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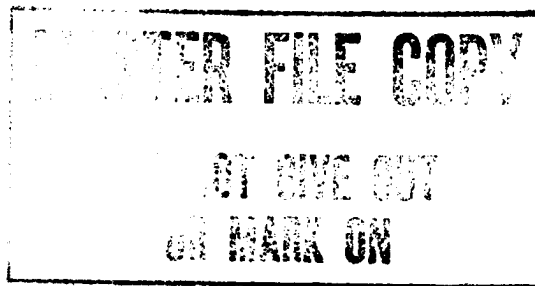


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Pakistan: Implications of Military Commitments to Arab States



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A Research Paper

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NESA 83-10075
April 1983

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Pakistan: Implications of Military Commitments to Arab States

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A Research Paper

This paper was prepared by
 Office of Near East-South Asia Analysis.
It was coordinated with the Directorate of
Operations and the National Intelligence Council.
Comments and queries are welcome and may be
directed to the Chief, South Asia Division, NESA,

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*NESA 83-10075
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**Pakistan:
Implications of Military
Commitments to Arab States**

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Key Judgments

*Information available
as of 25 March 1983
was used in this report.*

Pakistan's approximately 18,000 military personnel stationed in the Middle East and North Africa are becoming an important vehicle for achievement of its foreign policy goals. Pakistan has reaped significant benefits from the program:

- The armed forces have gained an improved sense of mission, standard of living, and morale.
- Salary remittances have provided an economic boost.
- Islamabad has acquired new sources of arms procurement.
- Pakistan has become one of the largest non-Arab recipients of financial support from the oil-rich Arab states.
- Pakistan's military personnel have gained valuable training on sophisticated Western and Soviet military equipment—including Soviet aircraft—which has given them a better understanding of the capabilities of the Indian Air Force.

The military aid, however, also carries risks:

- The longer the Pakistani troops stay abroad, the greater the risk that Pakistan will become embroiled in local or regional conflicts to which it is not a party.
- Pakistan's international image could be tarnished by charges that it provides "soldiers for hire" to radical regimes such as Libya.
- Morale within the armed forces could be damaged by the disparity between overseas and domestic salaries and by discrimination against Pakistani Shia personnel by the recipient countries.

Pakistan will continue and may even expand its military ties with the Middle East in order to ensure Arab political support and economic assistance. As long as Pakistan demonstrates competence in managing its program and maintains a stable and moderate government with Islamic credentials, there will be a market for its military personnel in the Middle East and North Africa. The prospect of increased political instability in the area brought on by falling oil prices might well prompt the Gulf states to request even larger foreign military contingents.

Several factors, however, could slow an expansion of military ties: the limited capacity of the recipient countries to absorb more military personnel, competition from other states to supply military advisers, the risk that Pakistan could be drawn into regional conflicts, and pressures within the Pakistani Government to retain skilled technical personnel in Pakistan. An unexpected, dramatic change in any one of these factors could lead to a reduction in the military assistance program.

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The United States generally benefits from Pakistan's military assistance program. Cooperation between Islamabad and the Arab states strengthens the military establishments of moderate governments while dampening Pakistan's financial demands on the United States and minimizing US visibility in this sensitive region. Only in the training of Palestinian guerrillas and Libyan pilots do Pakistan's military ties clearly run contrary to US interests. A setback to the military assistance program, accompanied by a reduction in Arab economic assistance to Pakistan, could increase Islamabad's need for US economic aid.



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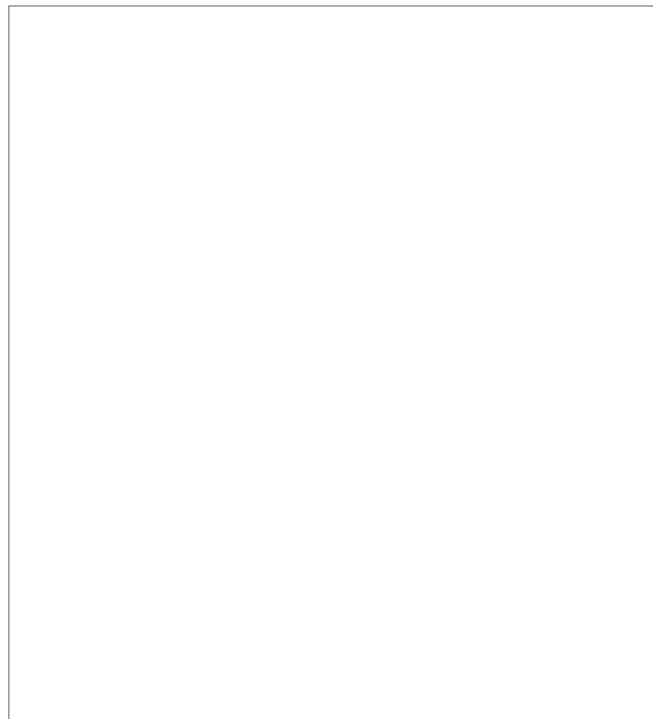


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**Pakistan:
Implications of Military
Commitments to Arab States**



During the past decade, Pakistan has become second only to Cuba among developing countries in the size and diversity of its military forces stationed in foreign countries. All but a small number serve in the Middle East and North Africa. Assistance provided to foreign military forces ranges from training to combat support and, most recently, to the commitment of ground combat troops. The manpower involved is probably less than 2 percent of the approximately 1.5 million civilian Pakistani workers outside the country.



We believe that the expansion of military ties within the Middle East and North Africa is part of Pakistan's effort to expand relations with the Islamic world. Pakistan hopes to garner broad Islamic political and military support to ensure its territorial integrity as well as financial support for its economic development. At the same time, we believe that Islamabad is trying to strengthen the military forces of its Islamic supporters, particularly those in the Arabian Peninsula, in an effort to enhance the security and stability of the region.

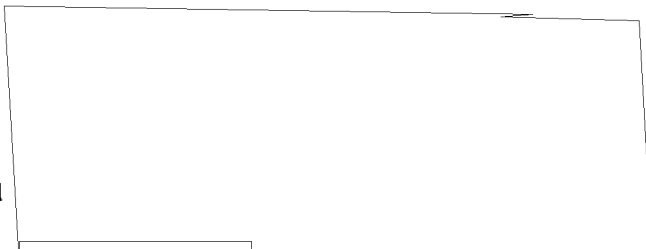
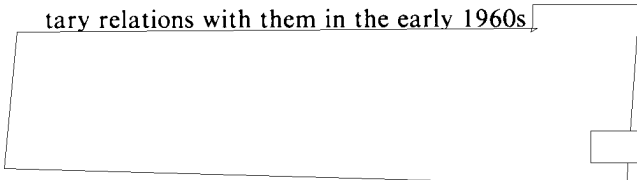


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Evolution of the Assistance Program

The Early Days: Moving To Fill a Need

The military weaknesses and vulnerabilities of the countries in the Middle East and North Africa opened the door for Pakistan's aid. Islamabad initiated military relations with them in the early 1960s.



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The 1971 War With India: Reevaluating Alliances

Pakistan's war with India in 1971 and the consequent loss of East Pakistan caused Islamabad to reevaluate its strategic



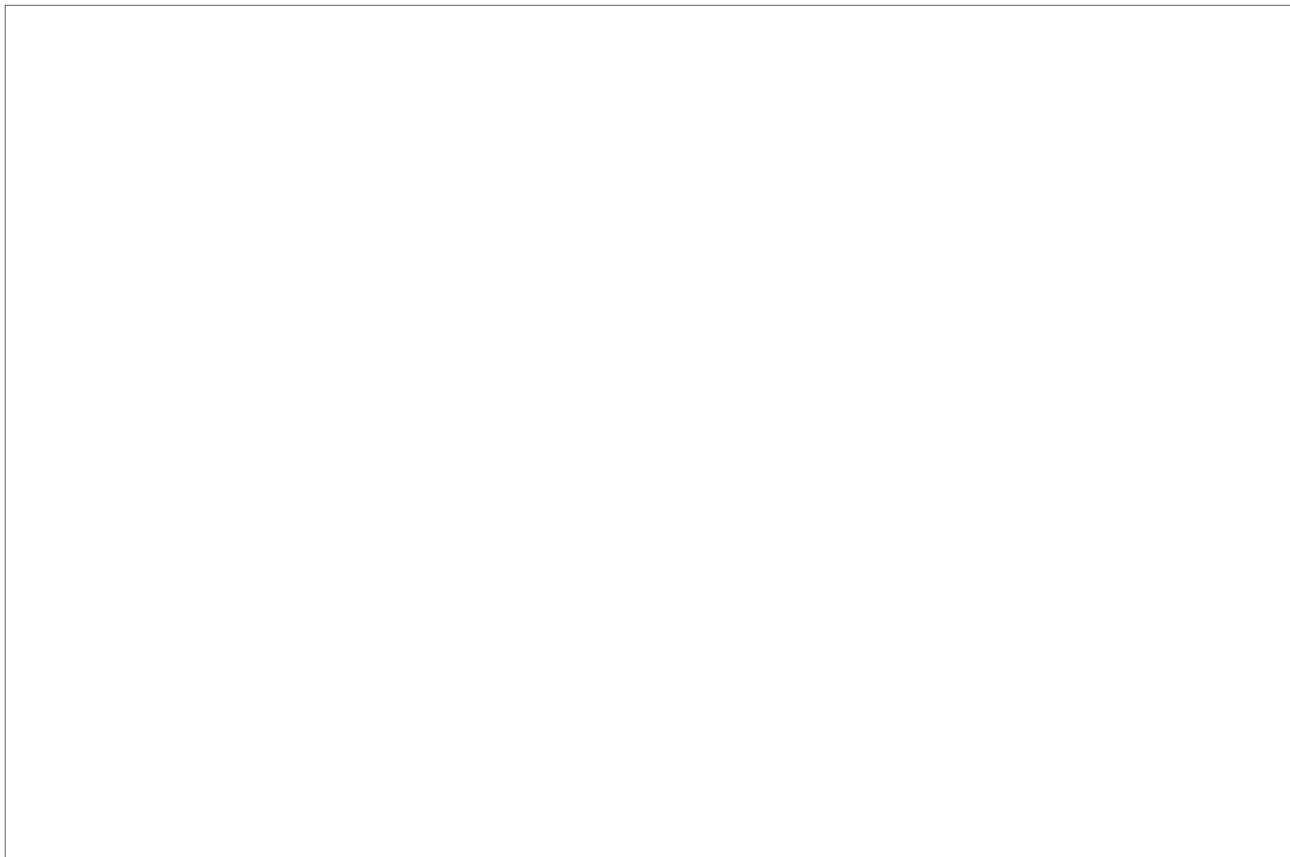
The Arabs' military debacle in the war with Israel in 1967 and Britain's military withdrawal from the Persian Gulf in 1969-70 encouraged Pakistan to expand its military ties. The Arab countries looked to Pakistan to train and advise their armed forces because Pakistan was an Islamic country.



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relations and to place greater emphasis on its political and military ties with the Islamic countries of the Middle East-North Africa:

- Pakistan's military and political leaders saw no benefit to Pakistan's security from membership in the CENTO and SEATO alliances because neither alliance had prevented India from splitting Pakistan.
- Pakistan's leaders viewed the United States as an unreliable ally when it suspended arms shipments during the fighting and offered only limited political and diplomatic support. [redacted]

Islamabad's most important military ties, however, were with Iran. Unlike the Arab countries, Iran shared a border with Pakistan, had large, well-equipped, and well-trained armed forces, and was in a favorable position to provide military assistance to Islamabad in a war with India. In 1975 Islamabad and Tehran signed a mutual defense agreement [redacted]

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The Late 1970s: The Arab Connection Becomes More Critical

Iran's Islamic revolution in 1978-79 and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979-80 again altered Pakistan's perception of its strategic position and prompted Islamabad to strengthen its military ties to the Arab world, [redacted]

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- The removal of the Shah eliminated one of Pakistan's principal allies and biggest financial supporters.

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[redacted] Islamabad concluded that only fellow Islamic countries were concerned with the fate of Pakistan and that their political and economic support was essential if Pakistan was to survive as an independent country. Throughout the 1970s Pakistan increased its commitment of military advisers to Saudi Arabia, Libya, and the Persian Gulf Arab states. [redacted]

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- The new Islamic government in Tehran initially was hostile to Pakistan (Khomeini once called for the overthrow of the Zia regime), and Islamabad was wary of instability and the prospect of a new enemy on its borders.
- The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan for the first time presented Pakistan with a new and potentially serious military situation on its western border. [redacted]

The Military Agreements

Pakistan currently has protocols for military cooperation and assistance with 11 Islamic countries in the Middle East and North Africa as well as with the Palestine Liberation Organization. [redacted]

[redacted] the number of Pakistani military personnel stationed outside the country has increased from 900 in 1972 to approximately 18,000 this year—slightly less than 4 percent of all Pakistani armed forces personnel. In addition to its military training missions abroad, Pakistan's service schools, military bases, and ships serve as training centers for about 1,000 Arab military students at any one time, according to our analysis. [redacted]

Most of the military personnel serve in supply, transport, medical, construction, or training units. [redacted]

[redacted] Pakistanis advise their Arab counterparts on the acquisition and integration of modern weapons into the armed forces, especially air defense systems, and play key roles in helping them to define their future requirements. [redacted]

[redacted]

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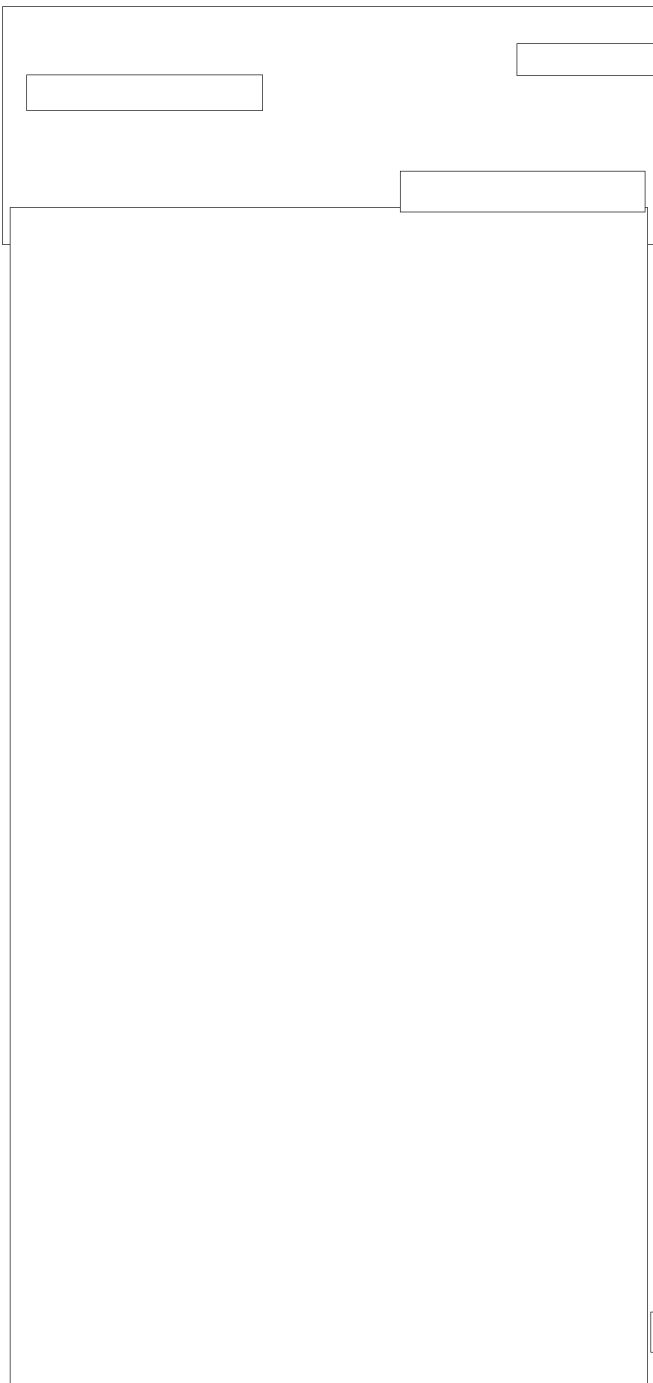
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Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. [redacted] neither air force could fly military operations without Pakistani maintenance and logistic support on the ground. Pakistani airmen are even responsible for the operation of Kuwait's two major airbases. [redacted]

Islamabad also trains seamen from these countries and has provided naval officers and petty officers to serve aboard their ships. [redacted]

Libya. Pakistan's most troubled and controversial military ties are with Libya. Pakistani military advisers and instructors have been assigned to the Libyan Air Force and Navy, and Pakistani pilots have flown Libyan aircraft since 1970. [redacted]

[redacted] the Pakistan Navy helped Libya to establish a petty officers school and to staff a naval academy in 1978. [redacted]

Libya's failure to meet its commitments and its involvement in regional and international terrorism have caused Islamabad to reduce its military presence from about 2,000 men in 1978 to about 400 today, [redacted] The Pakistanis continue to have an important training and advisory role in the Libyan air and air defense forces.

Persian Gulf States. Most of the small Persian Gulf states could not operate and maintain their air forces and navies without Pakistani assistance. Pakistani pilots fly French Mirage fighters in the air forces of

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[Redacted]

[Redacted] Islamabad decided after the 1973 war to reduce its military presence in the confrontation states and to terminate most of its training programs to avoid being drawn into disputes among them. We believe that Islamabad reasoned that none of the four could provide enough economic or political compensation for Pakistan's military aid to justify the risk of involvement in intra-Arab disputes. Apparently because Pakistan believes that Iraq still has the potential to be an economic and political power in the region, however, its military protocol with Baghdad remains in effect and Pakistani pilot instructors are still assigned to the Iraqi Air Force.

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Algeria. Islamabad signed a military protocol with Algeria in 1980 to help train Algerian pilots [Redacted]

[Redacted] Algiers requested the assistance because it did not believe that the Soviet pilot training program offered adequate tactical training. [Redacted]

Palestine Liberation Organization. Pakistan considers its military training of the Palestine Liberation Organization, which it has given since 1975, an integral part of its policy of supporting the Arab and Islamic cause against Israel.

[Redacted]

We believe that most of the Palestinians being trained in Pakistan belong to the more moderate Fatah faction of the PLO and very few to the radical factions. [Redacted]

Others. Islamabad has no current military ties with Egypt or Syria and provides only limited aid to Jordan and Iraq. All have large and/or proficient armed forces, have been confrontational states with Israel, and are political and military rivals for power and influence in the Arab world. Prior to the Middle East war of 1973, [Redacted]

[Redacted]

Motivations for Establishing Military Alliances

Pakistan: Quest for Security

[Redacted] the search for security against India and Soviet-occupied Afghanistan is the foremost objective of Pakistan's foreign policy.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

We also believe that Pakistan is motivated to increase its military commitments to the wealthy oil-producing Arab countries in order to ensure continued and even increased economic assistance essential to repaying mounting foreign debts, maintaining domestic programs for development growth, and financing foreign arms purchases. Arab funding for modern US and West European weapons to strengthen Pakistan's military capabilities is especially important from Pakistan's perspective, we believe. [Redacted]

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Arab States: A Need for Assistance

We believe that the security vulnerabilities and military limitations of the Arab oil-producing countries were the major impetus for them to seek outside military assistance. They purchased arms in the early 1970s in response to festering conflicts in the Yemens and Oman, continued Arab confrontation with Israel, Britain's military withdrawal from the region, and Iran's sizable military buildup under the Shah. The fall of the Shah, Tehran's attempts to export its revolution to the Arabian Peninsula, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the Iran-Iraq war heightened the concern of the Arab states for their security [redacted]

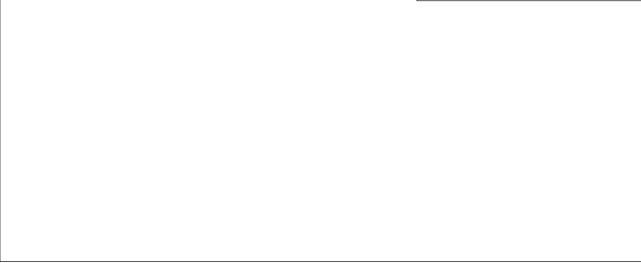
These states had the wealth to purchase expensive and sophisticated military equipment, but they had neither sufficient manpower nor the technical proficiency to maintain and operate it. [redacted]

[redacted] they turned to Pakistan rather than to the United States or European countries for the military-technical assistance to train and help maintain modern armed forces because:

- Pakistan is an Islamic country whose very creation was premised on Islam. Pakistani soldiers and advisers would have a less disruptive effect on the traditional Islamic societies of the Arab world than Americans or Europeans.
- Pakistan's armed forces have a reputation as one of the best in the Islamic world.
- Pakistan is not likely to get involved in internal or inter-Arab disputes.
- Pakistan has a plausible independence of policy from the United States.
- Pakistan's need for significant outside financial assistance establishes potential dependence on—and leverage for—the Arab states.

Dependence on the West for the kind of assistance that Pakistan can provide is viewed in Persian Gulf Arab capitals as prejudicial to their national sovereignty and Islamic identity [redacted]

Labor studies and manpower projections by the Arab states as well as by the World Bank and other international organizations show that the limited manpower and skills of these countries will continue to preclude the total staffing of the armed forces with native personnel for many years. The countries in the Middle East and North Africa, however, may look to diversify their sources of military assistance just as they have in the civilian work force. [redacted]



The Rewards for Pakistan

Pakistan, in our judgment, perceives that the political, economic, and military rewards that it reaps from its military assistance program, over and above the international support from the recipient countries for its territorial integrity, outweigh the risks that the program entails [redacted]

Political

Strengthening Islamic Credentials. We believe that Pakistan's military commitments in the Middle East and North Africa strengthen its Islamic credentials and its claim to a leadership role in Islamic affairs. The military ties advance the perception among Pakistanis as well as outsiders that Pakistan, under Zia's leadership, has a role as the "sword of Islam" to defend the faith. The enhanced Islamic credentials, in turn, have increased Pakistan's political influence in the Middle East and North Africa. President Zia, for example, was personally involved in the efforts of the Organization of Islamic Countries to mediate a solution to the war between Iran and Iraq, and Pakistan was instrumental in persuading most Arab countries to reject a resolution to expel Israel from the United Nations. [redacted]

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In our opinion, the military link with fellow Islamic countries serves to complement Zia's domestic campaign to establish an Islamic state. We expect that he will continue to press for more Islamic ways and institutions and a more Islamic national identity. In our view, an Islamic mission for the armed forces tends to bolster its confidence and morale at a time when senior officers. [redacted]

[redacted]

Enhancing Nonaligned Credentials. We judge that Pakistan's military assistance programs also help to enhance Islamabad's support in the Nonaligned Movement. Islamabad's provision of training for the Algerian Air Force, in our view, is a modest attempt to cultivate a key member of the movement. Greater Pakistani stature in the body would increase substantially the political costs to India or the Soviet Union if they attacked Pakistan. India, as a founding member of the Nonaligned Movement, would be particularly sensitive to nonaligned criticism for violating the movement's principles of nonaggression against a member state. [redacted]

Economic

Paying the Bills. We believe that Pakistan has been increasing its military ties with other countries partly in order to continue and even increase the inflow of economic assistance needed to reduce its trade deficit, sustain its economic development programs, and finance its military modernization [redacted] We expect Islamabad to look for greater foreign financial assistance for the foreseeable future. [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Salary Remittances Sweeten the Pot. Islamabad's military relationships also have provided other forms of financial stimulus for the economy. The salaries of all seconded military personnel and civilians are paid for by the host country. Pakistan's economy not only is spared this expense but also benefits from the savings sent home by the military personnel. If personal savings are remitted at the same rate as those of other foreign professional workers in the oil-producing states—about 50 percent of earnings, according to research conducted by the Pakistan Institute for

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Table 3*Million US \$***Pakistan:
Balance of Payments and
Economic Aid Flows ^a**

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983 ^b
Merchandise trade balance	-1,286	-1,464	-2,170	-2,516	-2,765	-3,194	-3,397
Net services	-385	-392	-452	-524	-459	-515	-658
Net transfers	590	1,226	1,496	1,895	2,233	2,285	2,710
Worker remittances	578	1,166	1,395	1,748	2,097	2,213	2,550
Current account balance	-1,081	-630	-1,126	-1,145	-991	-1,424	-1,345
Economic aid	800	797	888	1,054	956	1,113	1,220

^a Fiscal year ending 30 June of stated year.^b Projected.

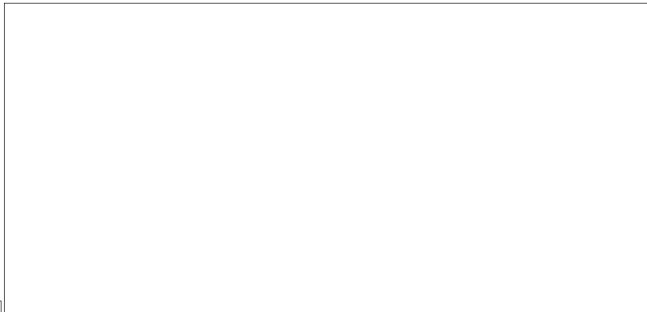
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Development Economics—we estimate the remittances from overseas military personnel equal about \$75 million annually. This supplements the \$2.6 billion remitted by Pakistan's civilian workers overseas. [redacted]

Personal Rewards: A Lucrative Tour. A foreign tour of duty is lucrative for Pakistani military officers. Salaries and other perquisites are considerably higher than at home. [redacted]



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Abetting Weapons Procurement. We believe that the experience with the modern US and West European weapons possessed by the Arab countries allows Islamabad to make more knowledgeable decisions on future weapons procurement. Its military personnel learn the maintenance and operational characteristics of the equipment and the logistic and technical skills required to support it. [redacted]

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The ability of military personnel stationed overseas to save more money than in Pakistan improves their standard of living upon returning home. Some of those who have served overseas, especially officers in high staff positions, also draw on the overseas contacts that they have made to establish themselves after retirement in the lucrative business of recruiting workers for civilian jobs in the Middle East and North Africa. [redacted]

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Military
Training the Armed Forces. Pakistan's commitment of military personnel to the Arab countries allows Islamabad to maintain trained armed forces larger than it could otherwise afford. Pakistani pilots flying in the air forces of the Arab states gain valuable training that would otherwise be precluded by high operational and maintenance costs, especially of aviation fuel. The commitment of combat troops to Saudi Arabia gives Pakistan trained reserve artillery and air defense battalions and the trained personnel of an armored brigade that could be recalled during a crisis with India. [redacted]

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Lurking Risks

Pakistan's transfers of military manpower to the countries of the Middle East and North Africa are not accomplished without some potential problems. We believe that Pakistani policymakers are especially wary of the long-term risks that an expanded military commitment in the region would involve. [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Loss of Foreign Political Support. If one of Pakistan's military alliances were to sour through involvement of Pakistani troops in domestic politics, broader cooperation with the host country could be threatened. [redacted]

Tarnishing the International Image. Stationing military personnel in radical countries such as Libya could embarrass Pakistan and strain its international credibility. Pakistani soldiers are already gaining a reputation as soldiers for hire. [redacted] India—which fears that Arab aid to Pakistan in exchange for military assistance will enhance Islamabad's arms purchases—has charged that the Pakistani troops are the "Cubans of the Arabian Gulf." [redacted]

Economic

A military assistance agreement that turns bad probably is the most serious economic risk for Pakistan. A broken agreement could cost Islamabad not only the financial benefits from the agreement itself but also other economic and military support the host country was providing. Pakistan's civilian work force and the associated remittances could also be cut back or even eliminated. [redacted]

[redacted]

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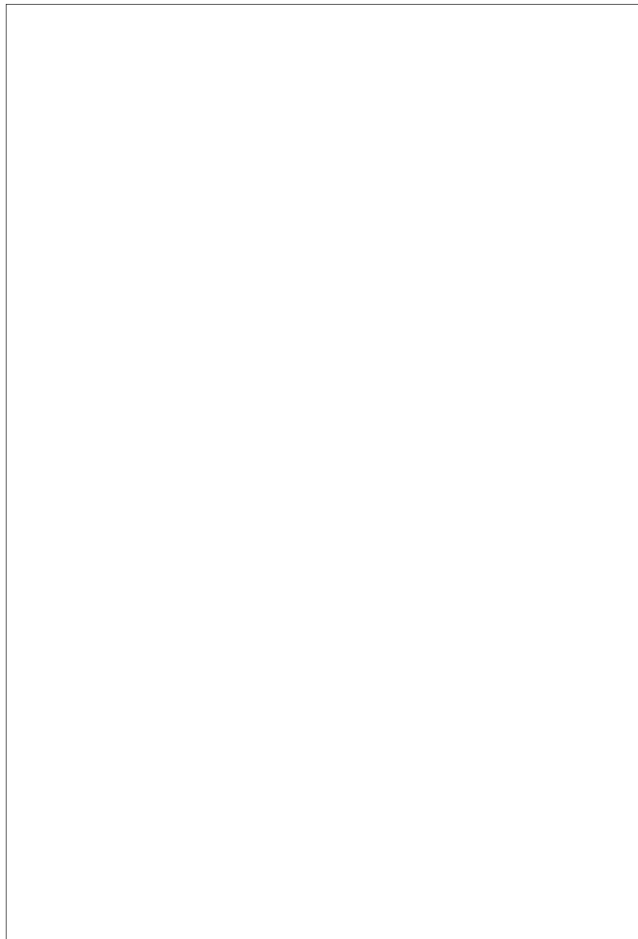
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continuing military threats posed by India and the Soviet Union in Afghanistan—will encourage Pakistan to continue or even expand its military ties.

Although we expect the military needs among the recipient countries to remain high and the benefits of the assistance program to continue to outweigh the drawbacks for Pakistan, we do not foresee a major expansion of Pakistan's military assistance program for several reasons:

- The limited administrative capabilities of the military establishments in the recipient states will restrict the pace at which they can accept foreign personnel.
- Pakistan will face increasing competition from other states in its military aid to the Middle East and North Africa just as it has in its supply of civilian workers.
- The limited number of skilled personnel in Pakistan will make it difficult to expand military assistance and also maintain credible quality and performance in the domestic armed forces.
- The increased risk that Pakistan could be drawn into regional conflicts against its will if it increased its military commitments would discourage Pakistan's decisionmakers from a substantial increase in its military assistance.
- A rapid expansion of the program could result in a deterioration in the quality of the detailees and eventually reduce the credibility of the program.

In our view, a collapse in oil prices to \$20 per barrel or less probably would add to, rather than diminish, the demand for foreign military assistance in the oil-producing states. We believe that the potential for

Outlook: The Prospects for Pakistani Military Assistance

We expect that shortcomings in indigenous manpower and skills, along with an unstable political and security balance in the region, will ensure a continued presence of foreign military forces in the Middle East–North Africa region for the foreseeable future. We believe that, so long as Pakistan continues to provide competent military assistance, maintains a stable and moderate government, stresses its Islamic heritage, and avoids close association with the United States, there will be demand for its military assistance in the region. Conditions within Pakistan—the continuing need for outside capital to finance economic development and military modernization as well as

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greater political instability under a reduced oil price scenario would prompt the Gulf states to beef up their security readiness with outside apolitical forces. The friction in OPEC caused by additional price cuts, for example, might prompt Iran to expand the war to other Gulf countries. Required cuts in domestic spending in the conservative Arab states could foster internal discontent and assist Iranian recruitment of dissident Gulf Shias. Under such circumstances, if one or more of the Gulf states requested additional assistance from Pakistan and provided sufficient financial incentive, we believe that Islamabad would accommodate their request. [redacted]

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Implications for the United States

Pakistan's military presence helps to support Arab regimes that are friendly to the United States; its military ties strengthen regional security without a greater, and potentially provocative, US presence and reduce the need for US involvement in regional crises; the close working relationships between Pakistan and other Muslim countries help to influence collective Arab foreign policy positions potentially to the benefit of the United States; finally, Arab economic and military assistance to Pakistan in exchange for its military aid reduces the assistance required from the United States. [redacted]

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Some aspects of Pakistan's military assistance to the Middle East and North Africa, however, work to the detriment of US regional interests. Pakistan's mantle as a defender of Islamic interests limits its support of US regional policy interests, particularly in the Arab-Israeli dispute; Libyan pilots trained by the Pakistanis or Pakistani pilots flying for the Libyans could attack US aircraft or ships in the Mediterranean; hostile propaganda could successfully portray Pakistan as a US surrogate and cause the Arab states to reduce the Pakistani military presence in their countries; Pakistan's training and support enhances the PLO's capability to subvert US objectives in the Middle East; and the extensive Pakistani military presence at Tabuk in Saudi Arabia could increase tensions between Saudi Arabia and Israel and ultimately involve Pakistan in another Arab-Israeli war. [redacted]

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