



**Identifiers:**

ID: 371-25/DTN

December 30, 2025

**Correspondence:** Taha Nazir PhD, Researcher, Worker, and Journalist. Thomson Reuters - ID N-5730-2015 | ORCID ID - [orcid.org/0000-0002-5308-6798](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5308-6798) | <https://tahanazir.com>

**AI Tools:** Artificial Intelligence tools employed for scientific content development, data analysis, formulation, synthesis and conclusions for accuracy, validity and implications of the work.

**Conflict of interest:**

Author accepts all potential conflict of interest.

**Funding:**

The authors received no direct funding.

**Ethics approval:**

No ethical approval needed for this work.

**Consent for publication:**

Author is agreed to publish this article.

**Peer Review:** Not peer reviewed

**Blog Article**

**THE HIDDEN COSTS PAKISTAN PAID FOR SUPPORTING U.S. INTERESTS IN THE REGION**

**Taha Nazir PhD**

Research Scientist, Writer, Media Professional and Social Worker. <https://tahanazir.com/>

[ORCID](#) | [Publons](#) | [ResearchGate](#) | [Scopus](#) | [Academia](#) | [Linkedin](#) | [Google Scholar](#) | [Loop Frontiers](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Scinapse](#)

**Running title:** Pakistan–US Alliance Costs, Deep State Sacrifices

**Keywords:** Pakistan military establishment, deep state, U.S. interests, Afghanistan War, War on Terror, militant networks, terrorism casualties

**Data Source:** Archives, Biographies, Databanks, Encyclopedias, Libraries, Metadata Registries, Reports, Repositories, arXiv, Crossref, OpenAI, Wikipedia, World Health Organization, Zenodo.

**What cost Pakistan’s military establishment and deep state have paid to support U.S. interests in the region?** Especially in relation to **Afghanistan, Iran, and shifting global alliances**—along with sacrifices, diplomatic consequences, and emerging strategic realities:

Pakistan aligned itself with the United States during the Soviet-Afghan War and later in the War on Terror, becoming a frontline state in both conflicts. This alignment brought strategic recognition but came at the cost of internal security, regional trust, and long-term socio-political consequences. The Afghan jihad of the 1980s, supported by the CIA and coordinated via Pakistan’s ISI, introduced militant networks, drug trafficking, and a widespread Kalashnikov culture into Pakistan’s society, destabilizing its internal order for decades. After 2001, Pakistan facilitated U.S. military operations in Afghanistan through logistics, intelligence cooperation, and drone warfare support, despite severe domestic backlash. In return, Pakistan faced frequent accusations of duplicity, even as it bore the brunt of terrorism on its own soil.

More than 80,000 Pakistanis — civilians, soldiers, and police — were killed in acts of terrorism between 2001 and 2020. These include high-profile attacks like the Army Public School massacre, the Mehran Naval Base attack, and multiple bombings in Quetta, Lahore, and Peshawar.

Economic losses due to terrorism, regional instability, and security operations have been estimated at over \$150 billion. This includes loss of foreign direct investment, tourism, trade disruptions, and infrastructure damage, while military expenditures increased drastically. Pakistan provided refuge to over 3.5 million Afghan citizens during the war years and continues to host more than 1.3 million today. This mass displacement burdened public services, accelerated ethnic tensions, and introduced serious law enforcement challenges in urban areas. Iran, Pakistan's neighbor with shared religious and cultural ties, became increasingly wary of Pakistan's proximity to the U.S. and Saudi Arabia. This led to mistrust, border tensions, and Iran's growing strategic tilt toward India, visible through cooperation on Chabahar Port and military exchanges.

India's deepening military and intelligence partnership with Israel, including advanced surveillance, drone, and missile systems, shifted the regional balance. Despite this, Pakistan maintained a principled stance and did not normalize relations with Israel, in contrast to several Gulf countries.

Iran and India's collaboration in Chabahar and exclusion of Pakistan from the International North-South Transport Corridor reduced Pakistan's regional connectivity options and undercut the strategic weight of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The U.S. exit from Afghanistan in 2021 left Pakistan to deal with the fallout — a resurgent Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), heightened cross-border attacks, and a humanitarian refugee crisis. Pakistan received little meaningful support from the West during this transition.

Accusations from the U.S. of Pakistan's alleged harboring of militants damaged Pakistan's image globally, despite its military operations and sacrifices. The discovery of Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad further strained trust with Washington, even as Pakistan continued its counter-terror efforts.

In 2024, tensions flared with Iran over alleged militant safe havens in Balochistan. Iran conducted missile strikes inside Pakistani territory. Pakistan responded militarily but restored diplomatic ties within days, demonstrating strategic patience and regional maturity.

Under the current leadership of General Asim Munir and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Pakistan has shown a pragmatic and balanced regional policy — focusing on de-escalation with Iran, peace efforts in Afghanistan, and cautious engagement with China, the U.S., and Gulf states. Pakistan resisted normalization with Israel despite growing pressure, citing its commitment to the Palestinian cause. Unlike the UAE, Bahrain, and Morocco, Pakistan maintained its position that full diplomatic relations are not possible without a just solution for Palestinians.

Despite facing betrayal from allies, global mistrust, and regional isolation, Pakistan's establishment continued to prioritize its Islamic identity, diplomatic neutrality, and sovereignty, rather than submitting to transactional alignments with superpowers or regional blocs.

Pakistan's military faced not only battlefield casualties but also psychological warfare, internal political pressure, international media narratives, and economic isolation — making its sacrifices more complex than conventional wars.

The strategic price Pakistan paid includes long-term internal radicalization, breakdown of social harmony, global reputation loss, alienation from neighboring countries, and reduced leverage in regional power dynamics.

However, the emerging policy direction reflects a shift from dependency to strategic autonomy. Pakistan has increasingly pursued self-respecting diplomacy, aimed at multipolar engagement rather than unilateral alliances.

The resilience of Pakistan's deep state and military under adverse geopolitical and economic conditions highlights its enduring commitment to national sovereignty, Islamic solidarity, and regional stability — even when such principles come at the cost of strategic disadvantages.

What you think What cost Pakistan's military establishment and deep state have paid to support U.S. interests in the region? tell us by reply in comment section.

### **Editorial Statement:**

This is research-based manuscript, prepared and structured in a scientific manner. Modern AI-assisted tools used to access current and authentic info. The digital archives, bibliographic databanks, online libraries, research articles, academic repositories and encyclopedias employed.

### **Preprint Notice:**

This manuscript is shared as a non-peer-reviewed preprint on platforms such as Zenodo, SSRN, and Research Square to support scholarly discussion. The content is research-based and developed using publicly available and verifiable sources. Readers are encouraged to interpret the material as preliminary and subject to revision.

### **Disclaimer:**

This non-peer-reviewed article is shared for general academic discussion. AI tools were used to assist with clarity and organization. Readers are advised to independently assess and verify the information.

### **References:**

- Fair, C. C. (2014). *Pakistan's Army and Its Role in U.S.-Pakistan Relations*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.  
<https://carnegieendowment.org/2014/05/08/pakistan-s-army-and-its-role-in-u.s.-pakistan-relations>
- International Crisis Group. (2013). *Drones: Myths and Reality in Pakistan*. International Crisis Group Report No. 247.  
<https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/pakistan/drones-myths-and-reality-pakistan>
- The World Bank. (2021). *Pakistan: Economic losses from conflict and terrorism*. World Bank Data & Analysis.  
<https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/pakistan/overview>
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2022). *Afghan Refugees in Pakistan: Statistical Summary*.  
<https://www.unhcr.org/pk>
- Gall, C. (2013). *Pakistan's struggle with the Taliban*. The New York Times.  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/17/world/asia/pakistans-struggle-with-the-taliban.html>
- BBC News. (2011). *Osama bin Laden raid: Impact on U.S.-Pakistan relations*.  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-13257330>
- Human Rights Watch. (2010). *Pakistan: The fallout of the War on Terror*.  
<https://www.hrw.org/report/2010/07/01/pakistan-fallen>

- Riedel, B. (2011). *Deadly Embrace: Pakistan, America, and the Future of Global Jihad*. Brookings Institution.  
<https://www.brookings.edu/book/deadly-embrace/>
- Khan, H. (2018). *Pakistan's foreign policy challenges after the U.S. exit from Afghanistan*. Journal of South Asian Studies.  
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10266065.2018.1459354>
- Al Jazeera. (2024). *Iran–Pakistan tensions: What led to cross-border strikes?*  
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/1/18/iran-pakistan-border-strikes-explained>



© 2025 DownTown News. This publication is released under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) license. You are permitted to: Share: Copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format. Adapt: Remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, including commercial use. These freedoms cannot be revoked if the licensing terms are followed. License Terms: Attribution: You must provide appropriate credit to DownTown News, include a link to the CC BY 4.0 license, and indicate if any changes were made. Attribution must be given in a reasonable manner that does not imply endorsement by DownTown News. No Additional Restrictions: You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that restrict others from exercising the permissions granted by this license.

For full license details, please refer to the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0).