

Saudi-Pakistan Relations: More than Meets the Eye

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A special relationship has developed between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, centered on a particular trade-off. Saudi Arabia depends on Pakistan for strategic depth and regards it as both an important asset in restraining Iranian influence and an answer to its need for a non-Arab ally. In exchange, Pakistan receives extensive economic aid, and benefits from Saudi Arabia's influence in the Gulf and its role as guardian of the Islamic holy sites. The two countries have been able to overcome several disputes between them by maneuvering between various pressures, strengthening their special relations, and ensuring that more is unknown than known about their strategic cooperation, both conventional and nuclear.

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In February 2019, Prince Mohammad bin Salman, in effect the ruler of Saudi Arabia, made his third official visit – and his first visit as crown prince – to Pakistan, and was honored in ways beyond Pakistan's usual reception of foreign leaders. During the two-day visit, described as “historic,”¹ memoranda of understanding and agreements were signed that were the most extensive in the history of the two countries; the petrochemical field was the primary focus of the agreements. Inter alia, Saudi Arabia's Aramco will invest \$10 billion in building an oil refinery in the Gwadar region, which is subject to Chinese influence, and talks are underway on transferring control of gold and copper mines in Baluchistan to Riyadh.² Unlike the past, the kingdom is now investing in long term projects in Pakistan in the hopes of economic benefit and ongoing political influence. This visit

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was important to the Saudis – and bin Salman – due to their desire to gain friendship and rehabilitate the kingdom’s reputation, damaged by the Khashoggi affair and the war in Yemen, but also as part of Saudi Arabia’s strategy of “looking eastward.”

This article explores the special connection between the countries, ties that have been tested in recent years. Since it became independent, Pakistan has relied on military and economic aid, mainly from the US, China, and Saudi Arabia. With relations with Washington at a low point and the desire to avoid dependence on Beijing, Saudi Arabia remains a source of reliable economic support for Pakistan. In the bilateral security realm, more is unknown than known about both the conventional and nuclear spheres. Disputes between Riyadh and Islamabad have emerged in recent years, especially given the Pakistani parliament’s refusal to join the war in Yemen led by Saudi Arabia since March 2015, and to a lesser extent as a result of the Saudi crisis with Qatar (from June 2017). However, overall relations between the countries have remained close, and they also cooperate in multilateral bodies, foremost among them the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

Religion and Politics

The religious dimension is significant for both Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia, home to Islam’s holy places, enjoys considerable religious influence in Pakistan. Pakistan welcomes the special status it receives from Saudi Arabia with respect to these Islamic sites. Inter alia, Pakistani policemen guard the holy places and Pakistani citizens receive a substantial discount on entry visas to Saudi Arabia. Over the years, the Saudis have managed to promote their religious influence by enlisting the Sunni ulama and donating generously to mosques and madrassas in Pakistan, which maintain theological and organizational ties with Wahhabi institutions in Saudi Arabia. Through funding and patronage for Islamic purposes and enterprises such as the International Islamic University, Wahhabi theology is disseminated and Saudi interests and legitimacy in Pakistan are maintained.

Riyadh has sought to roll back Shiite achievements and counter the threat it sees from Iran by enhancing ethnic tension. Pakistan has the world’s largest Shiite population outside of Iran (40 million, 20 percent of Pakistan’s population), and Iran has considerable influence in the country. In the past decade, thousands of Pakistanis have been killed in violence

between Shiites and Sunnis, and Pakistan fears that Iran is liable to incite the Pakistani Shiites. Iran's success in recruiting numerous Pakistani Shiites in support of its goals in Syria constitutes evidence of the extent of Iranian influence on the Shiites in Pakistan.

At the same time, and despite the political turmoil in Pakistan, the connection between the countries has remained strong over the years, in part because Saudi Arabia has fostered deep-rooted ties with the Pakistani military and intelligence establishment, as well as the weaker political establishment. The extent of the kingdom's influence on Pakistani politics was revealed by a diplomatic telegram leaked in 2010, in which the Saudi ambassador to Pakistan was quoted as saying, "We in Saudi Arabia are not observers in Pakistan; we are participants."³

Economy

In addition to the political and religious connections, powerful economic interests bind the two countries together. To be sure, the volume of trade between the two countries is modest (about \$3 billion a year), and is unbalanced: most of it consists of oil and its derivatives exported by Saudi Arabia to Pakistan. However, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are now trying to increase the volume of their bilateral trade, and have agreed to begin talks on a free trade agreement.

Saudi Arabia is Pakistan's main oil supplier and a destination for Pakistani exports (mainly food and textile products). Occasionally Saudi Arabia grants Pakistan direct financial aid and supplies it with oil at a reduced price. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia hosts the highest number of Pakistani workers (two million people send \$6 billion a year home to Pakistan). Pakistan prefers asking for help from Saudi Arabia, which does not impose stringent monetary and fiscal terms for loans like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the generous assistance also makes it easier for Pakistan to negotiate with the IMF; in June 2019 Pakistan indeed reached a three-year bailout deal with the IMF. Accepting Saudi economic aid is likewise attractive to Pakistan for the purpose of lessening the political dependence that accompanies massive Chinese investment in its territory. In addition, in June 2019 it was reported that Saudi Arabia would postpone its demand for Pakistani payment for Saudi oil shipments for three years, totaling nearly \$10 billion.

Saudi Arabia has remained at Pakistan's side over the years and assisted it in many crises, including following the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan, the 2010-2011 floods, and the economic crisis in 2014. In an unprecedented

step, Riyadh even opposed the American administration in 2018 and tried, together with China and Turkey, to prevent Pakistan from being included on the gray list of countries failing to meet the targets set by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF),⁴ due to the ties of the Pakistani government and military to extreme Islamic groups.⁵

Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan made his first visit outside Pakistan to Saudi Arabia in September 2018.⁶ He proposed the inclusion of Riyadh as a partner in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) strategic segment at a cost of \$45 billion as part of the Chinese Belt Road Initiative (BRI). The idea was opposed by China, and it is unclear what role Saudi Arabia will play in the project. Beijing perhaps fears losing its exclusivity in the project and a rapprochement between Islamabad and the American-Saudi Arabian axis at its expense. According to the agreements between China and Pakistan, other countries can join projects associated with CPEC, but decision making and implementation will remain in the hands of Beijing and Islamabad. As a rule, Pakistan lacks independent financial resources that could give it the status of a partner with China. Saudi investment is therefore unavoidable, and China prefers it to other investors, especially the United States.

Prime Minister Khan was also among the few to participate in the Saudi economic conference (Davos in the Desert) convened by Crown Prince bin Salman in October 2018. This conference, which took place immediately following the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, was boycotted by many Western leaders and companies. In an interview on the eve of the conference, Khan said that despite the murder, Pakistan should maintain good relations with Saudi Arabia: “We are desperate for money...we are a country of 210 million people and we have the worst debt crisis in our history.”⁷ In return for attending the conference, Khan received \$6 billion from the Saudis. Most of all, however, this event highlighted Pakistan’s desperate plight, rather than the depth of its relations with Saudi Arabia.

Security

In the 1960s, Pakistan began to assist in creating the Saudi army. Pakistani pilots flew Saudi airplanes during the war in Yemen in 1969, and Pakistani special forces helped liberate the Great Mosque in Mecca from Islamic extremists in 1979. Overall, military cooperation benefits both sides. Pakistan has land, air, and naval forces with operational experience, but their sources of income are not always adequate. In contrast, Saudi Arabia has considerable

economic resources, but lacks quality manpower, and its army is still relatively small in relation to its population and has little expertise. Over the years, security relations between the countries have become more intimate, to the point that former head of Saudi intelligence Turki al-Faisal described them as “one of the closest relationships in the world.”⁸

In addition to training the Saudi forces, Pakistan, which has the world’s largest Muslim army and is the only Muslim country with nuclear weapons, has consistently shown its readiness for direct military intervention in Saudi Arabia on a large scale. The two armies conduct training and maneuvers on a regular basis, and they cooperated in their support of the Afghan mujahidin during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

Training and Instruction

As in other Gulf states, many Pakistani mercenaries serve in various combat roles in Saudi Arabia. Pakistan also trains Saudi soldiers in its territory. During a discussion in parliament in 2018, Pakistan’s Minister of Defense disclosed tersely that some 10,000 Saudi soldiers were in Pakistan for training and instruction.⁹ In March 2016 the two armies also took part in the largest joint exercise ever in the kingdom, together with forces from 20 other Muslim countries.

Joint Military Force

In December 2015, Pakistan officially joined the Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition (IMCTC), created by Saudi Crown Prince bin Salman. The purpose of the IMCTC, which numbers 41 countries and is headquartered in Riyadh, is unclear. A hint of the force’s purpose and character is given by the fact that Iran and Iraq, both of which have a Shiite majority, are not members in it. The force has not been known to have participated or to have taken responsibility for any operational activity whatsoever to date. It is believed that Pakistan’s official membership in the force was political compensation for Pakistan’s refusal to join the fighting in Yemen in early 2015 (this refusal surprised Riyadh, which reported that Islamabad was participating in the fighting). Furthermore, even in this case, in order to avoid criticism, Islamabad made it clear that its role in the force was focused on military and intelligence advice and logistics support for members of the coalition, without any active participation in the force itself. Former Pakistan Chief of Staff Raheel Sharif was put in command of the force in 2017.

Military Forces

About 15,000 Pakistani soldiers were sent to the kingdom at the request of Saudi King Fahd after the Iran-Iraq War broke out, and about 5,000 soldiers were sent following Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. Some of the Pakistani forces were stationed in Tabuk, near the border with Israel, but most were in the eastern district, where the major portion of Saudi Arabia's oil fields are located, and where two million Shiites (20 percent of the Saudi population) are concentrated. In 2011, Pakistan sent approximately 1,000 mercenaries to help suppress the riots in neighboring Bahrain due to concern that the unrest would spread to Saudi Arabia. In February 2018, Pakistan sent over 1,000 soldiers to the kingdom to join the approximately 1,600 Pakistani security personnel permanently stationed there, whose official jobs, under a 1982 agreement between the countries, are consulting, instruction, and security for the holy places.¹⁰ The two countries refused to provide details about the exact number of soldiers, the areas in which they were deployed, and the specific purpose of the force funded by Saudi Arabia. It is possible, however, that some of the Pakistani soldiers were stationed along the border between Saudi Arabia and Yemen. The timing of the deployment and the statement by the Pakistani army that "the force will not be stationed outside the kingdom" makes it likely that it is also aimed to counter possible internal threats to Saudi stability, given the disputes within the kingdom and the concentration of authority in the hands of Mohammad bin Salman.

Weapons

It is possible that Saudi Arabia has purchased surface-to-surface missiles manufactured in Pakistan, such as one of the Shaheen missile series developed with the help of Chinese technology and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) manufactured in Pakistan. In January 2019, it was reported in the US that a facility for producing UAVs, the first of its kind in Saudi Arabia, was discovered southwest of Riyadh and had probably been constructed with Pakistani/Chinese aid. The site, which may not be operational, is similar to a site northwest of Islamabad built by China.

Saudi Arabia's Strategic Rocket Forces (SRF) is a separate elite force in which, in contrast to the rest of the Saudi army, Pakistani advisors and instructors are employed rather than Western personnel.¹¹ While Saudi Arabia has expressed interest in acquiring the JF-17 warplane manufactured by China and Pakistan, there is little likelihood that with its air force based

on American and European aircraft, it will buy this airplane. Pakistan, however, which is willing to transfer technology and accept joint production, is looking for new export markets for the plane in order to lower the cost of production.

Nuclear Weapons

It is believed that Saudi Arabia gave Pakistan financial aid in order to develop an “Islamic bomb.” The international community imposed sanctions on Pakistan in 1988, following its nuclear testing, but Saudi Arabia came to Pakistan’s aid by supplying it with 50,000 barrels of oil daily. The Saudi economic support for the Pakistani nuclear program¹² was the basis for the assessment that if and when Riyadh seeks aid from Pakistan’s nuclear capabilities, such aid will be forthcoming.¹³ The visit by then-Saudi Minister of Defense Sultan to the enrichment facility in Pakistan in 1999 drew criticism from the Clinton administration, due to concern that his visit followed nuclear understandings between Riyadh and Islamabad. To be sure, there is no verified information from an open source about such a nuclear exchange deal between the parties. There are reports, however, whereby the possibility was at least discussed in talks between the two sides. Furthermore, A. Q. Khan, “father of the Pakistani nuclear program,” has visited Saudi Arabia more than once, also for “religious needs.”

In a scenario of an Iranian breakout to a nuclear weapon, the Pakistani commitment to maintain the kingdom’s security could be expressed through a transfer of nuclear warheads to Saudi Arabia or the stationing of nuclear weapons (guarded by Pakistani soldiers) in the kingdom – an “arrangement” that does not violate the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), signed by Saudi Arabia. Pakistan, which did not sign the NPT, also has a questionable record in the dissemination of nuclear technology. The possibility of Pakistan turning a blind eye, for example, to assistance by Pakistani scientists in assembling a uranium enrichment infrastructure in the kingdom cannot be ruled out. A declared nuclear umbrella provided by Pakistan, meaning a commitment to respond to a foreign force posing an existential threat to the Saudi royal household and the Islamic holy places, is another possibility, although it is doubtful whether it would satisfy Riyadh. Anonymous senior Saudi sources have hinted on a number of occasions that if Iran breaks out to a nuclear weapon, the kingdom has a “solution” in the form of Pakistan. Concern about Pakistani nuclear assistance to the kingdom increased in 2018, when in response to a question on the subject, bin Salman stated

publicly and explicitly for the first time that if Iran acquires military nuclear capability, the kingdom would acquire a similar capability without delay. The kingdom has used threats of this type to pressure the US and the international community to adopt a harder stance against Iran, but it also raises doubts about its own nuclear intentions.

It is possible that Riyadh believes that Pakistan will come to its aid in some way in the event of an Iranian breakout to a nuclear weapon. It is also possible, however, that the understandings on the matter, insofar as they exist, are interpreted differently by each party. Furthermore, in fulfilling this “deal,” Pakistan will also have to take into account its entire array of regional interests, including its relations with Iran, and the international price it will have to pay for lending such assistance to the kingdom. If it is discovered that Pakistan has indeed transferred a nuclear weapon or technology to Saudi Arabia, it will be severely condemned by the United States and the international community, and be hit with severe sanctions. Besides the need to cope with substantial economic and political damage, Pakistan will instantly turn Iran into its bitter enemy.

In the event of an Iranian breakout to a nuclear weapon, Saudi pressure on Pakistan to provide it with immediate nuclear guarantees will grow. In this case, it appears that stationing a Pakistani nuclear weapon in Saudi territory is more likely than a transfer of nuclear warheads from Pakistan directly into Saudi hands (operation by Saudi Arabia under a Saudi chain of command). An open question is to what extent Saudi Arabia would be willing to put its security in the sole hands of Pakistan. Presumably the United States will exert pressure on both Pakistan and Saudi Arabia in an effort to prevent closer nuclear cooperation between them.

The Islamabad-Riyadh-Tehran Triangle

Saudi Arabia regards Pakistan and its geographic position – bordering Iran on the far side – as an important asset in restraining Iranian influence and a response to its historic search for a strategic non-Arab ally. Pakistan, however, wants to maintain a balance in its relations with Iran and Iran’s regional rival – Saudi Arabia. As a rule, Pakistan will do everything in its power to avoid choosing between Tehran and Riyadh. For example, immediately following the 2018 announcement that Pakistani forces had been sent to the kingdom, the Pakistani foreign minister declared that these forces were not directed against Iran, explaining that their purpose was to train and instruct the Saudi forces.

Pakistan wants to avoid harming its relations with Iran, with which it shares a border nearly 1,000 kilometers long. As part of the desire to maintain proper relations with Iran, Prime Minister Khan called on the Trump administration to rescind the sanctions imposed on Iran in 2018, and called on Arab countries to reopen their embassies in Damascus. Pakistan was among the few countries whose embassy in Damascus remained open throughout the civil war in Syria. It was also reported, however, that Pakistan sent military advisers and weapons to the Syrian rebels via, and paid for by, Saudi Arabia.

Islamabad is likewise interested in preserving proper relations with Iran due to economic interests and its energy distress. There is an outstanding agreement between Iran and Pakistan for laying a natural gas pipeline for Iranian gas to Pakistan. Pakistan is not fulfilling its side of this agreement due to American sanctions against Iran, and possibly also due to pressure by Riyadh. Saudi Arabia fears that completion of a gas pipeline will foster Pakistani dependence on Iran and constitute a potential means for Iran to exert pressure on Pakistan. Furthermore, the Pakistani army is stretched thin and is busy with missions along the Pakistani-Indian and Pakistani-Afghan border, and does not want to open another front against Iran. Pakistan and Iran also share a common interest in suppressing the Baluchi separatist movement operating in both of their territories, and in economic cooperation in Afghanistan.

Islamabad fears that Saudi Arabia wants to strengthen its intelligence grip in Pakistani Baluchistan, in part through economic investments, as a springboard for stepping up its subversion among the Baluchi minority in Iranian territory.¹⁴ In this context, Iran, in a rare step, accused Saudi Arabia of supporting terrorist operations in its territory that took place close to the port of Chabahar in December 2018 and the Sistan-Baluchistan region in February 2019. In December 2016, a Saudi think tank published a study about the Baluchis, expressing support for their struggle against the regime in Tehran, and specifically against the port constructed in Chabahar with Indian support.¹⁵ For its part, Iran is interested in maintaining proper relations with Pakistan, and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Zarif was the first foreign senior minister to visit Pakistan after Khan's appointment as Prime Minister.

The dispatch of Pakistani forces to the Saudi kingdom brought to an end a period of coolness in the bilateral relations since Pakistan refused have its army take part in the war in Yemen, out of concern that fighting against

the Shiite Houthis in Yemen would disrupt the delicate ethnic fabric in Pakistan (which has many Shiites in its army) and its relations with Iran.¹⁶ Perhaps the most determined opponent of Pakistani involvement in the war in Yemen was Prime Minister Khan, when he was in the opposition. Pakistan also remained “neutral” in the dispute between Qatar and several of its neighbors, in order to avoid closing the door on economic assistance from Qatar.

Just as Pakistan wants to preserve a balance in its relations with Saudi Arabia and Iran, Riyadh is nurturing its relations with Pakistan simultaneously with its relations with India, as shown by bin Salman’s visit to India immediately after his visit to Pakistan in February 2019. Saudi Arabia supported Pakistan in its wars against India in 1965 and 1971, and backs the Pakistani position in its dispute with India over the Kashmir region, but it also maintains good relations with India, and signed a series of cooperation agreements with India in 2014, including security agreements. Similarly, although in 2015 Pakistan refused to take an active part in the war in Yemen, it expressed solidarity with Riyadh and condemned the Houthis’ missile attack against Saudi Arabia.

Conclusion

In view of its support for Pakistan and due to its religious weight as the “guardian of the Islamic holy places,” Saudi Arabia enjoys the strongest support among Pakistan of all of the Muslim countries.¹⁷ Nawaf Obaid, who held a series of senior positions in Saudi Arabia, described the relations between the countries as follows: “We gave money...There’s no documentation, but there is an implicit understanding that on everything, in particular on security and military issues, Pakistan would be there for Saudi Arabia.”¹⁸

Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are likely to remain close allies, and will go to considerable lengths to remain involved in each other’s affairs. It is clear that both of them attach great weight to containing the crises between them and preventing disagreements from doing any substantial damage to their strategic relationship. The relations equation between the two countries is likely to continue and be based on several levels:

- a. In the economic sphere: Pakistan has relied on an abundance of Saudi economic aid over the years, and Saudi Arabia is likely to expand its economic involvement in order to attempt to fortify Pakistan’s dependence on it. Expanded economic ties and Saudi pressure on

Pakistan to adopt a more determined stance against Iran are on the agenda.

- b. In the security sphere: In exchange for Saudi economic aid, Pakistan grants security aid to the kingdom. Pakistan has showed consistent willingness for direct military intervention in Saudi Arabia on a large scale for various purposes.
- c. In the strategic sphere: Iranian advancement toward nuclear military capability will put the intimate relations between the countries and the option of redeeming the Saudi investment in Pakistan's nuclear currency to the test.

In view of the concern about Iran's regional power and the doubts concerning the reliability of American support, Riyadh is likely to expand its ties with Pakistan, and in an extreme scenario, seek to "cash its strategic check" for what it regards as an appropriate return on its economic investment over many years in Pakistan. At the same time, the continued tension between the US and Pakistan is also liable to bring Riyadh and Islamabad closer together in the security sphere. This may have implications for Israel, above all with respect to weapons proliferation, including both ground-to-ground missiles and nuclear weapons.

Notes

- 1 In January 2016, during his previous visit to Pakistan, Mohammad bin Salman signed an agreement for security cooperation between the countries. No details were disclosed about the character and content of the agreement, which was signed a week after the attack on the Saudi embassy in Tehran. See also Yoel Guzansky, "Pakistan and Saudi Arabia: How Special are the 'Special Relations'?" *INSS Insight* No. 797, February 16, 2016.
- 2 Drazen Jorgic and Asif Shahzad, "Saudi Crown Prince Begins Asia Tour with \$20 Billion Pakistan Investment Pledge," *Reuters*, February 19, 2019.
- 3 See WikiLeaks, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/07RIYADH2320_a.html.
- 4 A group of 38 countries founded in 1989 for the purpose of combating financing of terrorism and money laundering (Israel has been a full member since December 2018).
- 5 In June 2018, Pakistan was finally added to the "gray list" of countries because it did not take appropriate measures against the financing of terrorism and money laundering.
- 6 Prime Minister Khan undertook not to leave the country in the first three months of his term, although he had previously been invited by Iranian President Hassan Rouhani.
- 7 Asif Shahzad, "Imran Khan Leaves for Saudi Conference Saying Pakistan 'Desperate' for Loans," *Reuters*, October 22, 2018.

- 8 "Saudi-Pak Ties: One of the Closest Relationships in the World," *Arab News*, February 17, 2019.
- 9 "10,000 Saudi Soldiers Being Trained in Pakistan," *Middle East Monitor*, February 19, 2018.
- 10 The order of battle and purpose of the Pakistani force in the kingdom is shrouded in secrecy. It was revealed as a result of parliamentary pressure on the government in Islamabad. In a parliamentary discussion on the subject in February 2018, the Pakistani Minister of Defense stated that he "could not say where the Pakistani soldiers were posted in Saudi Arabia." Nadir Guramani, "Gov't Refuses to Divulge 'Operational Details' of Pakistani Troops' Deployment to Saudi Arabia," *Dawn* (Pakistan), February 19, 2018.
- 11 The Saudi air force, for example, has always been maintained to a large extent by American (the F-15 system) and British (the Tornado system) advisors and contractors.
- 12 Libya under Muammar Qaddafi also gave economic aid to Pakistan for the development of its nuclear program.
- 13 The two countries probably signed an agreement along these lines during the visit by then-Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Abdullah to Pakistan in 2003.
- 14 The Baluchi is a primarily Sunni ethnic minority located on both sides of the Iranian-Pakistani border, and in smaller numbers in Saudi Arabia. Jundallah was a prominent Baluchi terrorist organization that operated in Iranian territory starting in 2003. Given Iran's success in striking at the leadership of Jundallah, another organization, Harakat Ansar Iran, began operating in Iran in 2011. This organization announced its union with a Baluchi group named Hizbul-Furqan and the founding of Ansar al-Furqan in 2013. See Ariel Koch, "Al-Qaeda in Baluchistan and its Connection to the War in Syria," Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, November 7, 2018, <https://dayan.org/content/al-qaeda-baluchistan-and-its-connection-war-syria>.
- 15 Mohammed Hassan Husseinbor, "Chabahar and Gwadar Agreements and Rivalry among Competitors in Baluchistan Region," *Journal for Iranian Studies* 1, no. 1 (December 2016): 82-99, <https://bit.ly/2HCutlb>.
- 16 Pakistan opposed such involvement even though the Pakistani government was headed by Nawaz Sharif, who has close ties with the Saudi royal family, and who was granted asylum in Saudi Arabia following the 1999 military coup in Pakistan.
- 17 This is based on a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center, which found that 95 percent of Pakistani citizens expressed positive views towards Riyadh. "Saudi Arabia's Image Falter among Middle East Neighbors," Pew Research Center, October 17, 2013.
- 18 Christopher Clary and Mara E. Karlin, "The Pak-Saudi Nuke, and How to Stop It," *American Interest* 7, no. 6 (2012), <https://bit.ly/31i0hDr>.