

Newsweek

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INTERNATIONAL PAKISTAN

UP IN FLAMES

Pakistan's proxies are killing American troops
and blowing up their supplies.

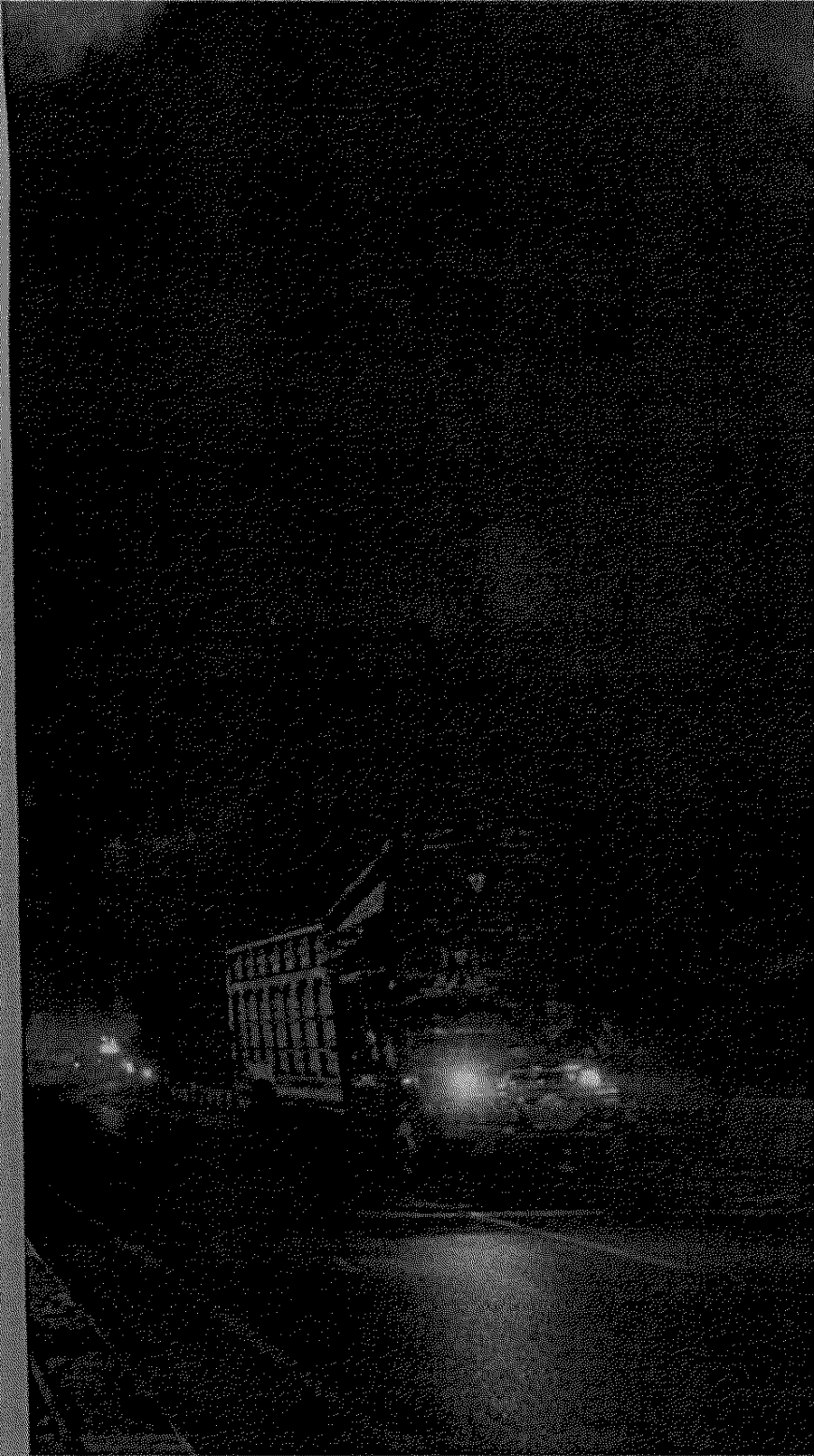
So, how exactly are we allies again?

BY NISID HAJARI AND RON MOREAU



MORE THAN 100 FUEL TANKERS HEADED
FOR U.S. TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN WERE
SET ABLAZE BY MILITANTS

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OF THE TWO NATIONS DESCRIBED jointly as "AfPak," one has nuclear weapons and the other doesn't. One has a population of 175 million and a GDP of \$166 billion; the other has only 23 million citizens, a literacy rate under 30 percent, and an economy, if you don't count the opium trade, worth no more than \$13 billion. One is a haven for Osama bin Laden and the remnants of the terror network that launched the 9/11 attacks. The 100,000 U.S. troops sent to root out Al Qaeda are in the other one.

By now the notion that Pakistan is the real "prize"—the strategic center of gravity—in the Afghanistan war hardly bears repeating. Yet in a telling moment in his book *Obama's Wars*, Bob Woodward notes that during the administration's deliberations last year, when then-national-security adviser Jim Jones suggested referring to the region as PakAf instead, the Pakistanis were immediately "distressed... that the inversion might suggest that Pakistan was the main problem." Nobody wanted to upset our Pakistani allies; AfPak it has been ever since.

In America's relationship with Pakistan, carrots predominate, in part because we have so few sticks. After our almost unquestioned support for Pakistani dictator Gen. Pervez Musharraf didn't elicit sufficient cooperation against the Taliban, we showered the civilian government that replaced him with \$7.5 billion in aid, to little effect. American generals praise the very real sacrifices—in blood and treasure—made by the Pakistani Army in the fight against militants in Swat and South Waziristan; yet calls to broaden the

campaign to North Waziristan, home to one of the deadliest Afghan insurgent groups, the Haqqani network, go unheeded. U.S. and Pakistani diplomats recite platitudes about "our common enemy, and Pakistan's President Asif Ali Zardari repeatedly invokes his assassinated wife, former prime minister Benazir Bhutto, to underscore his dedication to battling extremists. But that depends on whose extremists.

The events of the past week make clear why the United States has been so solicitous. After a U.S. helicopter attack across the border killed two Pakistani soldiers at a frontier outpost, Islamabad shut down one of the main crossings into Afghanistan in protest. Three quarters of nonlethal supplies intended for Coalition troops in Afghanistan travel through Pakistan. The crossing point quickly clogged with trucks that couldn't pass, making them easy targets. Militants torched more than 100 fuel tankers as Pakistani authorities largely stood aside and watched.

Impeding supply routes is not the strongest leverage Pakistan can bring to bear. The high-tech drone war that has eviscerated Al Qaeda's ranks—killing 17 commanders in the last nine months—is run out of Pakistan and is largely dependent on Pakistani intelligence for targeting. Islamabad publicly denies any role in the Predator strikes, and loudly protests the collateral damage when civilians are killed. But it hasn't grounded the CIA's drones—so far.

America's forbearance, though, is waning. In a report sent to Congress on Oct. 4, the Obama administration admitted that "the Pakistan military [has] continued to avoid military engagements that would put it in direct conflict with Afghan Taliban or Al Qaeda forces in North Waziristan." There is a reason for this—a "political choice," as the report says. The Pakistani military has long tolerated Afghan insurgents like the Haqqanis, who direct their attacks into Afghanistan only. Those groups—which include

the Quetta Shura, led by the one-eyed Mullah Mohammed Omar—are Islamabad's insurance policy, agents who are meant to look after Pakistani interests when the United States eventually withdraws the bulk of its forces from the region. (Pakistan vehemently denies supporting any militant groups.)

Gen. David Petraeus, tasked with turning around the war in Afghanistan, has concentrated the surge of U.S. forces in the Taliban heartland in the south, leaving his eastern flank vulnerable. That's "Haqqani's I-95," says one Army officer, who asked for anonymity when discussing intelligence matters. As insurgents pour freely across the border, the officer continues, U.S. soldiers "are getting hammered."

Petraeus needs to protect those soldiers. He also needs to show fresh momentum by December, when the administration plans to reassess progress in the war, if he wants to fend off pressure for a substantial U.S. drawdown next summer. So "he is taking a tougher stand than his predecessor" when it comes to the Taliban's safe havens in the tribal areas, says retired Pakistani Army Lt. Gen. Talat Masood, who maintains close ties to the Pakistani brass. "[Petraeus] is of the view that you can't have two positions—you either have to be an ally or not."

The brazen chopper attacks into Pakistan—a red line for Islamabad—are one sign of U.S. impatience. So is the intense barrage of Predator strikes over the last month—a record 22 of them. Some of those attacks reportedly were meant to disrupt a brewing terror plot in Europe; one killed four militants with German citizenship. But others have targeted Haqqani commanders and fighters. According to a source involved in the discussions, administration officials have reluctantly begun to consider

options for stepping up the campaign against the Haqqanis. These include sending U.S. Special Operations Forces across the border, and even launching a full-scale bombing campaign.

Islamabad argues that Pashtun insurgents like the Haqqanis will be needed in order to negotiate an end to the war. "The [Pakistani] military believes you need the Haqqani network involved to help bring Pashtun Taliban elements into some kind of power-sharing arrangement [in Kabul]," says defense analyst Rifaat Hussain. But that's not inconsistent with America's recent aggressiveness. In Iraq, too, Petraeus's forces first pounded Sunni insurgents before striking deals with them. The point—then and now—is to bring the enemy to the table in a weakened position.

What can no longer be glossed over is the fact that, for now and the foreseeable future, America's interests do not and will not align with Pakistan's. We do not share a common enemy. Pakistan's enemy, as it's always been, is India—and by extension an Afghan government seen to be dominated by non-Pashtuns with close ties to New Delhi. To get a sense of how Islamabad sees the world, consider this: the Pakistani Army has deployed 140,000 troops to the tribal areas, the source of attacks that have killed more than 2,000 Pakistanis over the last three years; it keeps some 300,000 on the border with India—a booming market and budding world power that has no conceivable reason to welcome a conflict with its neighbor.

Islamabad's obsession remains to maintain "strategic depth" against an Indian attack by having a friendly government in Kabul to fall back upon. The more likely Afghan power-sharing talks become—with President Obama's July 2011 deadline to begin a U.S. drawdown looming—the more important proxies like the Haqqanis become to Islamabad. America's enemy is Pakistan's key asset.

It's worth remembering that Pakistan has never had any moral qualms about dealing

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with the Taliban. It helped create the Islamist militia in the 1990s, and was one of only three nations to recognize Mullah Omar's medieval government—even under the glamorous Bhutto. Ordinary Pakistanis draw a distinction between Afghan mujahedin and the bloodthirsty Pakistani Taliban, who are of more recent vintage. They also don't like to feel pushed around by the United States: in July, only 17 percent of Pakistanis held a favorable view of America, a number that's no doubt dropped since then.

Sure, the United States needs to respect the constraints that Pakistan's Army and civilian government are facing—both in terms of resources and legitimacy. Attacks like the one on the frontier post—which are huge setbacks to whatever progress U.S. diplomats have made—are clearly counterproductive, especially when targeting only low-level fighters. But America cannot extricate itself from Afghanistan without first reversing the Taliban's

momentum—it really is AfPak, in other words, not PakAf, at least for the moment. That means we have to pursue our interests as ruthlessly as we can, regardless of whether they damage Pakistan's interests or its ego.

Before complaining, Islamabad would do well to look at the bigger picture. Next month President Obama is heading to India, where he will meet with Mumbai entrepreneurs and be feted in New Delhi. He won't overtly tilt the United States toward India, as some pro-Delhi partisans have argued for. But even a small gesture—say, loosening export restrictions on dual-use technology—would be a pointed reminder of the value of maintaining good relations with America.

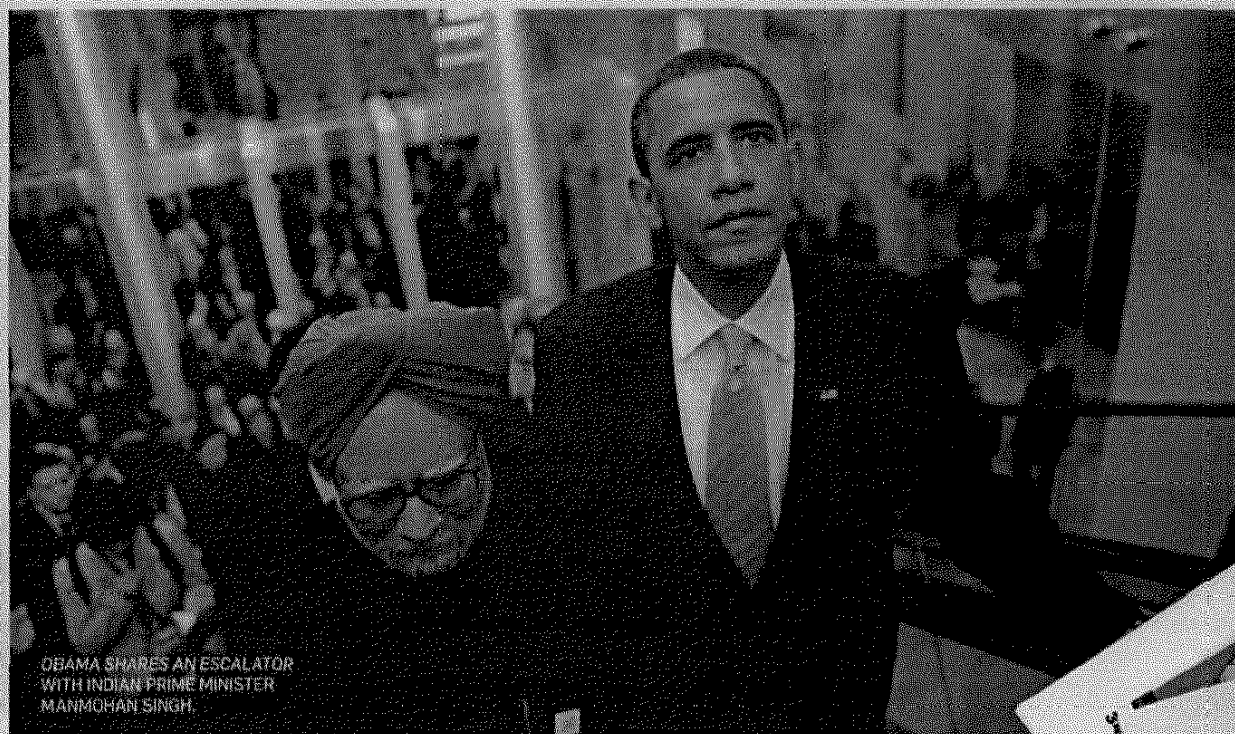
The other destination on his itinerary may be even more relevant. Indonesia has become an important example of a peace-

ful, moderate Muslim democracy. Little more than a decade ago the country was ruled by a brutal dictator, and its sclerotic economy was dominated by military-owned businesses. Now it's growing at 4.5 percent

annually. Worries about the sprawling archipelago disintegrating into fiefdoms have faded completely. Instead, the country will soon boast the second-largest number of Facebook users in the world.

There are rewards for this—both internally and globally. Some \$73 billion in foreign investment flowed into Indonesia last year. The Jakarta stock market is up 19 percent since July (contrast that with the Karachi Stock Exchange, which has fallen 2.5 percent in the past three months). By pursuing its immediate interests so avidly, Pakistan is in real danger of isolating itself—of becoming a pariah state in the eyes of the world. It might win Afghanistan but lose the West. Is that the prize Pakistanis really want?

With JOHN BARRY in Washington and SAMI YOUSAFZAI in Islamabad



OBAMA SHARES AN ESCALATOR WITH INDIAN PRIME MINISTER MANMOHAN SINGH.

PIET SOUZA - THE WHITE HOUSE

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