The Stability-Instability Paradox and the Effect of an Iranian Nuclear War Weapon on Pakistan's Domestic Stability

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The Stability-Instability Paradox and the Effect of an Iranian Nuclear Weapon on Pakistan’s Domestic Stability

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Abstract

Sectarian conflict is a recent phenomenon in Pakistan’s history. Pakistan lost its secular nature when it underwent a process of Islamization during Zia-ul-Haq’s rule, which created extremist Sunni militants. The Iranian Revolution and Saudi religious donations also caused the Pakistani population to become more religious and the target of a Saudi-Iranian proxy war. In this thesis, I explore how the stability-instability paradox helps explain why the Saudi-Iranian proxy war will lead to domestic instability and increased sectarian conflict in Pakistan once Iran acquires nuclear weapons. The Saudi-Iranian proxy war has manifested itself in sectarian terms in Pakistan because both countries fund religious schools and militant political organizations. Because Iran and Saudi Arabia are competing for regional hegemony, they have turned Pakistan into a battleground between pro-Saudi Sunni forces and pro-Iran Shiite forces. When Iran acquires nuclear weapons, Pakistani Shiite groups will become aggressive and Iran will become emboldened in its support of unconventional warfare thus leading to domestic instability and increased sectarian conflict in Pakistan.
Table of Contents

List of Figures .................................................................................................................. iii
Key Terms .......................................................................................................................... iv
Preface ............................................................................................................................... 1
Introduction ......................................................................................................................... 4
Chapter 1: Literature Review
  1.1: Nuclear Deterrence ................................................................................................. 9
  1.2: Stability–Instability Paradox .................................................................................. 12
  1.3: Nuclear Proliferation Debate .................................................................................. 17
Chapter 2: Methodology ................................................................................................. 23
Chapter 3: A Political History of Pakistan ..................................................................... 27
Chapter 4: Pakistan and Iran’s Nuclear Weapons Program
  Section 1: Pakistan Nuclear Weapons Program ....................................................... 36
  Section 2: Iran’s Nuclear Program .............................................................................. 38
Chapter 5: Pakistan, Iran and Saudi Relations
  5.1: Iran-Pakistan Relations ........................................................................................... 43
  5.2: Saudi-Pakistani Relations ..................................................................................... 51
  5.3: Saudi-Iranian Relations ....................................................................................... 56
Chapter 6: Sectarianism in Pakistan
  6.1: Origins .................................................................................................................. 68
  6.2: Saudi and Iranian Involvement ............................................................................. 76
Chapter 7: Findings ......................................................................................................... 90
Conclusion ......................................................................................................................... 100
List of Figures

Figure 1: Growth of Pakistani Madrassas by School of Thought ..................80

Figure 2: Population Percentage vs. Madrassa Share ............................80

Figure 3: Sectarian Killings in Pakistan (1989-2012)..............................89

Figure 4: Trends in Sectarian Violence (2009-2012)...............................89
Key Terms

Ayatollah: the title for a Shiite leader

Deobandi: a conservative interpretation of Sunni Islam that is similar to Wahhabism

Hajj: a compulsory pilgrimage for Muslims to the cities of Mecca and Medina, which are located in Saudi Arabia

Madrassa: a religious seminary

Sharia law: Islamic law

Shiite/Shia: one of the main sects of Islam that constitutes about fifteen percent of Pakistan’s population

Sunni: the largest sect of Islam that is a majority in Pakistan

Wahhabi: a fundamentalist school of Sunni Islam that is found in Saudi Arabia

Ulema: Islamic religious scholars

Zakat: One of the five pillars of Islam, this is a compulsory charity that Muslims must give annually
Preface

Recent events that have been taking place in Pakistan worry me. The majority of headlines are about terrorist acts, sectarian violence, a failing economy and political corruption in Pakistan. When I lived in Pakistan about a decade ago, I remember economic improvement, a flourishing tourism industry and a rich culture. My childhood is filled with memories of *basant* (a cultural kite flying festival) and joyous weddings at which I would wear colorful clothing and dance the night away with my cousins.

However, today’s reality is much different from the Pakistan I once knew. When being Sunni or Shia did not matter, now it does. When sleeveless shirts were accepted a decade ago, now women are stared at and feel uncomfortable. When homes had electricity for most of the day, now it is only available for about fifteen hours. When families relied on gas heaters to keep them warm in the winter, now gas is completely unreliable. When the most enjoyable day of a wedding used to be the *mehndi*, as it was filled with music and dances, now many families have forfeited that tradition. More women are now covering their hair. They are also forsaking higher education in order to get married. Pakistan is not only becoming more Islamic, it is becoming more Wahhabi (a strict and fundamentalist interpretation of Islam found in Saudi Arabia).
Through my research, I was able to discover why Pakistan is heading in a direction I fear. Why is everyone in Pakistan gradually becoming more religious? Why are more Pakistanis discussing Islamic duties when we used to discuss Pakistani musicians? Today, many people have replaced their fashionable clothing for veils and beards. As the country is slowly starting to resemble Saudi Arabia, the once vibrant Pakistan culture is eroding. Having lived in Pakistan for several years and being of Pakistani descent, I am concerned about the future of the country and want it to prosper. I am proud of being Pakistani and do not want Pakistani traditions and culture to disappear.

Issues such as political corruption, religious extremism, terrorism, Balochi nationalism, sectarian violence, population growth and a struggling economy negatively affect the future of Pakistan. I believe that Pakistan holds potential in the international sphere as a major actor. The country has geostrategic importance and is especially intriguing because it has weapons of mass destruction. Nuclear weapons give Pakistan a backbone; however, with great power comes great responsibility, and Pakistan should be careful of the development, security and use and of its nuclear weapons. Certain principles that do not apply to the majority of states in this world pertain to Pakistan because it has weapons of mass destruction. The current situation in Pakistan makes possessing nuclear weapons complicated. For example, the existence of terrorist groups makes nuclear theft more likely.
New, current trends within the country, such as the rise of sectarian violence, are worrying. It is important to analyze why these trends are occurring and how to best circumvent them. To further complicate the issue, Pakistan’s neighbor, Iran, is suspected of pursuing nuclear weapons. The prospect of an Iranian bomb has caused extensive debate and action in the international community and because Pakistan is Iran’s neighbor, it has a large stake in the discussion. I believe that before the Iranian bomb comes into existence, Pakistan should analyze historical relations and current trends, and then formulate a cohesive strategy in dealing with a nuclear-armed Iran. My interests are with a prosperous, stable Pakistan, and by exploring the consequences of an Iranian nuclear bomb on Pakistan’s domestic stability, I hope to improve the chances of a stable Pakistan.
Introduction

The fact that Pakistan does not want another nuclear-armed neighbor may seem obvious, but recent developments in the Iranian nuclear program make that future probable. Currently, Pakistan’s official stance on Iran’s nuclear program is that Iran has the right to acquire nuclear energy for peaceful purposes but should stay within the confines of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Therefore, Pakistan does not support an Iranian nuclear weapons program. Many argue that an Iranian nuclear weapon is looming. Some, such as U.S. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta and Israeli politician Ehud Barak believe that in less than a year’s time, Iran will test its first nuclear bomb (Afsaneh 2012). Although Iran signed the NPT, it is now developing infrastructure and technology beyond what is necessary for nuclear energy. Due to these developments in Iran’s nuclear program, the international community should prepare for a scenario in which Iran does have nuclear weapons. There is ample research regarding the implications of an Iranian bomb for the Middle East, US and Israel.

The founder of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, envisioned Pakistan to be a pan-Islamic state. However, Pakistan underwent an Islamization when the Deobandi (a conservative school of Islamic thought) military general Zia-ul-Haq came into power. Similarly, the 1979 Iranian Revolution, which institutionalized Shia Islam in Iran, caused sectarian tensions to inflame in Pakistan, a Sunni
majority country. Because many of Pakistan’s domestic and foreign policies have been favorable to Sunnis, the difference in ideology between Iran and Pakistan has been the basis of most conflict between the two states. Furthermore, sectarian differences have also led to a system of alliances among Muslim states that are based on ideology, and this works to Pakistan’s advantage because Sunni leaders control a large number of governments in the Middle East.

Today, sectarian violence ravages prospects of nationalism and unity in Pakistan. One source of instability in Pakistan is religious conflict incurred by fundamentalist groups. However, this violence is sectarian (between groups within a single religion), rather than interfaith (between different religions). The formation of Islamic religious schools during the 1980s created religious extremists that now massacre Pakistan’s Shiite minority. The year 2012 marked the highest number of sectarian-driven terrorist acts. Just two months into 2013, the number of deaths is already more than half than the total for 2012’s count.

I would like to explore how the already increasing sectarian violence in Pakistan will be affected once Iran acquires nuclear weapons. This paper will be a case study of the stability-instability paradox of Pakistan and a nuclear-armed Iran. The stability-instability paradox explains the relationship between two states that do not engage in nuclear war, but are emboldened in their use of conventional and unconventional warfare after acquiring nuclear weapons. I am interested in the fact that Pakistan, a Sunni majority state that possesses nuclear weapons and is
plagued by sectarian conflict, may soon face a Shiite majority, nuclear-armed neighbor. This topic is important because it could explain how Pakistan will be impacted and potentially set a precedent for Sunni and Shiite communities in the Middle East. Furthermore, it may make Pakistani politicians aware of the situation and realize the effects of a potential Iranian nuclear weapon. It may lead them to implement changes before this scenario becomes reality.

My topic is security in Southeast Asia and my subtopic is domestic stability in Pakistan. My dependent variable is domestic stability and sectarian conflict and my independent variables are the Saudi-Iranian proxy war and nuclear weapons. In this thesis, I explore security and stability in South Asia. I look at Pakistani relations with Iran and Saudi Arabia and explore how an Iranian nuclear bomb would further destabilize Pakistan and increase sectarian conflict. Although it seems logical that Pakistan would not want another nuclear-armed neighbor, the factors why are not apparent. It is also not apparent how Pakistan will be affected in such a scenario.

The objective of this paper is to explain factors that complicate the prospects of a stable Pakistan, given that Iran may develop nuclear weapons. Deterrence theory asserts that nuclear weapons create stability between two states but does not adequately elucidate the situation in South Asia. Although I agree that Iran and Pakistan will not use nuclear weapons on one another, I believe that Pakistan will experience instability and conflict. In this thesis, I explore the
implications of the stability-instability paradox on Pakistan’s domestic scene. I aim to look beyond explicit Iranian-Pakistani relationship and their policies towards one another and include other factors such as the Saudi-Iranian proxy war.

The research question I wish to explore is how does the stability-instability paradox help explain why the Saudi-Iranian proxy war will cause Pakistan to experience domestic instability and increased sectarian conflict once Iran acquires nuclear weapons? First, in chapter 1, I do a literature review in which I will describe nuclear deterrence theory, the stability-instability paradox and the views of proponents and opponents of nuclear proliferation. In Chapter 2, I outline my methodology and explain why I chose my cases and variables. I outline a political history of Pakistan and explain how the intended secular state became an Islamic state in chapter 3. In chapter 4, I give a brief overview of Pakistan’s and Iran’s nuclear weapons program and finish the section by presenting the prevailing consequences of a future with an Iranian nuclear weapons. Next in chapter 5, I describe the Pakistani-Iranian relationship, Saudi-Pakistan relations and Saudi-Iranian relations. These are important because they demonstrate shifting relations in which Pakistan has slowly become more friendly with Saudi Arabia rather than Iran. In chapter 6, I outline the history of sectarianism in Pakistan, starting from its inception after the Iranian Revolution to modern day. In the second section of the same chapter, I discuss Saudi and Iranian
involvement in Pakistan’s sectarianism. In chapter 7 which is also my findings chapter, I will the stability-instability paradox to sectarian conflict by describing the significance of a possible Iranian nuclear weapon on Pakistan’s domestic stability and sectarian conflict. I conclude the thesis by recommending policies.
Chapter 1: Literature Review

1.1 Nuclear Deterrence Theory

Deterrence is a way to restrain your opponent’s actions by having a credible and adverse consequence (Farooq 2004: 5). To function, deterrence theory relies upon willingness and fear: if a powerful actor is willing to commit an aggression, another actor is deterred from aggressing first for fear of retaliation. The simple idea of deterring an enemy gave rise to nuclear deterrence theory. Deterrence assumes a rivalry between two factions such as between India and Pakistan. Another assumption of deterrence is that nuclear war, conventional war and unconventional war are at separate levels of operation. Conventional warfare is conflict between two states on a military battlefield using traditional weapons, such as guns. Unconventional warfare utilizes untraditional weapons such as chemical and biological weapons, which “enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt or overthrow an occupying power or government by operating through or with an underground, auxiliary and guerrilla force” (Grdovic 2010: 136). Since conventional and unconventional are so unlike, deterrence applies to each level of defense differently.

Nuclear deterrence theory was modeled from the relationship between the United States and the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (USSR) during the Cold War. Both the rivals were nuclear powers and engaged in an aggressive arms
race, but over a span of rough fifty years, neither used nuclear weapons on the other. One of the main operating principles at the height of the Cold War was Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD). The US and USSR had expansively built up their nuclear arms and had the capability to annihilate the other. MAD, formulated by US Secretary of State Robert McNamara during the Reagan administration, is a military strategy in which use of weapons of mass destruction results in the complete devastation of both sides because the aggressor state will experience an inevitable retaliation, or second strike. MAD assumes that the victim state will survive the nuclear attack and launch a second strike on the aggressor state because a second strike is justified (Kenny 1985: 38). It also presumes that states will not use of weapons of mass destruction on other nuclear-armed states, due to fear of revenge, as it will lead to the destruction of both parties. There are no winners. The purpose of nuclear weapons is therefore, not to destroy, but to deter. Nuclear weapons are for security and nuclear stability. The Cold War demonstrated that nuclear weapons were not just the most destructive bomb, they were an instrument of foreign policy.

There are three requirements for the successful operation of nuclear deterrence: rationality, credibility and capability. Nuclear deterrence will only work if the leaders of the state are rational. Rational leaders must be capable of calculating the risks and benefits involved with an action. The fear caused by nuclear weapons causes a rational leader to feel “a high degree of objective and
subjective insecurity [that will] postpone any attack” (Browhow et al. 1986: 91).

Deterrence requires rational utilitarianism, also called instrumental rationality, in which leaders make decisions based on how much they can gain. On the contrary, Max Weber’s value rationality theory assumes that leaders make decisions for achieving a specific value such as an ideological, religious or psychological goal (Paul et al 2004: 6). In such a circumstance, deterrence cannot work because these leaders strive to pursue intangible goals despite the physical costs, such as their lives, and are not concerned of how many casualties they incur. For example, many view North Korea as having a revisionist dream and do not believe that it will be deterred from using nuclear weapons on a more powerful state. Second, in order to be deterred and to fear retaliation, a nuclear state must believe in another state’s credibility, or that it actually has nuclear weapons and would use them. Nuclear states will only be deterred if they know another state possesses nuclear weapons. Last, nuclear-armed states must broadcast their capability to deter an attack and carry out an assured second strike. As states acquire nuclear weapons to deter an attack from their enemies, they must also be willing to retaliate. If a state appears unwilling to conduct a second strike, it does not instill fear in the enemy and consequently deterrence will not work. Therefore, a state must broadcast its capability of a retaliatory nuclear second strike.
1.2 Stability-Instability Paradox

Prior to the Cold War, the United States was the international hegemon until the USSR challenged its power. Next, the international stage entered into a phase of bipolarity in which there was reasonable stability. However, with the fall of the Soviet Union and relative weak power of emerging Russia, the US remained the sole hegemon. Scholars argue that a unipolar world may be the most unstable as stability is often maintained by a balance of power, as exhibited by the Cold War. (Wohlforth 1999: 5). A balance of power is a scenario in which no power is overpoweringly dominant (Chatterjee 1972: 51). There are three types of balance of power: hard balancing which entails an “intense interstate rivalry” complete with military buildup, soft balancing which involves security alliances, and asymmetric balancing which “refers to efforts by nation states to balance and contain indirect threats posed by sub-national actors such as terrorist groups,” (Paul et al 2004: 3). Great powers can greatly influence the regional balance of power. For example, there existed a balance of power between Iran and Iraq in the Middle East. However, the defeat of Iraqi Baathist regime and the invasion of the US caused the power dynamics to change (Barzegar 2010: 74). Now, Iran and Saudi Arabia fight for the position of regional hegemon and have their respective spheres of influence in which they both engage in soft balancing.

Security is the absence of fear or threat against the values of a nation (Wolfers 1952). During the Cold War, the US and USSR utilized negative
security. Negative security asserts that states look at their spheres of influence as a matter of national security because when an ally is threatened, the state is also threatened. Security is not limited to their domestic territory (Yusoff and Soltani 2012: 244).

The Cold War exemplified negative security and nuclear deterrence theory. The US and the USSR competed for their spheres of influence in a competition between capitalism versus communism but their rivalry never resulted in a direct military or nuclear confrontation. The US considered much of the western part of the world its sphere of influence, while the USSR believed the eastern part of the world its sphere. They used proxies and asymmetric warfare in order to avoid nuclear conflict (Krepton). Their shadow war, fought in Africa, Latin America and Asia, served to support the faction most aligned with their interests in their respective sphere of influence. By doing so, they “internationalized their national security” (Yusoff and Soltani 2012: 245). By either facilitating a revolutionary political system or supporting the existing government, the result was often civil war. One of the most glaring examples is the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan during the Cold War. The USSR entered Afghanistan to support the pro-Soviet communist Afghan government. The US thought a pro-Soviet government would threaten its allies in the area and consequently funded and provided arms to the anti-Soviet faction, the revolutionary mujahideen, meaning “strugglers” (Hughes 2008: 329). This US
covert operation was one of the most expensive (Time Magazine 2003). Eventually, the Soviets withdrew and the US-supported side was able to establish power.

The US and the USSR’s actions led Glen Snyder to create the stability-instability paradox. It argues that,

lowering the probability that a conventional war will escalate to a nuclear war reduces the danger of starting a conventional war, thus, this low likelihood of escalation—referred to here as ‘stability’—makes conventional war less dangerous, and possibly, as a result, more likely (Chari 2003: 19).

In other words, nuclear weapons create stability at the nuclear war level but induce instability at the lower level through mechanisms of conventional and unconventional warfare (militancy, insurgency, proxy war and terrorism) (Dixit 2012: 121). In 1954, B. H. Liddell Hart also explained that, “to the extent that the H[hydrogen] bomb reduces the likelihood of full-scale war, it increases the possibility of limited war pursued by widespread local aggression.” The stability-instability paradox also asserts that the possession of nuclear weapons may encourage conflict because states are complacent in the fact that their aggressions will not escalate to nuclear war (Dittmer 2001). Two nuclear-armed adversaries avoid using weapons of mass destruction but are willing to engage in limited military skirmishes against one another. The fear of conflict escalating to nuclear war facilitates violence, and consequently, instability results. As Kapur describes, “The unlikelihood of nuclear escalation reduces nuclear weapons’ ability to deter
conventional conflict, thereby making low-level aggression more likely” (2009: 39). Therefore, the high cost of nuclear war encourages unconventional war.

To put it simply, the stability-instability paradox means no nuclear war, limited conventional war and heightened unconventional war. The theory signals that nuclear weapons deter and create fear but do not keep the peace; they cause nuclear deterrence to work but not deterrence in general. In other words, they afford protection against a nuclear attack but not other forms of aggression.

Many scholars use Pakistan’s risky actions in the Kargil War to demonstrate the stability-instability paradox. Nuclear-armed India and Pakistan fought in the Kargil War in May 1999 and this was the first war between the two rival states since they acquired nuclear weapons. During the conflict, Pakistan supported insurgent groups to fight Indian soldiers in Kashmir, a disputed territory that the two countries were fighting over. Pakistan supported Kashmiri mujahedeen but did not want the involvement of Pakistani soldiers (Abbas 2005: 172). In other words, Pakistan was first willing to engage in unconventional warfare but not conventional war. However, war broke out when Pakistani soldiers and Kashmiri militants crossed over onto the Indian side of the Line of Control (the de facto border), and resulted in conventional war. Most importantly, this conventional warfare did not escalate to nuclear war and was limited in casualties. Pakistan’s actions countered traditional deterrence theory, which stipulates that nuclear states act more carefully than nonnuclear states. According
to Sagan, once Pakistan had acquired nuclear weapons, people inside the Pakistani military argued, “This is our chance to do something about Kashmir” and convinced Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif into sending Pakistani soldiers pretending to be Kashmiri insurgents into India (2007). Sagan, as well as other researchers, such as Panday, believe that the stability-instability paradox emboldened Pakistan in their use unconventional and was able to limit the extent of conventional war, for fear of nuclear escalation. Because casualties during the Kargil War were relatively small and because Pakistan increased its use of proxies in Kashmir, the Kargil War attested to the belief that nuclear weapons encourage unconventional war and limit conventional war.

Rajagopalan argues the contrary. He asserts that the stability-instability paradox is not applicable to Pakistan’s support of Kashmiri insurgent groups because Pakistan utilized unconventional warfare before it acquired nuclear weapons. He believes Pakistan remained consistent with its support of non-state groups, regardless of going nuclear (2006: 10). However, he bases his argument on that fact that Pakistan did support insurgent groups prior to going nuclear, but does not consider that Pakistan greatly increased its support of those groups after proliferating. Since acquiring nuclear weapons, Pakistan has undoubtedly increased its utilization of unconventional warfare.

The stability-instability paradox is not specific to the relationship between nuclear states India and Pakistan. The US and USSR’s actions during the Cold
War also demonstrated the operation of the stability-instability paradox. The Cold War rivals supported proxies throughout the world such as in Latin America and Middle East. As mentioned earlier, the proxies that the US and USSR supported throughout the world furthered their foreign policy goals. The Cold War was a period of relative stability between the US and USSR but not in areas where the proxies fought one another.

The large amount of literature on nuclear deterrence theory helps explain why Iran and Pakistan will never use nuclear weapons on one another. The existing literature on the stability-instability paradox has been applied to the Cold War and Kargil War. However, there is no literature on how the stability-instability paradox would operate on a nuclear-armed Iran and Pakistan. This topic is important due to the likelihood of Iran acquiring nuclear weapons and the fragile domestic scene in Pakistan. Studying the effect of an Iranian nuclear weapon on Pakistan is important because it could potentially mitigate a troublesome future.

1.3 Nuclear Proliferation Debate

The prevalence of nuclear weapons has created an extensive debate on nuclear proliferation, or the spread of nuclear weapons. One argument for nuclear proliferation is the establishment of strategic stability. During the Cold War,
strategic stability was the “balance of strategic forces of the USSR and the US (or such state of the two powers’ strategic relations) where there were no incentives for a first strike” (Arbatov 2010: 8). In other words, states obtain nuclear weapons to deter a nuclear attack but do not intend to launch nuclear weapons. Therefore, nuclear weapons remain a figurehead in their weapons arsenal, one that fulfills its purpose without actually ever being used.

Other proponents of nuclear deterrence theory, such as Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and William Riker, argue for nuclear proliferation because they believe nuclear deterrence limits conventional war. States conduct conventional war using traditional military weapons on a battlefield. Many believe that nuclear deterrence limits conventional war for fear of escalation to nuclear war, as also argued by the stability-instability paradox. For example, according to Khan, when India and Pakistan fought in the Kargil War in 1999, they continued hostilities “without fear of escalation into a full-fledged war that could precipitate a nuclear challenge” (2003: 64). Kenneth Waltz, a prominent supporter of both deterrence theory and the spread of nuclear weapons, further explains, “Deterrent strategies lower the probability that they [wars] will become wars of high intensity” (1981). He projects a peaceful world in which states will acquire nuclear weapons gradually so that stability is maintained in the world order. Therefore, supporters of nuclear proliferation believe that rival states should acquire nuclear weapons in order to prevent war and create peace and stability.
Many opponents of nuclear proliferation assert that nuclear deterrence theory is flawed. Sagan, an opponent of nuclear proliferation and an Iranian bomb, describes why nuclear weapons in the hands of the Iranian state may be troubling. He argues that there are three problems with nuclear deterrence: the stability-instability paradox, anti-state actors and sale of nuclear weapons. Sagan asserts Pakistan exhibited all three consequences after acquiring nuclear weapons and a nuclear-armed Iran would exhibit the same problems. As mentioned earlier, if Iran were to possess nuclear weapons, it would probably act more aggressively with its use of conventional and unconventional war. Second, Sagan mentions the transfer of nuclear weapons into the hands of terrorists due to the vulnerability-invulnerability paradox. The vulnerability-invulnerability paradox means that in the case of an attack, a state would disperse its nuclear weapons to make them less vulnerable. However, by changing the location of the weapons, the state is making the weapons vulnerable to attack by other forces, such as terrorist groups (Khan 2003: 68). This would lead to accidental use of nuclear weapons. Poorer nuclear states, such as Pakistan and North Korea, have fewer resources to devote to control and command systems, which are intended to secure nuclear facilities and so weapons are less vulnerable to attack. Sagan mentioned that Pakistan exemplified the vulnerability-invulnerability paradox. He cited an instance when a Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agent spoke to Taliban members about hiding Pakistani nuclear weapons in Afghanistan so they would be invulnerable to
Indian attacks (Fernandez 2011). Although this plan never materialized, it would have made Pakistani bombs susceptible to attack by Al-Qaeda, the Taliban or other terrorist organizations. Sagan believes the only solution to the vulnerability-invulnerability paradox is technological aid from other Western nuclear powers to strengthen Pakistan’s ability to protect its nuclear weapons.

Second, Sagan discusses the threat of state actors giving away nuclear technology. Although the state itself may not want to share nuclear technology, a single individual in a nuclear state may act otherwise. Pakistani engineer AQ Khan is an example. In his own self interest, money and greed, he created a black market for nuclear weapons and allegedly sold bomb designs and centrifuges to Libya, Iran and North Korea and offered them to other nations such as Iraq. He was willing to give certain countries nuclear technology if they had sufficient economic resources. The Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto denied allegations that he knew AQ Khan was transferring nuclear technology, which Khan later rebutted. The Pakistani government viewed AQ Khan as an individual actor giving away nuclear expertise and technology. Sagan believes that the political organization of a nuclear state determines whether deterrence theory will function. While democratic states often have a system of checks and balances, authoritarian states do not. An authoritarian leader may be irrational and launch a nuclear attack because of personal biases or fears.
The prevailing worldview is against the spread of nuclear weapons, and therefore many states participate in an extensive nonproliferation regime. One nonproliferation effort is the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), which was ratified in 1970 in order to control nuclear weapons proliferation and aid the spread of nuclear energy. Currently, 190 countries are signatories of the treaty. The NPT rests on three ideas (nonproliferation, disarmament and the right to nuclear energy) and recognizes five states with nuclear weapons, the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France and China. As signatories of the NPT, nuclear states have the obligation to disarm their own nuclear arsenal, not to transfer weapons, to share nuclear technology and to assist with the civilian nuclear energy programs of other states. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is the organization that patrols civilian programs of nuclear energy states in order to ensure they are not weaponizing. All Signatories of the NPT that have nuclear programs must submit to IAEA inspections.

India and Pakistan never signed the NPT and instead declared and openly tested their nuclear weapons. Israel also never signed the NPT, continues a clandestine nuclear weapons program and has never openly tested its weapons. North Korea signed the NPT, withdrew and finally conducted nuclear tests. Iran is a signatory of the NPT but is suspected of developing nuclear weapons. Because Iran orally threatens states such as Israel, researchers have studied the impact of an Iranian nuclear weapon on the Middle East, Israel and the US. However, there
has not yet been any work done on how an Iranian nuclear weapon would affect Pakistan. Because the stability-instability paradox has aptly described the relationship between other nuclear rivals, I chose to apply it to a nuclear-armed Iran and Pakistan.
Chapter 2: Methodology

The purpose of this paper was to discover how an Iranian nuclear weapon will influence Pakistan’s domestic stability. I researched how the stability-instability paradox helps explain how the Saudi-Iranian proxy war will cause Pakistan to experience domestic instability and increased sectarian conflict once Iran acquires nuclear weapons. Therefore, I applied the stability-instability paradox to the case of a nuclear-armed Iran and Pakistan. I hypothesize that if Iran possesses nuclear weapons, then Pakistan will most likely experience domestic instability and increased sectarian conflict. My hypothesis will be relevant if Iran acquires nuclear weapons.

In one of my previous classes, I learned how the stability-instability paradox operated between nuclear-armed Pakistan and India during the Kargil war and was curious to see how the theory would affect Pakistan once Iran acquire nuclear weapons. I first chose Pakistan as one of my cases because I lived there for several years and wanted to understand why it is becoming a dangerous country. Next, I wanted to study a nuclear-armed Iran because it is topical. Because it is probable in the future and its consequences could be grave, many researchers have done work on how Iran will affect the Middle East and the United States. However, there has not been work done on how Pakistan’s domestic stability and sectarian conflict will be impacted. I think it is important to
study Pakistan in relation to a nuclear-armed Iran because Pakistan also has nuclear weapons and is an unstable country. Furthermore, a nuclear-armed Iran is of concern for Pakistan because it is Pakistan’s neighbor. I also specifically chose these two countries because the majority of their populations belong to two different sects in Islam: Sunni and Shia. Historically, these sects have competed with one another for influence and power. Currently, Pakistan is the only Islamic state with nuclear weapons and may soon face a Shiite-majority nuclear-armed neighbor. I wanted to explore if that would be of any consequence.

Although the Iran-Pakistan relationship appears calm, there are underlying issues that I wished to explore. I chose nuclear weapons as my independent variable because they are an important aspect of Pakistan’s foreign policy, and because the relationship between two nuclear-armed states is often complicated. A whole field of research, nuclear theories, applies to nuclear-armed states and may not apply to the majority of other non-nuclear states in the world. I further included the Saudi-Iranian proxy war as my independent variable because it helps explain why sectarian tensions have increased in the Middle East. In a proxy war, states fund different organizations to carry out activities that are agreeable to their patrons. Because Pakistan is financially dependent on other states, such as Saudi Arabia, it has become entangled in the politics of other, more powerful states that have been able to maneuver Pakistan’s policies. Sectarian conflict and domestic stability are my dependent variables because they seem to be getting worse every
day and I wanted to discover why they are worsening and whether the situation could become more dire. Sectarian conflict is inter-religious violence that sects conduct on one another. Domestic instability is instability within a country and can be measured by violent events and terrorist acts.

My research was primarily qualitative. I looked at historical relations between Iran, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, observed how those countries have molded their foreign policies and how those policies affected each other. Most importantly, I researched how those policies affect Pakistan. I read books and articles related to the underlying problems in their relationships with one another. Furthermore, I spoke with several Pakistani academics and researchers who have knowledge of Iran-Pakistan relations and nuclear weapons theories. They provided information that I was not able to access through CU Boulder’s VPN. I incorporated a quantitative aspect into my research as well. Since I focused on state sponsored terrorism and conflict, I quantified some of these topics. For example, I explored how much money Saudi Arabia is giving to Pakistani religious schools, how many sectarian terrorist acts have occurred in Pakistan and whether there is a correlation between the two. In addition, I looked at the growth of madrassas by school of thought.

One of the largest obstacles I faced in this research was lack of information. Many of the topics that I researched are classified and underground, and as a result, official data are not readily available. Furthermore, many websites
relating to my topic were in either Urdu or Farsi. If I knew how to read these languages, I would have been able to understand more about certain organizations and their links to the problem of sectarianism in Pakistan. Various websites have posted different statistics and facts, and I tried to quote information that have been cited by several sources and the most credible sources. As a student, I was not able to do extensive field research and speak with people involved with my topic. However, I tried to creatively read scholarly works and include the most relevant information. Therefore, my work has been primarily drawn from the work of Middle East analysts and nuclear theory experts, such as Vali Nasr and Pervez Hoodbhoy. Recent news articles were an excellent source of information. For example, *Dawn News*, a credible newspaper was an excellent source of information from a Pakistani perspective. I was especially able to measure strains in relationship between Iran, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia through news articles and WikiLeaks.
Chapter 3: A Political History of Pakistan

Pakistan’s history is filled with instances of corruption, assassinations, military rule, economic problems and a slow transition to Islamization. Its history has ties with India, Iran and Saudi Arabia but due to the policies of some Pakistani politicians, Pakistan is drifting away from its cultural roots and instead moving closer to its religious roots.

Present day Pakistan is in the area known as the Indus Valley, which extends from the western borders of Iran to the eastern border of India. However, the Indus Valley civilization no longer existed after 1700 BC and the cause is unknown today. In 522 BC, the Persian Emperor Darius II invaded the provinces of Punjab and Sindh, and these areas remained under Persian control for the next 200 years. Consequently, the Persian language became highly entrenched in Sindh and Punjab (current day Pakistan’s two most populated provinces). Persian became the official and cultural language of the empire, ranging from the government, to literature and education (The Urdu Language).

Led by General Muhammad bin Qasim, Arabs finally invaded the province of Sindh in 712 AD, and consequently were able to retain control for the next three centuries. Most notably, the Arabs brought Islam to the area and the religion persists to the present day. The next conquerors, the Mughals, were Muslim descendents of Genghis Khan but were also Persianized (Canfield 1991: 20).
They arrived in the 16th century and controlled the subcontinent for the next 200 years. Urdu was their official language and it continues to be the national language of Pakistan today. Urdu is derived from Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Hindi (Dawn 2011). The influence of the Persian conquest in the subcontinent heavily impacted the Urdu language. The Urdu vocabulary consists of 70% Persian or Farsi words but is also influenced by Arabic.

After the fall of the Mughal Empire, several different empires ruled until the most notable, the British Empire. Eventually, the British left and the subcontinent was partitioned between the agricultural north, which was to form present day Pakistan, and the industrial south, which was to be India. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, created the “two nation theory” in which he asserted that Muslims needed a separate homeland. Consequently, Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs migrated after the division of the subcontinent. Dubbed Pakistan, meaning “the land of the pure,” the new country was intended to be a secular nation based on the principle of “one nation, one culture, and one language” (Amin 1993: 73). Jinnah was neither an Islamic fundamentalist nor a complete secularist. His speeches often referenced Islam but he was also tolerant of other religions. In one of his speeches, he explained,

You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this state of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed – that has nothing to do with the business of the state (Debates 1947).
The Pakistani flag that was created under Jinnah’s supervision is divided in order to symbolize Pakistan’s diversity. Two-thirds of the flag is green and contains and crescent and star in honor of the majority Muslims. The white third is in honor of the minorities (Irfani 2009). Finally, Jinnah died in 1948 just a year after the birth of Pakistan, and unfortunately, his pan-Islamic dream did not last. Many Pakistanis believe that if Jinnah had lived longer, the population would be more unified nationally today.

Next, Liaquat Ali Khan, Jinnah’s “right hand man” took power (Ahmed 1997: 190). During his rule, the national identity of Pakistan became an intangible concept as tribes, villages and dynastic families retained their feudal power and caused people to give their allegiance to their tribes first. Consequently, Pakistan had difficulty forming a singular identity (Jaffrelot 2002: 4). Furthermore, the Indo-Pak War of 1947 (or the First Kashmir War) and the 1948 Balochistan conflict occurred during Liaquat Ali Khan’s administration. He was finally assassinated in 1951.

After martial law was declared, General Ayub Khan came into power through a military coup d’état in 1956. Ayub Khan is remembered as a man who modernized Pakistan and improved its image internationally. In addition, he created a new constitution that did not declare Islam the state religion and thus continued Jinnah’s religiously inclusive dream. He fought for and instituted a

When Ayub Khan stepped down, Yahya Khan took power in 1969 and he declared a second period of martial law. It was under Yahya Khan’s rule that East Pakistan separated and became the independent country of Bangladesh in a bloody war. In dealing with the Bengali separation movement, Khan invoked Islamic rhetoric in his speeches and asserted that Bengali Muslims were Hindus in disguise (Khan 1985: 837). The war and consequent loss of East Pakistan caused Khan to resign in 1971. Many Pakistanis felt that the military’s secularism was why they lost East Pakistan (Nasr 2001: 78).

Consequently under the next the civilian ruler, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Pakistan became more Islamic. Due to the military’s loss of East Pakistan, the military also became more open to Islam. An expert on Pakistan and State Department Scholar on the Muslim World Vali Reza Nasr explains,

The loss of East Pakistan, in effect, created a crisis of identity for Pakistan. As a result, the population turned to Islam for answers. This opened the door for Islamists and traditional religious institutions to become more directly involved in politics (2001: 78).

A new constitution was formed in 1973 that was more open to Islam, as opposed to Ayub Khan’s liberal constitution. The new constitution made Islam the state religion for the first time in Pakistan’s history and initiated a program of Islamic education in schools. Islamiyat, or Islamic studies, was now mandatory in
schools. Non-Muslims could no longer be president or prime minister. Bhutto adopted Islamic socialism and made his slogan “Clothes, food and shelter” (Nasr 2001: 76). Due to pressure exerted by religious parties, Bhutto declared Ahmedis (a sect of Islam) non-Muslims. Furthermore, the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA), an anti-Bhutto party coalition, threatened to overthrow him if he did not institute law favorable to Islam, and consequently, he yielded to their demands of instituting religion and as a result, made gambling illegal, declared Fridays a weekly holiday and banned the sale and consumption of alcohol. Already, religious groups were gaining their foothold to political power and Jinnah’s Pakistan was moving further away from what he envisioned. In 1977, the PNA led a coup against Bhutto after which he was arrested, tried and executed. Finally Zia-ul-Haq declared martial law and came into power.

Zia-ul-Haq, a military ruler, de-socialized Pakistan and turned it towards capitalism. Encouraged by the Islamic Revolution in Iran, he Islamized Pakistan. Although Pakistan had a tradition of practicing Islam through a tolerant school of thought called Sufism (Islamic mysticism), Zia instituted the Deobandi school of thought, which is similar to the strict Wahhabi Islam (a conservative Sunni interpretation of Islam), found in Saudi Arabia. By encouraging Deobandi Islam, Zia converted many moderate Pakistani Sunnis into conservative Deobandis. He incorporated Islamic laws, created Islamic courts, introduced a blasphemy law in Pakistan (the first time in its history) and instituted laws against minorities. He
received support from Jamaat-i-Islami (JI), or “Islamic Party,” a rightist party promoting an Islamic state with Sharia law.

They [Jamaat-i-Islami] wanted to first bring about a revolution in the thinking of Pakistanis and then achieve political power. Their... hope was that they would be carried home to power of the shoulders of an ‘adherent.’ Their time seemed to have come. Zia seemed to fit the role perfectly (Abbas 2005: 101).

Zia gave JI special privileges. For example, he banned all political parties and censored the media, but JI was immune from these laws. Moreover, Zia changed Jinnah’s “Unity, Faith, Discipline” motto for the army to “Faith, Obedience of God, Struggle in the path of Allah.” The army not only had to protect Pakistan, but also Pakistan’s “ideological frontiers” (Rizvi 1986: 242). Clearly, Zia’s attempts at Islamization were not how Jinnah envisioned Pakistan.

Zia’s reform of the education system also changed the secular nature of Pakistan. He allowed the ulema, or Muslim scholars, to control the new madrassa system. Most of the ulema were Deobandi Muslims and hoped madrassas would produce fundamentalist students. Furthermore, Zia used money from a compulsory zakat (charity) tax money to fund madrassas. Pakistani political analyst and researcher Hassan Abbas states,

This was the first formal recognition of the Madrassa network by the government. With financial infusion and official encouragement, this was to grow exponentially, and in time it was to become the nursery, and then the assembly line that would churn out tens of thousands of radicalized young men (2005: 107-108).
In addition to radicalizing how Pakistanis traditionally practiced Islam, Zia’s Islamic laws created sectarian divisions among the population. During his rule, he also allied with the US in its Cold War against the USSR. Pakistan helped train the Sunni Afghan mujahideen (holy warriors) and this group eventually became a destabilizing factor in Pakistan’s future. The war created hardliner Sunni militants and caused there to be an influx of Afghan refugees into Pakistan. In 1988, Zia died in a plane crash, which is believed to be an assassination. Zia’s Islamization policies and support of Afghan mujahideen are widely blamed for radical sectarianism in Pakistan today.

After the decade rule of Zia, Benazir Bhutto, the daughter of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, was elected as leader. Because Zia had begun a tradition of Sunnization in Pakistan, the Shia Benazir Bhutto would dress herself like a Sunni woman (Nasr 2006: 82). A failing economy and national security concerns eventually caused her dismissal. The next leader, Nawaz Sharif, came to power in 1990. With economic and institutional problems, Sharif resigned and Bhutto returned to power. During her administration, the Pakistani intelligence agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), was cleansed of Islamists. Relations with the international community improved. Notably, it was during Benazir Bhutto’s time that the Taliban, which consisted of Afghans trained by Pakistan, funded by Saudi Arabia and encouraged by the US, took control over Afghanistan. Students from Pakistani madrassas also joined in the effort (Abbas 2005: 55). Benazir Bhutto
continued to support the Taliban, as she believed they would stabilize Afghanistan. Extremist Sunni organizations such as Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LJ) and Tehrik-e-Nifaj-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM) approved her support of the Taliban. In 1994, the Taliban expanded to the northwest of Pakistan and imposed Islamic law. It was not until 2007 that Bhutto repealed her support of the Taliban. After having been accused of corruption, her time in office ended and Nawaz Sharif returned to power after popular elections.

Under Nawaz Sharif’s time in office, Pakistan successfully detonated its first nuclear bomb on May 28, 1998. As a result, relations with the international community deteriorated and the economy took a turn for the worse as sanctions were imposed upon Pakistan. In addition, Pakistan and India fought in the 1999 Kargil War, after which Nawaz Sharif’s popularity collapsed. In a military coup, General Pervez Musharraf took power in 1999. Islamic groups welcomed Musharraf, thinking he would be favorable to their cause as Zia had been. Musharraf planned to recover the country’s morale, improve the economy, and remove corruption in Pakistani politics. He liberalized the economy and it improved drastically. Musharraf wanted to reform the blasphemy law, but was not able to do so because of pressure from religious groups. He suppressed the sectarian problem because he put radical Sunni and Shiite political parties on watch. He was able to halt their activity for the time being, but it would resume in
the years to come. In November 2007, he declared a state of emergency that lasted for a month. In the following year, Musharraf resigned and ended his nine years in office.

Subsequently, Bhutto’s husband Asif Ali Zardari was elected in 2008. In conjunction with the US, the Pakistani army marched to the northwest of Pakistan to remove the Taliban. Relations with the US worsened when Americans conducted a mission in Pakistan to kill Osama bin Laden, the head of the Al-Qaeda. The highest number of sectarian motivated terrorist acts has marked his term. Evidently, Pakistani politics have experienced a tumultuous history of assassinations, martial law and a path towards Islamization.
Chapter 4: History of Pakistan and Iran’s Nuclear Weapons Program

4.1 Pakistan’s Nuclear Weapons Program

After India’s first nuclear tests in 1974, the Pakistani prime minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, made Pakistan’s nuclear ambitions clear by asserting that “even if Pakistanis have to eat grass, we will make the bomb” (Epstein 1977: 19). Pakistanis viewed nuclear weapons as a solution to their unstable relationship with India and sought them for deterrence purposes. Henry Kissinger, US Secretary of State during Nixon’s administration, attempted to dissuade Pakistan from building nuclear capability by offering to develop its conventional weapons (Abbas 2005: 84). Muslim-majority Pakistan and Hindu-majority India experienced a tumultuous, mistrusting and competitive relationship. India was more industrialized, economically powerful and had a stronger military than agriculture-based Pakistan. The two neighbors fought wars in 1947 and 1965 over Kashmir and in 1971 over East Pakistan (present day Bangladesh) and consequently, Pakistan was constantly reminded of its conventional inferiority. After the 1971 defeat by India, Pakistan was determined to acquire nuclear weapons. Therefore, Pakistan’s primary purpose for acquiring nuclear weapons was as a deterrent against India’s nuclear weapons and its conventional warfare superiority.
Throughout the 1980s under Zia’s rule, Pakistan pursued a strategy of nuclear ambiguity, but secretly developed a nuclear weapons program. Several of Zia’s attempts at diplomacy failed. India did not pursue Zia’s proposed no-war pact and nuclear-free South Asia (Abbas 2005: 118). Pakistan’s nuclear weapons program came into existence largely because of the efforts of nuclear scientist named Abdul Qadeer Khan (AQ Khan) who worked in a laboratory in Holland and illegally imported nuclear technology into Pakistan in 1975. Pakistan changed its course of nuclear ambiguity when India began a series of aggressive nuclear tests (Ahmed 1991: 178). In May 1998, Pakistan detonated its first nuclear bomb and the prime minister, Nawaz Sharif was quoted saying, “No matter [if] we are recognized as a nuclear weapons power or not, we are a nuclear power” (The News). Consequently, Pakistan officially became a member of the nuclear club, joining the confirmed nuclear states. By developing nuclear weapons, Pakistan defied the West and these weapons gave the country security, prestige and a sense of nationalism. Although Pakistan has not signed the NPT, it has adhered to international standards of safety of its nuclear assets. A secure command and control system, aided by Western efforts, can alleviate most concerns about terrorists taking over nuclear facilities.

Because Pakistan is the only state Islamic state with nuclear arms, many have labeled its nuclear weapon the “Islamic bomb.” When Zulfikar Ali Bhutto initiated Pakistan’s nuclear weapons program, he meant it as a deterrent against
India’s nuclear weapons and for Pakistan’s international prestige. However, he argued that,

We know that Israel and South Africa have full capability. The Christian, Jewish and Hindu civilizations have this capability. The communist powers also possess it. Only the Islamic civilization was without it, but that position was about to change (1979: 138).

The Pakistani nuclear weapon was never intended to be the protectorate of the Muslim world and currently does not serve as a nuclear umbrella for other Islamic states. Regardless, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto used the the label “Islamic bomb” in order to solicit funding from Arab states, such as Saudi Arabia, who funded about 60% of the program (Borger 2010). Muslim states such as Saudi Arabia and Iran welcome a nuclear Pakistan.

4.2 Iran’s Nuclear Program

The secular monarch Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi began the Iranian civilian nuclear program in 1957 when Iran signed a bilateral deal with the US to import enriched uranium and build research reactors under the US “Atoms for Peace” program. Next, Iran signed the NPT in 1968. Although Iran argued their nuclear program was for peaceful purposes, when the Shah was asked about nuclear weapons ambitions, he replied that Iran would get nuclear weapons “certainly, and sooner than one would think” (Interview with Shah 1974: 2). When the Iranian Revolution occurred in 1979, most of Iran’s nuclear reactors
were under construction and not yet complete. Consequently, with turmoil in the country, many international firms left Iran and so their projects were uncompleted. In addition, the religious leader of the Islamic Nation of Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini, issued a *fatwa*, or religious decree, against nuclear weapons because he believed they run counter to Islamic teachings (Eisenstadt and Khalaji 2011: 2). As a result, many Iranian nuclear scientists and students left the country and the Iranian nuclear program came to a standstill.

The Iran-Iraq war years changed the fate of Iran’s nuclear program because Iraq utilized chemical weapons and Western powers did not come to Iran’s aid. Iraq destroyed unfinished reactors in Iran and consequently Iran’s nuclear infrastructure was severely damaged. It is important to note that allegedly, it was during the Iran-Iraq War that AQ Khan first began talks with Iran to sell nuclear bomb secrets. In retaliation to Iraq’s missile attacks on Iran, Iran began to pursue missile capability. After the war, Iran decided to restart its nuclear program and appealed to Western nations for aid, but with no avail. Consequently, during the early 1990s, Iran signed agreements under the IAEA with China and Russia who both agreed to help repair damaged Iranian infrastructure and provide materials.

In 2002, when the National Council of Resistance of Iran revealed the existence of two other nuclear enrichment facilities at Arak and Natanz which were never disclosed to the IAEA, international concerns about a covert nuclear
weapons program heightened. Iran consequently invited the IAEA to come and inspect their nuclear facilities but even after several visits, the IAEA was not satisfied (Chubin and Litwak 2003: 100). They argued that Iran was not fully cooperating with IAEA requests. As a result, in 2003, Iran agreed to halt uranium enrichment and most importantly, signed the Additional Protocol, which would allow the IAEA to conduct rigorous searches into Iranian facilities. Nonetheless, Iran did not ratify the Additional Protocol and hopes for Iran halting uranium enrichment were destroyed. To further exacerbate the situation, in 2004, the IAEA had noted similarities between Iranian and Libyan nuclear technologies. Since AQ Khan had already admitted selling nuclear technology to Libya, the IAEA’s revelation confirmed that AQ Khan also provided secrets to Iran. Once again, the IAEA criticized Iran for its lack of cooperation and disclosure of foreign aid with its nuclear program. Finally, in 2004, Iran declared it would continue its nuclear program and enrich uranium (Nikou 2011). Although Iran remains a signatory of the NPT and has not produced a nuclear bomb, the international community is dismayed at Iran’s lack of adherence to treaties, its continued concealment of information and lack of full cooperation. Further complicating an Iranian nuclear weapons threat is the fact that Iran is developing missiles and more shockingly, long range missiles. However, Iranian scientists claim these missiles cannot carry nuclear warheads and do not signal an impending missile with a nuclear head (Bahgat 2006: 312).
Despite troubles with the IAEA, Iran did not violate the NPT. Furthermore, according to the 2003 IAEA report, it was “doubtful” that Iran had all the materials required for the construction of a nuclear weapon (Chubin and Litwak: 101). Despite this fact, for decades, countries such as the United States and Israel have been postulating that Iran is only years or months away from developing a nuclear bomb. However, predictions of an Iranian bomb have not yet come true. Therefore, Western media often portrays Iran as an anti-Western state because of the current regime’s foreign policies and nuclear aspirations. However, Iran has been pursuing nuclear technology since Shah’s regime, when US-Iranian relations were friendly.

Those who believe Iran is pursuing a military nuclear program argue current advancements in the nuclear program are not necessary for energy purposes and signal production of a nuclear weapon. In addition, given Iran’s large amounts of oil and gas reserves, the country does not need additional energy sources. Moreover, critics remain suspicious because Iran previously did not fully disclose all information regarding its nuclear program to the IAEA and still may be hiding information about a military program. Those that believe Iran is not going to acquire nuclear weapons assert that Iran is a signatory of the NPT, reassert Iran’s right to nuclear energy, and cite Ayatollah Khomeini’s religious fatwa. Regardless of the debate around its intentions, Iran is still a signatory of the NPT and continues to declare that its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes.
The future will tell if Iran is acquiring nuclear weapons. Until then, the international community should prepare for a world order in which Iran does have nuclear weapons.

Most states do not want to accept an Iranian bomb. States that are members of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, an organization committed to preventing nuclear weapons proliferation, have placed economic sanctions on Iran because they were alarmed by IAEA reports and developments in Iran’s nuclear program. Muhammed El Baredei, the IAEA director, relates that,

From what we repeatedly observed, a policy of isolation and sanctions only served to stimulate a country’s sense of pride; in the worst case, it could make the targeted country’s nuclear project a matter of national priority (El Baradei 2006: 86).

Regardless, many question whether Iran will actually suspend its nuclear program, cave under economic sanctions and give in to international pressures. Bahgat argues that scenario is unlikely because the amount of financial and human capital and national prestige Iran has invested into its program. Iran is continuing with its nuclear program despite sanctions that are negatively affecting its population. Although Iran relies heavily on imported materials to develop its nuclear program, it has at the same time built up a local expertise and has the resources to continue a nuclear program (Bahgat 2006: 308).
Chapter 5 : Pakistan, Iran and Saudi Relations

5.1 Iran-Pakistan Relations

Pakistan’s relations with Iran are often described as “shaky.” As Pakistan moves closer to certain allies such as Saudi Arabia, Iran and Pakistan’s shared historical roots are often forgotten. On the surface, relations appear calm because they maintain diplomatic ties and cooperate economically and politically. However, Iran and Pakistan’s use of proxies in other countries reveal that they often support opposite sides of a conflict.

As mentioned earlier, Pakistan’s official language, Urdu, is heavily influenced by the Persian language due to historic Persian conquests. The conquests led to the existence of a Persianized form of Islam in South Asia from the 13th to 19th centuries. Rulers, such as the Mughals, were also Persianized and consequently the official language of the land was Persian. According to the Pakistani author Mujtaba Razvi, “Next to Islam, the Iranian cultural tradition exercised perhaps the most decisive and penetrating influence in fashioning the Muslim socio-cultural ethos in Pakistan” (1971: 204). While both Iran and Pakistan are Muslim majority states, Pakistan has a Sunni majority while Iran has a Shiite majority, and Shiite Islam has been the official state religion of Iran since 1501 (Fürtig 2002: 35). As the Pakistani-American political scientist Dr. Shirin R.
Tahir-Kehli argues “the closeness of Iranian-Pakistani ties can be traced … to the common bonds of religion, language, and culture” (1977: 489).

Pakistan-Iran relations started friendly. Iran was the first state to recognize the independent country of Pakistan in August 1947. Jinnah realized the importance of maintaining friendly relations with Pakistan’s western neighbor and thus began a friendship built on mutual respect. In 1950, Pakistan performed its national anthem the first time ever in its history in front of the Shah of Iran (Irfani 2009). Pakistan and Iran were both members of the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), which was an alliance of cooperation and protection aimed at countering Soviet influence in Central and South Asia. In 1964, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey formed the Regional Cooperation and Development (RDC) scheme for the purposes of creating economic and cultural ties. In 1965, Iran backed Pakistan in its fight with India for Kashmir and declared that Pakistan had been a victim of aggression (Mujtaba 1971: 211) India asserts that Iran aided Pakistan by giving it free oil. During the war, Iran also provided medical aid and ammunition to Pakistan and was considering an embargo on India. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was noted saying,

It is a debt we owe to the Iranian nation, and as a fraternal country, we shall remember for ever the generous and warm appreciation of righteous cause that Iran manifested in concrete, unmistakable and tangible terms (Mujtaba 1971: 212).
Thus in the early years of Pakistan, Iran proved to be an invaluable ally, dependable in times of need.

Although, many positive developments occurred in the Pakistan-Iran relationship during Zulfikar Ali Bhutto’s time in office, once Zia became president, trends changed for the worse. As a religious man, Zia welcomed the Islamic Revolution of 1979 that overthrew the Iranian secular monarchy. Pakistan became the first country to recognize the Islamic Republic of Iran, following its revolution. The revolution’s slogan was “Neither Oriental nor Occidental - Islamic and only Islamic – neither Shia nor Sunni – Islamic and only Islamic.” Zia and Ayatollah Ruhollah Imam Khomeini (the Iranian religious leader) formed diplomatic ties based on Islam but did not have friendly relations, mostly caused by ideological differences. For example, Zia ignored Khomeini’s pleas to not execute the Shia Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Furthermore, “Khomeini's religious rhetoric sparked radicalism across the sectarian divide [in Pakistan]” (Pant 2009). Furthermore, he issued a fatwa (religious decree) declaring that Iran must protect the Shiites of Pakistan (Vatanka 2012). The Iranian Islamic Revolution had additional consequences for Pakistan, which I will later discuss.

Events transpiring after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan put a sore spot on the Pakistan-Iran relationship. During the Soviet-Afghan war, Iran and Pakistan supported rival sides of the war and thus engaged in an unconventional war. Pakistan allied with Saudi Arabia and the US, and aided the Afghan
insurgency, called the Taliban. Because the Taliban is an extremist Sunni organization, it massacred Hazara Shiites in Afghanistan and consequently, Iran supported the opposing faction, the Afghan Northern Alliance. When the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan, both Iran and Pakistan aided with its stabilization and wanted to stay involved in order to retain their spheres of influence within the country and influence the new government. Post-Soviet Afghanistan is a time in history where Pakistan and Iran engaged in a proxy war (Haqqani 2005, Christensen 2011: 7). Iran influenced the education, social life and economics of the western region, which used to be part of its territory. Pakistan supported the Taliban as the new Afghan government and this severely weakened the Pakistan-Iran relationship. Rival Iran realized that “Pakistan’s long desired goal of gaining ‘strategic depth’ was sought to be attained through a favorable Taliban government in Afghanistan” (Alam 2004: 533). As Pakistan and the US continued to support the Taliban government, Iran countered their efforts by aiding the Northern Alliance and Shiite organizations.

In the 1998 Battle of Mazar-e-Sharif, the Pakistan-backed Taliban and Iran-backed Northern Alliance fought for control of the Afghan capital, Kabul. The result was seven Iranian diplomats dead and eight thousand Shiite Hazaras massacred (BBC 2001). After this incident, sectarian conflict soared in Pakistan in which “hundreds of Pakistani Shias, including Iranian diplomats and Iranian nationals, were killed” (Alam 2004: 533). Notably, the Mazar-e-Sharif incident
brought Pakistan and Iran close to war. Christensen argues that the likelihood of Iran and Pakistan finding a solution to Afghanistan is very unlikely and will continue to strain their relations in the future (2011: 54). He also believes that Iran is specifically trying to promote state supported terrorist groups and Shiism (2011: 18). For example, in 2009, the Afghan government discovered Iranian textbooks that encouraged Shiism and defamed Sunnism (Daily Times 2009). While Afghan Shiites viewed this move as prejudicial, Afghan Sunnis viewed this move as Iran attempting to incite sectarianism.

In another incident years later, a missile hit the United Nations office in Islamabad in the beginning of Musharraf’s administration. The director of the ISI, Lieutenant General Mahmood Ahmed was given information that the Iranian government had supported the Afghanistan Northern Alliance in carrying out the attack. Consequently, Musharraf’s planned trip to Iran was postponed. Once he finally did meet with Iranian leadership, they declared Iran had no role in the incident and talked about Pakistan’s support of the Taliban. Musharraf then re-assessed its pro-Taliban policy and eventually ceased support to the Taliban (Abbas 2005: 184).

Another problem in the Iranian-Pakistan relationship is caused by the Baloch tribes. Estimated around nine million they live near the borders of Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan. They are “linguistically, ethnically, culturally and traditionally alike” (Khan 2012: 121). In August 2004, Pakistani and Iranian
officials signed an agreement stating that the province of Balochistan in Pakistan and the province of Seistan Balochistan in Iran would be Twin Provinces. The agreement created future cultural, religious, social and economic exchanges between the two provinces. Despite this step forward, the two Baloch provinces experienced problems such as drug trafficking and border clashes. On October 19, 2009 forty members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard died in an alleged Jundallah attack after which Iran threatened to close the border with Pakistan (Pakistan Defense 2010). Jundallah, also known as the People’s Resistance Movement of Iran, is a terrorist organization supposedly supported by Pakistan that is accused of stirring Sunni and Balochi resistance in Iran (Vesely 2009: 24). They allege to have no separatist motives and instead want equality with Iranian Shiites. In a move of building trust with Iran, Pakistan arrested the head of Jundallah and gave him to Iranian authorities in early 2010 (Black 2010).

Furthermore, in order to bring the proposed Pipeline Project (discussed later) into existence, Pakistan and Iran suppress their Baloch population to stabilize their respective Baloch provinces.

Sectarianism is one of the worst aspects of Pakistan-Iran relationship. Hazaras are an ethnically Persian group living in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran. Pakistan and Iran experienced an influx of Hazara immigrants during a 1978 Afghan revolution. Due to their Shiite heritage, Pakistani Hazaras frequently visit Iran for cultural, education and religious purposes (Khan 2012: 135). Since 1999,
Pakistani Sunni extremist groups have massacred the Hazara community in Balochistan. The Pakistani government has failed to take any action against the groups conducting the killings and the Iranian government condemns the attacks. Many scholars believe that the Iranian Islamic Revolution instigated sectarian conflict in Pakistan, and since Pakistani Shiites and Iranians have been victims of the Sunni majority. In 1991, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, a Sunni militant organization murdered Iranian diplomat, Sadiq Ganji, in Pakistan for sectarian reasons. Rasul Bakhsh Rais, a political science professor at Lahore University of Management Sciences, asserts that,

This is sectarian. Sunni organizations contend on challenging Iranian influence in Pakistan would like to open up another front in Iran, which has been untouched by the sectarianism that is affecting Pakistan. The regional implications are going to be very serious for Pakistan. Pakistan-Iranian relations are likely to deteriorate. Iran is likely to encourage the sectarian aspect in Pakistan (Montero 2007).

Furthermore, many believe that Iran will not give up on the Pakistani Shias.

The rise of nationalism in Balochistan in Iran and Pakistan is a major impediment to the proposed Pakistan-Iran Pipeline Project. Because Iran has large natural gas resources, it wants to strengthen economic ties with neighboring countries and export its raw gas. The idea was first agreed upon in 1995 and since then, different countries such as India, Bangladesh, and China, have all been invited to participate in the project. Nevertheless, the US has threatened Pakistan and India with economic sanctions in order to coerce them to withdraw from the
deal and consequently, India withdrew in 2009 (Hussain 2013). The US believes it is necessary for states to refrain from forming economic ties with Iran because Iran is proceeding with its nuclear program. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia has also offered Pakistan an “alternative package” in which it would supply Pakistan with loans and oil (Dawn 2010). Due to its energy shortages, Pakistan has decided to not give in to international pressure and is proceeding with the deal. The current president of Pakistan asserted that “Pakistan is our priority and all our friends should understand that we do things for national interest and not for any other reason. All we want is peace and all we want is an economic growth in Pakistan” (RFRL 2013). As of March 5, 2013, the Pipeline Project is set to go forth despite US demands.

Clearly, Saudi Arabia and the US do not want Pakistan to cooperate with Iran because of the advancements in Iran’s nuclear program. Pakistan believes that Iran has the right to acquire nuclear energy but should not weaponize. In 2006, Pakistani officials held talks with Iranians in order to advise them against acquiring nuclear weapons. Pakistan’s Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri has been especially vocal in his condemnations of an Iranian nuclear weapon. According to Dawn News, Kasuri “made it his mission to persuade Tehran not to provoke a conflict over Iran’s nuclear program thus endangering regional - and Pakistan’s domestic - security” and also asserted that “We [Pakistan] are the only Muslim country [with such weapons] and don’t want anyone else to get it” (Sattar 2011).
Furthermore, Musharraf has also attempted to dissuade Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. Clearly, Pakistani officials have realized that gravity of an Iranian nuclear weapon.

The main source of agreement between Iran and Pakistan is that they are both Islamic nations, regardless of which sect they belong. When Pakistan successfully tested a nuclear bomb, Iran’s foreign minister visited Pakistan and offered his congratulations. He explained, “Now, they (Muslims) feel confident, because a fellow Islamic nation possesses the knowhow to build nuclear weapons” (Alam 2004: 534). Iran and Pakistan have signed several agreements such as Bilateral Trade Agreement; Bilateral Agreement on Cooperation in Plant Protection and Quarantine; Joint Economic Commission and Defense Cooperation, Preferential Trade Agreement and most recently, the Joint Ministerial Commission on Security. It is clear that although Iran and Pakistan are cooperating on matters such as trade, contentions regarding nationalism, suppression, state-sponsored terrorist groups and sectarian differences still exist.

5.2 Saudi-Pakistani Relations

Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are both Sunni Muslim majority countries. Saudi Arabia prescribes to the Wahhabi interpretation of Sunni Islam, which that has impacted the rise of fundamentalism in Pakistan. Wahhabism is an ultra-
conservative interpretation of Islam and follows Qur’anic teachings strictly. Due to their Islamic ties, Saudi Arabia was one of the first countries to recognize Pakistan’s independence. In the capital of Pakistan stands Faisal Mosque, in honor of Saudi Arabia’s King Faisal. In addition, the Pakistani city of Lyllapur was renamed Faisalabad for King Faisal. Their friendly ties are due to one’s superior military and the other’s abundant resources.

The relatively weak Saudi military benefits from the skilled Pakistani military. Every year, Saudi Naval and Special Forces travel to Pakistan to conduct combined trainings with the Pakistani army. The development of “a military relationship with Saudi Arabia offered Pakistan not only economic benefits and military material assistance, but, equally important, it gave Pakistan a psychological shift towards its Islamic roots” (Staudenmaier, Tahir-Kheli 1981: 8). The Pakistani military also has protected Saudi Arabia. For example, in 1969, when Yemeni insurgents attacked Saudi Arabia, Pakistani forces were the ones to crush the invasion. Following the attack, about 15,000 Pakistani soldiers came to Saudi Arabia’s aid during the 1970s and 1980s. They were stationed in Saudi Arabia in order to guard the border from Yemeni invasion and to train the Saudi military. When the Iran-Iraq War occurred, Saudi Arabia kept Pakistani troops on standby in case the war spilled over into Saudi Arabia’s territory or if Iraq lost the war (Dunningan 2012). Furthermore, during the Gulf Wars, Pakistan sent military personnel to Saudi Arabia in order to protect the Islamic holy sites. Saudi Arabia
has specifically asked the Pakistani military to supply Bahrain with soldiers and police if a Shiite uprising ever occurred. As a result, Pakistan supplied up to two thousand people to Bahrain and they now make up about thirty percent of Bahrain’s security forces (Mashal 2011). Bahrain’s Sunni monarchy invites foreign Sunni soldiers in order to provide security for the Shiite majority.

Saudi Arabia has consistently provided diplomatic and financial support to Pakistan. According to the Brookings Institute, out of all the Arab countries, Saudi Arabia has given the greatest aid to Pakistan since the 1950s (Riedel 2008). Saudi Arabia funded Pakistan’s support of the Taliban in Afghanistan during the 1980s. Throughout the 1965 Indian-Pakistani fight over Kashmir, Saudi Arabia gave financial support to Pakistan. “In 1976 alone, aid [to Pakistan] amounted to over $500 million or 24.8 percent of total Saudi aid” (Staudenmaier, Tahir-Kheli 1981: 3). Currently, Pakistan receives the largest amount of remittances from nationals residing in Saudi Arabia, and these remittances are a great economic relief to the struggling Pakistani economy. Saudi Arabia also provides special oil prices to Pakistan. Several newspapers, such as the Saudi Gazette, refer to Saudi Arabia being a “second home for Pakistanis” (2012). Although Pakistan is not a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Saudi Arabia facilitated a free trade agreement between the GCC and Pakistan. It has also given Pakistan support during crises such as the 2010 floods.
Saudi Arabia gives Pakistan aid for religious and educational purposes. When the Iranian Revolution occurred, Zia Islamized Pakistan and Saudi-Pakistani relations improved extensively. In order to counter Iranian and Shiite influence in Pakistan, Zia allied with Sunni fundamentalists after which Deobandi madrassas received funding from Saudi charities. A Wikileak revealed that Pakistani madrassas may have been receiving as much as $100 million dollars every year through charitable Islamic organizations operating as missionaries (Dawn 2008). Most significantly, the Saudi government still builds mosques and funds madrassas, which in turn foster a conservative interpretation of Islam in Pakistan.

When Pakistan conducted nuclear tests, Saudi Arabia openly approved. Due to international economic sanctions on Pakistan, Saudi Arabia gave $5 billion worth of oil as a present to Pakistan, and the Saudi support allowed Pakistan to continue with its nuclear weapons program (Hoodbhoy 2012: 136, Riedel 2011). In addition, for years, Saudi Arabia has attempted to purchase nuclear weapons and may have a secret deal with Pakistan. Mohammed Khilewi, a Saudi representative to the NPT, argued that Saudi Arabia had first paid $5 billion to Iraq to build the Saudis a nuclear weapon and then moved on to Pakistan (United Press International 2011). In the early 1990s, an American government specialist spoke with higher officials about Saudi Arabia purchasing nuclear weapons from Pakistan. He explained,
I raised my concerns over the Saudi purchase of a bomb from Pakistan with Washington but my government took Riyadh’s response at face value. The US asked the Saudi foreign ministry to confirm or deny the allegation of nuclear cooperation with Pakistan. It is widely known that the Wahhabi form of Islam authorizes the faithful to lie to non-believers, especially in matters dealing with national security and state sovereignty. But when the Saudis said there was no Pakistan deal, our side, without any further investigation, accepted the answer (Levy, Scott-Clark 2008: 226).

As mentioned earlier, Saudi Arabia provided 60% of the funding for Pakistan’s nuclear weapons and “in return has the option to buy a small nuclear arsenal (five to six warheads) off the shelf if things got tough in the neighborhood” (Borger 2010). Several other news sources have echoed Borger’s claim. There is not yet any conclusive evidence whether such a deal actually exists.

Saudi Arabia’s desire for nuclear weapons is due to instability in the Middle East and Iran’s increasing attempts at being regional hegemon by developing nuclear weapons. However, the difference between Iran and Saudi Arabia’s ambitions for nuclear weapons is that while Iran would rather build up their own infrastructure, Saudi Arabia does not have the expertise to do so. An official from the Pakistani Atomic Energy Commission noted that,

The Saudis did not want the process, unlike Iran. They were not interested in centrifuges. Riyadh did not have the scientists or infrastructure for these things. Saudis getting into enrichment would also have sparked a massive row with the US. They wanted the finished product, to stash away in case of emergency, and Pakistan agreed to supply it in return for many hundreds of millions of dollars (Levy, Scott-Clark 2008: 174).
In other words, purchasing nuclear weapons from Pakistan, readymade, would be the easiest way for Saudi Arabia to acquire a nuclear weapon.

Clearly, the Pakistani-Saudi Arabian relationship is very strong. Pakistan is able to offer military support and in return, Saudi Arabia gives money to Pakistan for various reasons. Because some Saudi money is funneled into Pakistan’s economy through educational and religious institutions, and consequently, the Saudis are able to influence Pakistan’s politics. In a surprising WikiLeaks cable, the Saudi ambassador to the US, Adel al-Jubeir, asserted that, "We in Saudi Arabia are not observers in Pakistan, we are participants" (Tharoor 2010). Regardless, the two countries enjoy friendly ties. They are looking to institutionalize their relations as they work together to combat regional instability. Prince Turki bin Sultan, the previous former Saudi intelligence chief asserted that the Saudi-Pakistan relationship is “probably one of the closest relationships in the world between any two countries” (Riedel 2008).

5.3 Saudi-Iranian Relations

Unlike the historically friendly Saudi-Pakistan relationship, the Saudi-Iranian rivalry is deep rooted. Until 1935, Iran was named Persia, and so culturally, most Iranians self identify as Persians and conversely Saudis labels themselves as Arabs. Consequently, the competition between the Arab and
Persian dynasty manifests itself as the Saudi-Iranian rivalry in present day. The Arab and Persian empires were both leaders of the Muslim world and led successful empires until the Arabs eventually defeated the Persian Empire. Sadek Zibakala, an Iranian professor at the University of Tehran, argued that “Persians will never forget their defeat at the hands of Arabs in the Battle of Qadisiya 1,400 years ago. It is as if a fire keeps seething under the ashes and is waiting for the right moment to explode” (Al-Zahed 2011). Some scholars, such as Amirahmadi, argue that the main sources of discord between Iran and Saudi Arabia are due to cultural and religious differences, a battle for OPEC leadership and struggle for regional hegemony.

Iran and Saudi Arabia first established diplomatic ties in 1928. Their relations were friendly especially when Saudi Arabia and Iran needed to cooperate politically when the Iraqi monarchy was overthrown in 1958. They were interested in safeguarding their own regimes. However, the last Shah of Iran, Shah Muhammad Reza Pahlavi, pursued a foreign policy aiming at regional dominance. As Iran intervened in different conflicts in the Middle East, such as Oman’s civil war, Arabs viewed this as Iran attempting to gain hegemony and consequently felt threatened (Amirahmadi 1993: 1).

Relations between the Iran and Saudi Arabia worsened after the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran. The Iranian Ayatollah claimed that the Islamic Revolution and Iran’s new political set up served as a model of how Muslims
should be governed and consequently tried to spread the values of its revolution to communities that were ruled by monar­chies. Because the Saudi monarchy was afraid of being overthrown, it emphasized ideologi­cal differences and delegitimized the Islamic Revolution by labeling it a Shiite revolution. Fürtig argues that,

Iran’s attempt to present itself as the center of a worldwide Muslim awakening, despite denominational differences, and as the front-runner of Islamic grandeur, had to be challenged. Therefore, Saudi propaganda started to castigate the Iranian revolution as an exclusively Shia one, underlining that Shi­ism was always antithetical not only to Wahhabism but to Sunnism in general, and that for these reasons Khomeini’s Islamic must be considered blasphemous (2002: xvi).

Because most of the Islamic Revolution’s leaders were Shiite, it did appear to be a revolution based on Shiite ideals. In Saudi Arabia, Shiites were treated as second-class citizens and the Islamic Revolution’s call to revolution appealed to them. As a result, the revolution emboldened the minority Shiites in Saudi Arabia and they protested.

During the Iran-Iraq war, Saudi Arabia supported Iraq by providing financial backing. In order to provide money to Iraq, Saudi Arabia increased its oil production and this consequently disadvantaged Iran’s economy. The Saudis did not want Iran to conquer their neighbor, Iraq, and believed a revolutionary Iran posed a great threat to Saudi Arabia’s security. According to Kayhan Barzegar, a Professor at the Islamic Azad University in Tehran, “the Iran–Iraq war

58
occurred because of the rhetorical exaggerations of Iran’s traditional threat perceptions in the Sunni Arab world” (2008: 89). Furthermore, as Iranians killed many Iraqis, Saudi clerics declared, “We should openly side with our Sunni brothers in Iraq and lend them all appropriate forms of support” (Shihri 2006). The Saudis were thus able to frame the Iran-Iraq war in terms of sectarian conflict.

The Ayatollah made his views on Saudi Arabia clear. He believed that the Saudis were tyrants, followed an American version of Islam, and were not capable of protecting Islamic holy sites. As a result, he encouraged Saudis to revolt against their government (Amirahmadi 1993). In 1979, Saudi forces had to put down a protest started by Shiite Iranian pilgrims to Mecca. As a result, 275 Iranians died (Fürting 2002: 37). The creation of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in 1971 also signified a unified Arab stance against Iran. The mission of the GCC is to “to effect coordination, integration, and interconnection between Member States in all fields” (Foundations and Objectives). In 1982, the GCC Secretary-General Abdullah Bishara asserted that “Iran’s quest for supremacy in the Gulf was the primary threat to the stability of the GCC” (Okruhlik 2003: 116). Again, in 1987, Saudi officials stopped a political demonstration started by Iranian pilgrims to the holy city of Mecca. As a result, 450 Iranians died and this was one of the bloodiest events since the Iranian Revolution. Consequently, the Ayatollah declared that the Saudi monarchy should be overthrown and for the
next three years, Iranians did not visit religious sites in Saudi Arabia. In 1988, Saudi Arabia and Iran broke off diplomatic ties and this marked an all time low in the Saudi Arabia and Iran relationship.

Following the conclusion of the Iran-Iraq war, relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia improved. The Iranian President wanted to establish economic ties and sought friendly relations with Saudi Arabia for post-war reconstruction (Jahner 2013: 42). Relations between Iran and the GCC also improved. The Gulf countries no longer viewed Iran as exporting its revolution or attempting to increase its sphere of influence. The nineties era was one of cooperation between Iran and the Gulf States.

Nonetheless, relations turned sour years later during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan when Iran and Saudi Arabia supported rival groups. Saudi Arabia favored Pakistani influence over Afghanistan and gave financial backing to the Sunni Taliban. On the other hand, Iran supported Afghan Shiites, most notably the Hazaras. Iran soon realized that supporting the minority Afghan Shiites would not sufficiently fight the Saudi-backed Taliban and consequently supported the opposing faction, the Afghan Northern Alliance. Once the Soviets left Afghanistan and Pakistani involvement decreased, Iran and Saudi Arabia were the only two remaining foreign actors. Fürtig argues that it became a “contest for influence between Saudi Wahhabism and Iranian Shiism” (2002: 162). For example, in 2006, an Iranian built a Shiite Islamic university and religious school
in Western Kabul and recently, Saudi Arabia announced a plan to build an Islamic education and mosque on Kabul’s hilltop known as “Tap-e-Maranjani (Khalil 2011). Despite the institutionalization of a Sunni government, the Iranian-Saudi competition appears to continue in Afghanistan.

In 2003, about a decade after the conclusion of the Iran-Iraq war, the US invaded Iraq and overthrew the government led by Saddam Hussein. Prior to the invasion, Iran and Iraq maintained a balance of power but after the fall of Saddam Hussein, Saudi Arabia emerged as Iran’s competitor in gaining regional hegemony. An Iranian expert on nonproliferation, terrorism, and Middle Eastern security Shahram Chubin, asserts that the fall of Hussein, Meant that the old triangular system, in which the three large Gulf powers of Iran, Saudi Arabia and Iraq balanced one another, was replaced by a bipolar structure pitting Iran and Saudi Arabia directly against each other (2009: 168).

Because Iraq was plagued by internal problems, it no longer sought regional influence Prior to the invasion, the Sunni Hussein government was hostile to Iranian interests and repressive of Iraqi Shiites. With its fall, Iran gained influence over the Shiite majority. Additionally, the US invasion of Iraq emboldened Shiites throughout the Middle East and this renewed Arab fears of Iran exporting its revolution (Nasr 2006). Iran was able to garner support from Shiites by claiming that the House of Saud was a lackey for the US. As Wehrey argues, “The fundamental driver of the relationship [between Iran and Saudi Arabia] is a
struggle to shape the regional balance of power,” (2009: xxi). In sum, the 2003 US invasion created a power imbalance and led to the modern day struggle for balance of power between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Iran’s system of alliances in the Middle East has created the “Shia crescent.” This term refers to Iran’s Shiite allies, such as Syria, and Hezbollah in Lebanon. Whether or not the crescent has formed on an ideological basis, its formation was a reaction to the alliance of Sunni monarchies. In other words, several Shiite states and groups have banded together in response to the unfriendliness of Sunni Arab monarchies and consequently, their opposition has strengthened the fact that they are Shiite governments. For example, when Sunni monarchies opposed Iran in the Iran-Iraq war, the Alawite (a school of thought similar to Shiism) government of Syria aided Iran. Furthermore, the new Shiite government in Iraq has sought friendly ties with Iran because it is surrounded by unfriendly Sunni states (Barzegar 2008: 93). The Shiite government in Iraq was a setback to Saudi Arabia’s attempts at regional dominance as Saudi Arabia lost an ally and gained an enemy.

Saudi Arabia has viewed Iran as attempting to gain influence due to its support of proxies in the Arab sphere of the Middle East. For example, in the 2006 Israel-Lebanon war, Iran supported the Shiite Lebanese rebel group, Hezbollah. Iran supplies Hezbollah with about $100 million a year, arms, missiles and rockets (Byman 2012: 2). Because of the large number of Sunni monarchies
in the Middle East that have allied with one another, Iran has proxies in order to
gain some regional influence. Iran allied with Hamas in Gaza and began
“gradually establishing its foothold in the Levant region” (Heydarian 2010). As a
result, these proxies often work against governments that are hostile to Iran. Due
to Iran’s involvement in other states, Saudi Arabia and Iran often engage in a
proxy war. For example, they engaged in a proxy war in Yemen, where the Saudi-
backed Yemeni government had to fight against the Iranian-financed Shiite
Houthi (Yemeni) insurgents. The rebels met violent Saudi attacks and were put
down.

Saudi Arabia may also be supporting Sunni proxies within Iran. In 2009, Jundallah, the militant Sunni organization that is allegedly based out of Pakistan, killed about thirty people at the Iranian border, including members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard. Iran put political pressure on Pakistan to stop supporting Jundallah and soon Pakistan caught its leaders and handed them over to Iran. Next, Iran executed those leaders. In November of that year, a Kuwaiti newspaper published a letter written by the head of Jundallah to the Saudi king asking for additional financial assistance. Jundallah attacked several times again in retaliation for Iran executing its leaders (Heydarian 2010). Jundallah is an example of supposed Saudi, American and Pakistani backed proxy operating in Iran in order to destabilize it.
The recent Arab Spring may redraw the map of the Middle East. Iran welcomed the revolutions in which people wanted to overthrow their monarchical governments because they are similar to the Islamic Revolution of 1979. With the fall of Egypt’s president Hosni Mubarak, a man who viewed Iran with enmity, and the installation of the Muslim Brotherhood in office, Iran sought friendly ties with Egypt. Saudi Arabia, on the other hand, is wary of the revolutions. When the revolution spread to Bahrain, a Shiite majority country, Saudi Arabia moved to aid the Sunni monarchy in suppressing the protests which the Iranians called the Saudi actions “genocide” (Milani 2011). The Saudis claimed that Iran has been supporting protestors in attempts to remove the Sunni monarchy.

While Iranian officials have been vocally critical of the human rights abuses in Bahrain and call for an overthrow of the Sunni Bahraini monarchy, they have taken a different approach in Syria. For Iran, Syria is an important ally because it serves as a route for transferring arms to Hamas in Palestine. Iran has been supporting the Syrian government in retaining its power during the Arab Spring. The ruling family is Alawite, a school of thought similar to Shiism. On the contrary, Saudi Arabia and other GCC members are supporting Syria rebels that are mostly Sunni. Although Saudi Arabia and Iran are supporting opposing sides, the civil war in Syria is not yet sectarian in nature. Regardless, many are voicing concern that Syria is turning into a Saudi-Iranian proxy battleground. National Public Radio (NPR) reported that Saudi Arabia is now sending young
Saudi militants into Syria to fight the Alawite government. NPR quoted human rights activist Muhammad al-Qahtani who explained that “Their [the Saudis] ultimate policy is to have a regime change similar to what happened in Yemen, where they lose the head of state and substitute it with one more friendly to the Saudis” (Erlich 2013). As the civil war continues to unfold, we will be able to decipher whether the Iran-Saudi competition manifests itself on sectarian lines in Syria.

Iran and Saudi Arabia clearly hold animosity for one another. They compete for cultural, religious, economic and politic influence in the Middle East. Their balance of power is maintained by supporting proxies and allying with different governments. Some consider their involvement in other states a zero sum game because if one state gains, the other loses. In an interview with the Carnegie Endowment, Middle East expert Christopher Boucek explains,

The challenge is that both countries view power and influence in the region as a zero-sum game. If Iran gains, Saudi Arabia loses—and vice versa. In Saudi Arabia there is not just a fear that Iran wants a greater role in the region, there is alarm that Iran wants to control the region. Saudi Arabia often seems to view the region through sectarian lenses and wants to unite people under the sectarian umbrella of Sunnis. Riyadh therefore views the ascendancy of Shias and the war in the region in zero-sum terms (2012).

Clearly, in several major events, Saudi Arabia and Iran have supported opposing sides, and the two states are constantly challenging one another in other ways. For example, Saudis label the Persian Gulf as the “Arab Gulf” and label the Iranian
province of Khuzestan as “Arabestan.” The Iran and Saudi involvement in conflicts throughout the Middle East appear to be on sectarian lines. While Saudi Arabia tends to highlight sectarian differences, Iran does not always support Shiite groups and tries to play down ideological differences. Iran’s support of proxies is mostly strategic, rather than ideological because its proxies always oppose some enemy of Iran, whether it be the US, Israel, or Saudi Arabia. Regardless, in many countries, such as Yemen, Bahrain and Pakistan, Iran has come to aid the oppressed Shiite group against Sunnis. Saudi Arabia usually views Iran’s involvement in the Middle East as attempts at increasing its regional influence.

Another way that Saudis view Iran trying to gain regional hegemony is by developing a nuclear weapons program (Whitlock, Sly 2011). As rumors surfaced about Iran developing an indigenous nuclear weapons program, Saudis became alarmed and vocally spoke out against Iran’s suspected nuclear weapons program. It was revealed through WikiLeaks that the Saudi King Abdullah urged the US to “cut off the head of the snake” before it was too late. Furthermore, Saudis have warned that if Iran acquired nuclear weapons, then it “would compel Saudi Arabia … to pursue policies which could lead to untold and possibly dramatic consequences.” Another official asserted that,

We cannot live in a situation where Iran has nuclear weapons and we don't. It's as simple as that. If Iran develops a nuclear weapon,
that will be unacceptable to us and we will have to follow suit (Burke 2011).

Some scholars believe that, in the case of an Iranian nuclear weapon, Saudi Arabia will not actually develop its own bomb (Oswald 2013). It currently does not have the infrastructure or expertise for an indigenous program. In addition, by pursing a nuclear weapons program, Saudi Arabia would violate the NPT would invite backlash from the international community. Many believe that in the event of an Iranian nuclear bomb, Saudi Arabia would purchase nuclear weapons from Pakistan due to its extensive funding of the Pakistani bomb. Furthermore, an unnamed official revealed that there is an agreement between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan that if Iran were to acquire nuclear weapons, Pakistan would supply Saudis with the bomb “the next day” (Ozer 2010). However, a report from the Center for a New American Security asserts that in the event of an Iranian bomb, Saudi Arabia would most likely build up its military forces and use conventional and unconventional forces to oppose Iran (2013: 16). The report dismisses Pakistan’s agreement with Saudi Arabia and argues that Pakistan would not go forward due to international pressure. It disregards the fact the Pakistan already defied the international community by pursuing its nuclear weapons. Furthermore, two states that support Pakistan economically, Saudi Arabia and China, will probably not cut off their aid or exert pressure on Pakistan if it gave weapons to Riyadh.
Chapter 6: Sectarianism in Pakistan

6.1 Origins and Causes

Ethnic and sectarian differences prevent unity in Pakistan (Ahmed 1997: 172). Pakistan currently has a population of 185 million people. About ninety-six percent of the population is Muslim and the remaining four percent consists mostly of Christians, Hindus and Sikhs. From the Muslim majority, eighty-five percent are Sunni and the other fifteen percent Shia. Pakistan can attribute its rise of sectarianism to Zia-ul-Haq’s Sunnization policies and the consequently creation of madrassas, the Iranian Revolution and policies during the Afghan war.

The Sunni-Shia divide occurred centuries ago shortly after the death of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Sunnis wanted to choose the next leader of the Islamic empire based on majority vote. On the contrary, Shia, meaning “partisan” wanted the head of the Islamic community, or caliph, to be directly related to the Prophet. Sunnis believe that the first four caliphs, or religious leaders to be legitimate. On the other hand, Shiites view the last caliph, Ali (the Prophet’s son in law), as the only legitimate one and give him a special standing with God. Sunnis and Shias have the same doctrinal beliefs. In the entire Muslim world, only Iran, Iraq and Bahrain have a Shiite majority. Numbering up to twenty-five million, Pakistan hosts the largest number of Shiites after Iran.
In Pakistan, Sunnis can be divided into Deobandis, Barelvis, Ahle Hadith and the modernists. Historically, most Pakistani Sunnis are Barelvi and incorporate Sufi practices in their interpretation of Islam. Barelvis are the most liberal and open minded of Sunnis in Pakistan. They emphasize the importance of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), worship saints and “embody popular religion as experienced by the masses” (Jaffrelot 2012: 223). Punjab has the largest number of Barelvis. The Barelvi’s biggest rivals are the fundamentalist Deobandis, which are most similar to the strict Saudi Wahhabis. Historically, they have been the most numerous in Sindh but also have considerable influence in Balochistan and Pakhtunkhwa. Recently, Deobandis have spread to Punjab by establishing religious schools (Jaffrelot 2002: 222). They criticize the Sufi practice of worshipping saints. Groups such as Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), Jaish-e-Mohammed, Harkat-ul-Jihadul Islami (HUJI), and most Pakistani Taliban groups claim to be Deobandi. These groups gain new membership mostly from tribal and rural areas. Furthermore, their ultimate goal is to institute Sharia law in Pakistan. Another Sunni fundamentalist group is the Ahl-i-Hadith, and they are more radical than Deobandis. Lastly, the modernist argue that Pakistan should be a secular state in which religion is not a concern of the state. Unlike the Deobandis, Ahl-i-Hadith group and Barelvis, the modernists do not want Sharia law instituted in society.
Until the 1980s, Pakistanis Muslim lived together in relative peace. However, as mentioned earlier, Zia-ul-Haq initiated a process of Islamization that created the problem of sectarianism in Pakistan. The Islamization in Pakistan has also been dubbed a “Sunnization” or “Sharia-ization” because Zia’s policies were not only Islamic, but very fundamental and conservative. The policies were mostly favorable to Sunnis and caused Muslim minorities to be neglected, abused and outcasted. For example, in 1984, Zia-ul-Haq declared Ahmadis, a sect of Islam, as non-Muslims.

Additionally, Zia’s government began setting up Sunni madrassas. Madrassas are religious schools that take young impoverished children from rural areas and provide food, housing and clothing to its students. Many Pakistanis are susceptible to the inexpensive madrassas system due to the weakness of the Pakistani education system. Pakistan spends about two percent of its GNP on education and consequently about sixty percent of the population cannot read or write (Bell 2007: 7). As mentioned earlier, Zia’s newly instituted Zakat was able to provide funding for the creation of most of these religious schools. By sending their sons to these religious seminaries, the parents are not aware that “their sons would be inculcated with a distorted version of Islam and instead of learning to read and write, they would be taught how to kill people” (Abbas 2005: 205). Because the education system was under control of the ulema, or religious class, the religious seminaries taught an ideological and conservative school of thought.
By involving the religious class, Zia’s madrassas system was an attempt at improving Sunni institutions and at implementing Sunni politics in society. Due to Zia’s policies, the number of madrassas increased dramatically. When Pakistan first became a county, there were only 137 madrassas.

The combined policy of financing through zakat and official recognition of their qualifications led to an explosion in the number of madrassas: in 1974 they accounted for 18 percent of all educational establishments in Pakistan; by 1983 this proportion had risen to 40.3 percent. In 1999, the total number of madrassas, of all sectarian persuasions combined, was put at 7,000 (Jaffrelot 2002: 232).

Additionally, madrassa degrees were equal to the Bachelor’s degrees given by other Pakistani universities. According to Shah, these policies ended Jinnah’s dream of a secular Pakistan and consequently changed the social fabric of Pakistan (2005: 617). Zia’s vision of creating an inclusive Islamic state was limited because it interpreted Islam through a Sunni lens. Shiites viewed his new policies as Sunnization and thought that their position in Pakistan was threatened.

Zia’s Sunnization process coincided with the Islamic Revolution in Iran, which added to the problem of sectarianism. The Iranian Revolution of 1979 gave Shiites throughout the Muslim world confidence. They were emboldened in their search for identity and rights. Shiites everywhere believed they could turn to the Ayatollah for support and consequently, they increased their political activism. Jaffrelot, a French expert on Pakistan argues that “Iran did play an important part in politicizing the Shi’a of Pakistan” (2012: 231). Consequently, the Iranian
Revolution “set in motion, first, a struggle for domination between the Pakistani state and its Shiite population” and so Pakistan can partly attribute this for the change in sectarian attitudes within the country (Nasr 2000: 175). The Iranian Revolution represents a model by which an anti-state actor can overthrow the government in power, and consequently caused many leaders to fear revolution.

Iran did not use “conventional war but rather ideological campaigns and sectarian-inspired civil violence” in order to influence Pakistani Shiites (Nasr 2006: 160). For example, when Zia-ul-Haq began his campaign to Islamize Pakistan, he instituted a compulsory charity tax that was contrary to their beliefs. As a result, Shiites rose up and protested. They viewed his Islamization as in fact being, Sunnization. Shiites turned to the Ayatollah, who sent a message to Zia asserting that mistreatment of the Shia would mean, “He [Khomeini] would do to him what he had done to the Shah” (Nasr 2006: 138). Next, twenty five thousand Shiites defied martial law when they gathered in the capital of Pakistan for a two day siege, demanding the taxes be removed. As a result, Zia repealed the compulsory tax for Shiites. Many, including the military and Sunni elite, were unsatisfied with Zia’s decision to repeal the tax. Sunni Islamists thought that Shiites were preventing their vision of an Islamic state from becoming reality.

The Iranian Revolution thus created Shiite activism in Pakistan and also encouraged Sunni extremism. With concerns of Iran attempting to export it
revolution, the Pakistani army was unhappy because they faced Shiite activists that were backed by Iran.

Consequently, the Pakistani state promoted Sunni Islam in order to counter Shiism. The Pakistani intelligence agency, the ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence) aided in creating militant Sunni groups and funding Sunni madrassas throughout Punjab and Balochistan (Nasr 2000: 177). The ISI concentrated much of its funding in Balochistan and on Pakistan’s western areas, provinces that border Iran. An individual noted that “If you look to where the most [Sunni] madrassas were constructed you will realize that they form a wall blocking Iran off from Pakistan” (quoted in Nasr 2000: 91). Militant Sunni groups argued that Pakistan had a Sunni majority population and they could treat minority Shiites inferiorly. Fundamental anti-Shiite rightists formed Anjuman Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan (ASSP) in 1985, which was renamed Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistani (SSP). This Sunni Deobandi organization was formed in response to the “increasing Shia-activism under the impact of the Iranian Revolution. (Ali 2000: 26). The founder of SSP, Maulana Haq Nawaz Jhangvi, argued that Iran, not Pakistan, was the home for Shiites. These fundamentalist Sunni organizations received help from Saudi Arabia, which funneled money through the Pakistani military and ISI (Abbas 2005: 204).

Conversely, after the Iranian Revolution, Iran began offering educational scholarships to Pakistani students. Members of the Imamia Student’s
Organization (ISO), a Pakistani Shiite student group established in 1972, formed Tehrik-e-Jafaria Pakistan (TJP) to fight for Shiite rights. This group began in 1979 when members of the ISO became politicized and were emboldened by the Iranian Revolution. The ISO was the first occurrence of Shiite political activism in Pakistan. Their mission was to impose Jafari law, or Shia law, and they adopted Ayatollah Khomeini as their spiritual leader. Furthermore, Shiites created the militant Tehrik-i-Nifaz-i-Fiqh-Jafaria (TNFJ) because they felt that the Sunni majority was oppressing their observance of Islam. Furthermore, TNFP was created in order to spread the ideas of Ayatollah Khomeini (South Asia Terrorism Portal). Iran provided funding to TNFJ which further inflamed tensions between Sunni and Shia militant groups (Abbas 2005: 204).

Apart from money received by Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States due to Zia’s Islamization policies, Sunni Pakistani religious parties received more funding during the Afghan war. Pakistani soldiers were called into the 1979 Afghan war for jihad, or holy war (Shaikh 2008: 601). America and Saudi Arabia supplied Pakistani soldiers with arms in order to fight in the Afghan war. Religious parties in Pakistan recruited students from madrassas, which “along with the Afghan refugee camps, become military training centers, where serving Sunni and Wahhabi military officers trained recruits, principally underage pupils” (Shah 2005: 616). Therefore, most of these Pakistani soldiers were anti-Shiite and targeted Shiites in Afghanistan during the war. After the retreat of the Soviet
Union in 1989, those soldiers formed militant Sunni groups in Pakistan. They use many weapons that they possessed during in the Afghan war (Yusuf 2012: 3).

During the Afghan war, the arms and funding that Saudi Arabia provided to the Afghan Taliban aided fundamentalist Pakistani Sunni organizations that still continue to carry out attacks today. For example, Ramzi Ahmed Yusuf, a Pakistani Sunni extremist, who served in the Afghan war and attended a Saudi-financed camp in Balochistan, was convicted for 1993 World Trade Center bombing. According to former Secretary and Ambassador of Bangladesh, Kazi Anwarul Masud, since 1994, more than 80,000 Pakistani militants have trained and fought alongside the Taliban (2013). In 1994, the Pakistani government decided to do something about the rising sectarianism. Titled “Operation Save Punjab,” the government conducted a search for sectarian leaders and consequently arrested forty activists and closed down many madrassas. However, concurrently, Pakistan was rounding up madrassas students to fight in the Afghan war. Regardless of the crackdown, militant organizations continued their activities.

In sum, Pakistan was not intended to be a battleground between Shiites and Sunnis. As mentioned before, Jinnah’s dream was a pan-Islamic state in which religion did not matter. However, other Pakistani leaders had different ideas. Most Pakistanis believe that Zia is to blame for the direction that Pakistan is heading now, a direction filled with fundamentalist groups that are wreaking
havoc on the ordinary population. Because of Zia’s institutionalization and ties with the Saudi clergy, Saudi Arabia now uses its petro-dollars to promote a conservative interpretation of Islam. It also uses its money in order to fund anti-Shiite groups and fight a proxy war against Iran.

6.2 Saudi and Iranian Involvement

In dealing with state sponsored terrorism, it is often difficult to attain facts and figures. Despite the lack of evidence, it appears that the Saudi and Iranian involvement in Pakistan can be best described as a Saudi proxy war against Iran.

Since the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and Iran’s initial support of the pro-Shiite TJNF, Iran may have given less money and support to Shiites in Pakistan. However, Iran was active immediately following the Iranian Revolution on 1979. In 1986, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini issued a religious decree proclaiming that the state of Iran must protect Pakistani Shiites (Vatanka 2012). Once Pakistani Shiites were emboldened following the revolution, Iran opened up cultural centers that promoted works by Iranian religious scholars. Furthermore, during the 1980s Iran was found to have given up to four thousand educational scholarships to Pakistani Shiites who wanted to study in Iranian cities (and this continues today). In return, these students went back to Pakistan and promulgated pro-Iranian ideas. With Iranian funding, they opened up Shiite madrassas (Zahab 2002: 116). Middle East analyst Alex Vatanka notes that the Ayatollah’s official
website has requests by Pakistani Shiites for funding religious institutions in Pakistan (2012). During the 1990s, Iran realized Pakistani Sunnis were stronger in strength and number, and so it focused its efforts on Shiites in the Middle East.

Because it appears that Iran has reduced involvement in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia now wages a one sided proxy war against Iran. Saudi Arabia uses soft power to influence the minds of madrassas students and Sunni fundamentalists. Saudi Arabia’s friendly ties with Pakistan have always provided the country with economic aid. However, Saudi Arabia realized that Pakistan was strategically important “in the erection of a ‘Sunni wall’ around Iran” (Nasr 2000: 178). Consequently, Saudi Arabia wanted to harden Sunni beliefs in countries surrounding Iran, and as a result, it began heavily funding some of the main Sunni militant organizations in Pakistan.

A reliable Pakistani newspaper, the News, recently observed that Pakistan gives about a third of funding to the religious seminaries from zakat while the remaining two-thirds are provided by foreign sources (Chandran 2000). In order to strengthen Wahabbism in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia gives charitable donations to the madrassa system. WikiLeaks revealed that religious and political leaders in Pakistan expressed that,

Recruitment activities by extremist religious organizations, particularly among young men between the ages of 8 and 15, had increased dramatically over the last year. Locals blamed the trend on a strengthening network of Deobandi and Ahl-e-Hadith mosques and madrassas, which they claimed had grown
exponentially since late 2005. Such growth was repeatedly attributed to an influx of “Islamic charity” [due to] annual “donations” originating in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates… in the region of $100 million annually (Dawn 2011).

According to a report by the Congress Research Service, Saudi Arabia has been found to be a supporter of terrorism as Saudi donors and charities give money to fundamentalists and terrorist groups (Branchard and Prados 2007: 1). Economic aid goes through charities and other organizations so that the Saudi government is not directly linked (Bell 2007: 20). For example, in a recent interview that I conducted with prominent Pakistani political activist and nuclear physicist Pervez Hoodbhoy, he narrated a recent incident in which a Saudi Airlines office in Islamabad was closed down because it was found to be a source of dissemination for madrassas funding (Hoodbhoy).

As Deobandism is similar to the Wahhabism, most Saudi donations are funneled to Deobandi organizations. As Figure 1 demonstrates, the number of Deobandi madrassas has exploded in the last fifteen years. Saudi petro-dollars that are intended to promote Wahhabist ideology have created Deobandi madrassas. The International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRF), a Saudi based charitable organization, has been found to give money to militant groups in Pakistan. After the 2010 Pakistani floods, IIRF provided relief aid to Pakistan but a large portion of the money went to Deobandi madrassas and fundamentalist groups. In addition, as Figure 2 demonstrates, the proportion of Deobandi madrassas and Deobandi
Muslims in Pakistan are skewed. Because there is the largest amount of Deobandi madrassas, most madrassas students obey a fundamentalist school of thought. Consequently, many analysts have concluded that the Saudi funding of Pakistani madrassas has led to the creation of Sunni extremists. For example, in an interview with PBS, Vali Nasr explained,

In order to have terrorists, in order to have supporters for terrorists, in order to have people who are willing to interpret religion in violent ways, in order to have people who are willing to legitimate crashing yourself into a building and killing 5,000 innocent people, you need particular interpretations of Islam. Those interpretations of Islam are being propagated out of schools that receive organizational and financial funding from Saudi Arabia. In fact, I would push it further: that these schools would not have existed without Saudi funding. They would not have proliferated across Pakistan and India and Afghanistan without Saudi funding. They would not have had the kind of prowess that they have without Saudi funding, and they would not have trained as many people without Saudi funding (2011).
Figure 1 Based on 2002 Report of Sindh Police in Dawn (Jan 16 2003) and the Central Board of Madrassas. Source: “Shia Genocide 101.” AlexPressed Jan 28 2013.

Figure 2 Compiled by a Pakistani social activist.
The impoverished madrassas students graduate only to reenter the world of religious extremism. Rather than become doctors, computer scientists or engineers, madrassas students become religious teachers or join militant organizations, such as the Taliban. Tehrik-i-Taliba Pakistan (TTP) or the “Student Movement of Pakistan” is Deobandi organization that was created originally to fight in Afghanistan. Not only does Saudi Arabia provide funding for madrassas, but it also backs Deobandi political organizations. For example, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) is currently one of the most active and dangerous anti-Shiite groups in Pakistan that Saudi Arabia provides financial backing. The Pakistani ISI openly supported LeJ until it was outlawed following the attacks of September 11, 2001. Now LeJ works with TTP and al-Qaeda in order to continue conducting terrorist acts in Punjab. A Pakistani Muslim cleric explained, “Saudi Arabia supports these groups. They want to keep Iranian influence in check in Pakistan, so they pay,” (Georgy 2012). As revealed through WikiLeaks, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton affirmed this statement by asserting that Saudi Arabia is a “critical financial support base” (CBS News 2013). She added that “Donors in Saudi Arabia constitute the most significant source of funding to Sunni terrorist groups worldwide” (Walsh 2010). LeJ has claimed responsibility for the recent Shiite attacks in Pakistan.

With the recent sectarian attacks in Pakistan, both Pakistani and Iranian Shiites have been dismayed at Iran’s lack of action. When Sunni activities
increased during the ninetees, Shia leaders in Lahore and Islamabad who Hassan Abbas recently conducted interviews with argued that, “Iran has been using Pakistan’s Shia for its own political interests and that Iran’s assistance did not protect Shia when Sunnis became more militant” (2010: 45). However, just as Saudi Arabia is suspected of supporting fundamental Sunni political parties, Iran is linked with Shiite political parties in Pakistan.Tehreek Nifaz Fiqah-e-Jafria (TNFJ) renamed Tehreek-e-Jaferia Pakistan (TJP) in 1992, has links to the Iranian religious class and commercial groups, according to the South Asian Terrorism Portal. The Shiite organization Sipah-e-Muhammad (SMP) was founded in the early 1990s due to acts carried out the Deobandi SSP, which focused on Iranian targets. SMP targets members of the SSP and LeJ. An informational religious website called *Haq Char Yaar*, asserts that the SMP headquarters in Lahore, which is an inaccessible area for government officials, contains numerous Iranian-made weapons. Furthermore, another Pakistani newspaper asserts that SMP members are trained and funded by Iran and have been targeting members of Sunni fundamentalist groups (Habib 2011). Part of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, the Quds Force is a specialized militant unit that has carried out attacks in Lebanon, Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan and is tasked with exporting “Iran’s Islamic revolution” (Wright 2008: 332). In October 2011, the US discovered a plot by the Quds force to assassinate the Saudi Ambassador to the U.S., Adel Al-Jubeir. The Quds Force cooperates with the Shiite SMP and in May 2011,
members of the SSP killed Saudi diplomat Hassan al-Qahtani in Karachi. According to at the Gateson Institute, the “link to the killing was allegedly proven by recorded messages between Iranian officials in Islamabad and members of the terrorist group” (Mahjar-Barducci 2011). It appears that Iran still has some involvement with Pakistani Shiites.

Whether or not the state of Iran or the Iranian ulema is still supporting Pakistani groups is still unclear from online data. Most of these political groups are underground and it is difficult to obtain information. The Saudi involvement is more apparent than Iranian participation in Pakistan. Regardless, many analysts believe that Iran will continue to aid its Shiite brothers in Pakistan. For example, renowned Pakistani journalist and Ahmed Rashid asserts,

Iran has been very involved in the Shia–Wahabi conflict in Pakistan since the 1980s and I see no reason why Iran should stop being involved. Now I don’t think it’s involved the way it was in the 1980s when there was very fierce competition between Wahabism and Shiism in Pakistan but, generally speaking, there is competition and the Iranians are certainly not going to abandon their Shia protégées in Pakistan (quoted in Christsen 2011: 39).

Therefore, it seems that in the times of need, Iran is supportive of its Shia brothers. Middle East expert Vatanka notes that,

Iran’s outreach to the Shia of Pakistan has historically fluctuated as a function of sectarian relations inside Pakistan and of Tehran’s overall relations with Islamabad. When sectarian tensions rise in Pakistan and Tehran-Islamabad relations are poor, Iran’s support for the Pakistani Shia has historically been at its strongest. In the early 1980s to the mid-1990s, for example, when sectarian tensions and violence expanded in Pakistan, the Iranian regime became a
strident supporter of the Shia and of militant Shiism. Now, given the deteriorating state of Shia-Sunni relations in Pakistan, and also given the fact that Iran’s clerical establishment is under attack by “Shiite nationalists” at home, conditions may be ripe for Iran to take renewed interest in the plight of Pakistan’s Shia once again (2012).

Vatanka and Rashid’s views signal that Iran will continue to support Pakistani Shiites despite the lack of conclusive evidence that it is currently doing so.

Pakistani Shiites often change their political tactics between cooperation, protest and violence. Following mass Shiite killings during the nineties, the ISO decided to reduce its tit-for-tat actions against Sunni militant groups. Instead, it worked with the Sunni ulema to resolve sectarian differences. However, in recent years, sectarian violence has increased and protests by the Shiite community may mean they are desperate for change and will try fighting once again. For example, after protests that the Shiite community led in 2009, several leaders of Sunni extremist groups were killed, supposedly by Shiite militants. In recent months, not only have there been Shiite targeted killings, but also Sunni victims. This indicates that Shiites groups are turning to tactics that Sunni extremists groups have been using.

It appears that Saudi Arabia’s funding of Pakistani madrassas and political groups has exceeded that of Iran’s support, and this has led to anti-Iranian sentiments in Pakistan, especially in political groups such as a LeJ. Not only do
these Sunni extremist groups target Pakistani Shiites, but they view Iranians as a threat. In an interview with Reuters, the SSP leader (LeJ’s parent group) explained that he believes that Iranian cultural centers and offices are covert intelligence offices (Hoodbhoy 2012). Average Pakistanis have also been influenced by anti-Persian sentiments. In my interview with Dr. Maqsudul Hasan Nuri, a Senior Research Scholar at the Institute of Regional Studies in Islamabad, he described how Pakistan is slowly moving away from its historical roots with Iran. For example, he noted how Pakistanis once said “Khuda Hafiz” which is a Persian form of goodbye. However, now Pakistanis more commonly say “Allah Hafiz” which is an Arabic way of saying goodbye. Furthermore, Pakistanis now call the holy month of fasting “Ramadan,” as it is pronounced when written in Arabic rather than the Persian and Urdu pronunciation, which is “Ramazan.” Because Urdu and Persian have the same alphabet, they pronounce words in a similar way (Nuri 2012). There is a slow and subtle transition in Pakistani society, in which it is losing its cultural roots with Iran and moving towards Saudi Arabia.

Pervez Hoodbhoy labels it a “Saudi-zation” of Pakistan, which means that Pakistan is changing its policies to ones that appease Saudi Arabia. In our interview, he described how Professor Fateh Muhammad Malik was dismissed following his attempts at starting a Farsi department at the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI). Hoodbhoy attributed his dismissal to active Saudis
intervention who subsequently installed an Arab in Malik’s position (Hoodbhoy 2012). The reputable Pakistani newspaper the Tribune noted that IIUI Arabic department faculty had complained to the Saudi embassy, which in turn expressed its disappointment with Malik’s liberal policies and accommodations to Pakistani Shiites. For example, Malik also invited Iranian ambassadors to an event, a move that Saudi officials advised him against. Furthermore, Malik signed Memorandums of Understanding with numerous Iranian universities and explained, “It is not the Zia era, the political reality has changed and we need the latest knowledge and technology to compete with the world.” In his attempts to open the International Islamic University Islamabad to the world, he was sent on leave for his progressive leanings.

Saudi Arabia’s use of soft power in funding madrassas and fundamentalist groups has most clearly manifested itself in increased sectarian conflict. In the last few years, Pakistan has experienced some of the highest incidents of sectarian conflict. Anti-Shiite groups, most of which are funded by Saudi Arabia and are Saudi proxies, have carried out most of the recent sectarian killings. In January 2002, President Pervez Musharraf banned the largest militant organizations, most notably Al Qaeda, SMP, TNFJ, SSP, LeJ, and TTP and for the next two years, there was a decrease in sectarian conflict. Pakistan began experiencing increased domestic stability in 2007 after which Musharraf resigned. Since he left office, the government has been largely ineffective in curbing the problem of sectarianism.
Militant groups have been able to carry out their activities and engage in retaliatory violence. “Pakistan has a conviction rate of 5-10 per cent at best, and significantly less in terrorism cases” (Fazli 2012: 3). Prosecutors involved in terrorism cases often dismiss the case because they receive death threats, and the government does nothing to provide them with security.

There has been a large amount of sectarian-motivated killings in Quetta, Karachi, Lahore and Jhang. Prior to 2000, most of the sectarian conflict occurred in the northwest of Pakistan, where the Taliban resided after leaving Afghanistan. These hardened fundamentalists first targeted the city of Paranichar or “Little Iran” because there was a large concentration of Shiites there. Recently, Karachi, Pakistan’s most populated city, has experienced a large amount of sectarian conflict. Analysts, such as Amir Rana, head of the Pakistani Institute of Peace Studies, attribute this to the presence of sectarian groups in Karachi, even ones that are banned such as SSP and LeJ (Rahman 2013). The province of Balochistan also experiences a large amount of sectarian violence, and this may be due to the concentration of ethnically Persian Shiite Hazaras. Since 1999, Sunni militants have massacred more than one thousand Hazaras in Balochistan. The Hazaras argue, “Our enemies are trying to paint us as Iranian sympathizers just because we are Shi’a. We are caught in the crossfire between some [Sunni] Arab states and Iran, and we are being massacred in their proxy war” (Siddique 2013). The anti-
Shiite group Lashkar-e-Jhangvi has claimed responsibility for most of the recent attacks.

Since the release of the head of LeJ, Malik Ishaq, in July 2011, attacks against the Shiite community have increased (Fazli 2012: 2). He was released because he renounced violence. According to the Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies Pakistan Security Report 2012, sectarian violence incidents and attacks increased by 53% in 2012 as compared to the prior year (2012: 1). Pakistani political analyst Huma Yusuf argues the sectarianism in Pakistan persists because militant organizations receive support from individuals, foreign agencies, Pakistani groups such as the ISI; the ineffectiveness of the Pakistani judicial system; persistence and lack of regulation of madrassas and political influence of sectarian organizations (2012: 6).
Figure 3 Source: Institute for Conflict Management, South Asian Terrorism Portal
Note: Although 2010 had the highest number of injured people, 2012 had the greatest incidents since 2007.

Figure 4 Source: “Policy Brief: Sectarian Violence.” Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies (Jan 2013): 1
Chapter 7: Findings

Due to Pakistan’s geostrategic location and large population, both Iran and Saudi Arabia found it beneficial to, respectively, become patrons of Shiites and Sunnis in Pakistan. Zia’s Islamization policies changed Pakistan’s inclusive character by making many Muslims in Pakistan more fundamentalist, and the Iranian Revolution caused Pakistani Shiites to fight for their rights. Consequent Saudi and Iranian support radicalized sectarian political groups, which began conducting violent attacks in Pakistan. The result of Saudi and Iranian intervention has been an indoctrination of fundamentalist beliefs and sectarian conflict in Pakistan. Whether or not the Iranian-Saudi rivalry is primarily due to sectarian differences, the competition has manifested itself in sectarian terms in Pakistan.

Currently, the Iranian-Saudi rivalry appears to be more of a one sided proxy war that Saudi Arabia is waging against Iran. Saudi Arabia has been aggressive with its funding of Pakistani groups in the last decade because it feels that Iran is expanding its sphere of influence in the Middle East and that an Iranian nuclear weapon is imminent. The rise of Deobandi madrassas indicates that Saudi Arabia has been able to channel its petro-dollars into organizations that further propagate fundamentalist and pro-Saudi views. Furthermore, the rise of
sectarian incidents in recent years demonstrates that the product of Deobandi madrassas, Sunni militants, act upon what they have been taught at madrassas.

Although Iran has visibly reduced its support of Pakistani Shiite groups, it may still be doing so by transfer of funds through religious charities or other underground tactics. Iran has a past of regional intervention, despite the threat of any looming danger (Al-Mani 1996: 80). Furthermore, Iran is known to “engage in espionage, proxy warfare, covert operations and a variety of other activities intended to influence regional outcomes in their favor” (Tope 2012). Its use of proxies throughout the Middle East is seen as an attempt at balancing Saudi Arabia and achieving regional hegemony. The alliance of Sunni monarchies favors Saudi Arabia’s regional influence. Therefore, Iran finds it easiest to challenge their power by patronizing insurgent Shiite groups, such as the Houthis in Yemen and Shiites in Bahrain. Recently, GCC countries put forth a statement, “The council expressed its rejection and condemnation of the continuing Iranian interference in the affairs of the Gulf Cooperation Council's states and called on Iran to stop these policies” (Al-Jazeera 2012). Most of the proxies that Iran supports are Shiites, with a notable exception of Hamas in Palestine. However, Hamas is not fighting a Shiite enemy, and instead its opponent is Israel. In Iran’s foreign policy, it is important that a Muslim group is successful against a non-Muslim side. It is important to note that Iran patronizes Shiites against Sunnis, but has never supported a Sunni group that targets Shiites.
In recent years, the international community has been speculating on when Iran will finally have nuclear weapons. Several states have argued that in a year, Iran will possess weapons of mass destruction. The United States, Saudi Arabia and Israel are especially concerned because a nuclear-armed Iran may be more likely to achieve regional hegemony and threaten states in the Middle East. Iranians believe their nation “has been deprived of its ‘rightful’ status as a regional superpower by foreign intervention, including the Russian, British, and American” (Baghat 2006: 323). Combined with the historical Sunni majority oppression of Shiite minorities, Iranians feel they must reassert themselves as a regional power. Kam argues, “The regime’s apparent expectation is that the acquisition of nuclear weapons, with all the attendant prestige, would become a central element in building Iran’s hegemony” (2010: 40). Most countries in the Middle East have a negative view of Iran and do not want it to become regional hegemon.

Currently in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia is balancing Iran and if Iran were to acquire nuclear weapons, it would challenge Saudi Arabia’s regional influence. Regardless, Saudi Arabia has made it clear that it will not accept a nuclear-armed Iran and may attempt to purchase nuclear weapons from Pakistan. Pakistan is unmistakably caught in the middle of a Saudi-Iranian rift. Should Iran choose to finally build a nuclear weapon, Pakistan may have to provide technology to Saudi Arabia and have a hostile nuclear-armed neighbor, or lose
Saudi Arabia’s financial backing and suffer economically. In order to avoid such a scenario, Pakistan has been trying to dissuade Iranian officials from pursuing nuclear technology for the past decade. However, Pakistan cannot afford to abide by international sanctions on Iran because it needs Iranian energy sources for domestic consumption. As a result, Pakistan recently finalized the Pipeline Project with Iran.

One of the most serious and dangerous implications of Iran acquiring nuclear weapons is that it will become more aggressive in its use of unconventional warfare. Because Iran already has a history of supporting proxies throughout the Muslim world, it will most likely continue that trend. Furthermore, groups such as Hamas, Hezbollah and Bahraini Shiites may become more aggressive and assertive in their demands and actions. Historically, when a significant event occurred involving Shiites or Sunnis, their Shiite or Sunni brothers in other states were emboldened. For example, after the Iranian Revolution in 1979, Shiites throughout the Middle East demanded more rights. Additionally, Sunni extremists in Iraq have been emboldened by events in Syria. Iraqi Sunnis are now protesting against their Shiite government, calling for changes in anti-terrorist laws that have led to the imprisonment of many Sunnis (Arraf 2013). The Arab Spring also caused Bahraini Shiite to protest against their Sunni monarchy.
According to the stability-instability paradox, when states gain nuclear weapons, they are emboldened in lower levels of conflict. For example, states are more likely to engage in unconventional warfare and support proxies. Based on this theory, a nuclear-armed Iran will be emboldened in its use of unconventional warfare. First, I do not believe Iran will resort to conventional war because of the system of alliances built up that oppose Iran. For example, the GCC is a Sunni coalition of Arab states that are suspicious of Iran’s motives. Winning a conventional war in the Middle East would be near impossible due to the sheer number of enemies against Iran. Second, Iran may become more aggressive in its patronization of proxies. Last year, Daniel Byman, a Middle East researcher, noted that,

Disturbingly, Iran’s support for terrorism has become more aggressive in recent years, motivated by a mix of fear and opportunism. Iran could become even more aggressive in the years to come, exploiting the perceived protection it would gain if it developed a nuclear weapon or, if thwarted through military force or other means, using terrorists to vent its anger and take revenge (2012: 1).

Clearly, as Iran inches closer to acquiring nuclear weapons, it is becoming more aggressive with its use of proxies. The Arab Spring had caused Iran to not only has become involved in more conflicts, but also become more aggressive with its funding. Iran probably wants to gain favor with the new governments in the Middle East. However, this thesis is not how a nuclear-armed Iran will impact the Middle East, but rather specifically Pakistan.
In my opinion, a nuclear-armed Iran does not mean nuclear war for Pakistan. If Iran were to acquire nuclear weapons, they would, figuratively, not even be aimed towards Pakistan. Nuclear deterrence theory would uphold, and consequently Iran and Pakistan will not go to nuclear war. However, that is not to say that stability will result. According to Waltz, “Policymakers and citizens in the Arab world, Europe, Israel, and the United States should take comfort from the fact that history has shown that where nuclear capabilities emerge, so, too, does stability” (quoted in Tope 2012). However, evidence points to the contrary. When the US and USSR both had nuclear weapons, stability did not result. When India and Pakistan both had nuclear weapons, stability did not result. Similarly, Pakistan is in the middle of a Saudi-Iranian competition and when Iran acquires nuclear weapons, stability will not result. Saudi Arabia is attempting to make Pakistan a Wahhabi nation and a direct enemy of Iran.

As time progresses and Iran continues on its path of uranium enrichment, Saudi Arabia (and the US and Israel) are becoming more concerned about an Iranian nuclear weapon. As Saudi Arabia become more insecure, it wants to ensure its allies are against Iran and that Iran does not interfere in other states. Iran’s involvement in the Middle East during the Arab Spring and consequent GCC reprimands support the fact that Saudi Arabia is effective in turning its allies against Iran. By funding madrassas and Sunni militant groups, Saudi Arabia has effectively turned a significant portion of the Pakistani population into anti-Shiite,
anti-Iranian Wahhabi style militants. If Iran were to acquire nuclear weapons, these groups, such as LeJ and SSP, would not tolerate a Shiite reaction in Pakistan. Furthermore, just as Saudi Arabia supported Sunni fundamentalist groups in order to suppress Shiite protests and an Iranian influence in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia will probably do so again. I believe that Saudi Arabia will not likely tolerate Shiites becoming more aggressive if Iran acquires nuclear weapons. It may put down a Pakistani Shiite protest as it did with Shiites in Bahrain. Regardless of the sequences in which the events unfold, Pakistan will probably experience domestic instability.

I believe that Pakistan will experience instability after Iran acquires nuclear weapons because Pakistan has a divided population. The general Pakistani population is not too concerned about who is Sunni or Shiite but fundamentalist groups in Pakistan are attempting to propagate their ideological views. The Saudi and Iranian involvement in Pakistan during the 1980s planted the seeds for sectarian violence, and therefore the sectarian-driven attacks that are occurring in Pakistan today are a result of the Saudi-Iranian proxy war. However, due to what may be a lack of evidence, the proxy war appears to be one sided because Saudi proxies, such as LeJ and SSP, are successfully massacring Shiite communities. However, that is not to say that Shiites are the only victims and are dismayed from carrying out any attacks. Shiites have still been reacting to the violence conducted by Sunni militant groups.
The most direct effect of a nuclear-armed Iran on Pakistan is that Shiites in Pakistan will be emboldened. After becoming more aggressive, they will likely appeal to Iran for increased support. The stability-instability paradox applied to a nuclear-armed Iran and Pakistan spells out domestic instability and increased sectarian conflict in Pakistan due to Iran’s use of unconventional warfare. As Iran already has a history of supporting proxies in Pakistan, I believe that Iran will become more aggressive in its use of unconventional warfare and will increase its funding of Shiite groups in Pakistan. However, Iran utilizing conventional warfare is unlikely because its resources are stretched patronizing different proxies throughout the Muslim world. Therefore, Iran will increase its use of unconventional warfare, as it did in Pakistan after the Iranian Revolution when it helped form Shiite militant groups that protected Pakistani Shiites and fought Sunni militants. Based on the stability-instability paradox, Iran would be likely to fund Pakistani Shiites because in Pakistan, Shiites are facing a Sunni enemy. Furthermore, Iran’s past of getting involved in regional conflicts, specifically in support of Shiite minorities, increases the likelihood of Iran getting involved extensively in Pakistan.

The first step in triggering domestic instability in Pakistan is when Shiites become aggressive after Iran acquires nuclear weapons. The increased Iranian support, as based on the stability-instability will fuel Shiites to become more hostile and will incite a reaction from Sunni militants. Because Saudi Arabia has
heavily funded Sunni militants in Pakistan, they will not tolerate a Shiite insurgency. Furthermore, Sunni militants will likely be capable of fighting newly aggressive Shiites. If they are not, Saudi Arabia will continue its support of Sunni groups, or may get involved itself like it did in Bahrain, to make sure they are able to defeat any Shiite rebellion in Pakistan.

Regardless of the sequence of events, the stability-instability paradox predicts a situation in which Pakistan experiences domestic instability because it is the target of unconventional warfare on behalf of Iran. If Iran were to acquire nuclear weapons, not only would it become more aggressive but also so will all the proxies that it supports. There is evidence that Iran supported Shiite groups in Pakistan such as the SMP after the Iranian Revolution and may continue to do so. Those groups will probably become more active in carrying out sectarian-driven attacks. In the already hostile environment in Pakistan, Sunni militants will most likely react to an emboldened group of Shiites aggressively. In such circumstances, Iran and Saudi Arabia are more probable to support their proxies in Pakistan for a heightened proxy war. The result is a fragmented Pakistani population that is domestically unstable under the weight of sectarian-driven attacks.

The stability-instability paradox also presumes that Pakistan will engage in an unconventional war with Iran by supporting Sunni militant groups. However, it would be logical to assume that Pakistan would not participate in an
unconventional war with Iran because of the failing economy, energy crisis and lack of infrastructure within the country. However, these issues did not stop the government and ISI from supporting Sunni extremist groups within Pakistan and the Afghan Taliban. There are speculations that factions of the Pakistani ISI currently support Sunni militant groups and also did following the Iranian Revolution. As a Pakistani who is worried about the government’s failure to provide for its citizens, I would hope that the government would not use its resources to support an unconventional war against Iran. Nevertheless, if Shiite groups are emboldened in Pakistan and appeal to Iran for funding, I believe that Pakistan will continue its support of Sunni proxy groups within the country. Even if Pakistan does not participate in unconventional war with a nuclear-armed Iran, Pakistani Sunni militant groups will fight against Iranian proxies regardless of the Pakistani government’s support. Saudi Arabia’s funding has affected the hearts and minds of Pakistani Sunnis and transformed them into hardliner Deobandi militants, and this ensures that a proxy war will continue even without the Pakistani government’s assistance.
Conclusion

The main question I answered in this paper is how the stability-instability paradox helps explain why the Saudi-Iranian proxy war will cause Pakistan to experience domestic instability and sectarian conflict once Iran acquires nuclear weapons. The stability-instability paradox states that nuclear weapons bring strategic stability but encourage the use of unconventional warfare and limit conventional war. This is an important topic because many believe that Iran is likely to develop nuclear weapons in the near future and an Iranian nuclear weapon will have grave consequences for its neighbor, Pakistan, a country that is already domestically fragile. I researched this topic because an Iranian nuclear weapon spells out a dangerous situation for Pakistan. In order to understand how Pakistan will be affected if Iran develops the bomb, I applied the stability-instability paradox to the relationship between Pakistan and a nuclear-armed Iran. As Pakistan slowly lost its secularity during the 1980s, the population and state became more Islamized and experienced increased sectarian conflict. Furthermore, it changed its relationship with both Iran and Saudi Arabia.

By funding madrassas and then aiding in the creation of militant groups, Saudi Arabia made soft power an instrument of its foreign policy and was able to ingrain a Deobandi and Wahhabi school of thought in many of Pakistan’s Muslims. In doing so, it turned Pakistani Sunnis against Shiites and Iran. Another
consequence of encouraging Deobandi ideology in Pakistan is a divided population that targets one another. In my opinion, Saudi Arabia does not want Pakistan to become sympathetic to Iran. For example, it was revealed through WikiLeaks that UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed said that “Saudi Arabia suspects that Zardari is Shia, thus creating Saudi concern of a Shia triangle in the region between Iran, the Maliki government in Iraq, and Pakistan under Zardari” (Guardian 2010). I believe that Saudi Arabia’s paranoia regarding an alliance between Iran and Pakistan fuels its support of Pakistan Sunni militants groups so that the population becomes anti-Shiite and anti-Iranian at the grassroots level.

The Pakistani state has been unable to counter the rise of sectarianism. Weak and often corrupt institutions are ineffective in solving the issue and historically, Pakistan has had several corrupt governments. According to Fazli, the “key challenge is not that ‘society’ is becoming more extreme, but [that] an increasingly permissive legal environment where violence spreads and violent groups proliferate without the threat of punishment” allows sectarian conflict to persist. (2012: 2). I have seen some instances of a grassroots movement on social media that call for an end to sectarian violence. However, it is difficult for an average Pakistani citizen to reach out to hardened militants and convince them to abandon their madrassa teachings. Until support for madrassas and political
militant groups discontinues, Sunni militants will exist. These groups often skew Islam and instead teach hatred. Madrassas introduced sectarianism to Pakistan.

I encountered several problems while researching and writing my thesis. First, as mentioned earlier, there was a lack of information. Conducting field research with militant groups would have been dangerous and near impossible. Furthermore, it was difficult to obtain official information regarding religious funding because Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Iran does not document all religious donations. Next, there was a problem with credibility and reliability of the sources. Some sources that I used may not have been credible. However, I tried to include information that other sources mentioned. Lastly, one of the biggest problems with my thesis is that it is hypothetical. I decided to research a nuclear-armed Iran because I believe it to be likely in the near future. Nevertheless, it is possible that Iran eventually gives in to the international community’s demands and does not develop the bomb. Furthermore, Iran may be so tied up with its proxies in the Middle East that when Pakistani Shiites appeal to Iran for aid, it does not give its support. Regardless, I did attempt to make predictions based closely on Iran’s past support of Shiite groups.

Considering these problems, if I were to continue with this research project, I would conduct field research. I would speak with members of Sunni and Shiite militant groups in order to discover their linkages with Saudi Arabia and Iran. Moreover, I would ask Shiite groups how they view Iran and if they a
nuclear-armed Iran would encourage them to become more militant. I would also speak with Saudi and Iranian ambassadors to Pakistan in order to explore their involvement in Pakistan. For example, I would be interested to know how much funding they provide to Pakistan and who the recipients are.

The conclusions that I formulated in this thesis were based on the stability-instability paradox. Because this hypothesis is predictive, it is not yet falsifiable. However, once Iran does acquire nuclear weapons, my hypothesis can be falsified by showing that Iran is not supporting Pakistani Shiite militant groups and by demonstrating that sectarian conflict has not increased in Pakistan. The null hypothesis, that there is no relationship between a nuclear-armed Iran and instability in Pakistan, appears to be unsupported by evidence. If Pakistan experiences domestic instability and increased sectarian conflict once Iran acquires nuclear weapons, my hypothesis will support the stability-instability paradox.

In order to avoid a situation in which Pakistan experiences domestic instability, the government should be careful of foreign aid that is transferred to religious schools and political groups. Furthermore, Pakistan should strengthen its ban of extremist groups, as it did under Musharraf’s rule, in order to ensure that these groups cannot operate. Currently, the government disables cell phone service in specific areas on days on which it believes terrorist acts will be carried out in order to disrupt communication between people that may be plotting an
attack. It should continue with policies such as these to ensure the safety of its citizens. Lastly, the Pakistani government should try to encourage an inclusive environment and sense of nationhood that is true to Jinnah’s dream. Pakistan should return to its secular foundations and extend rights to all minorities. In doing so, I hope that Pakistan loses its Deobandi character and is able to return to its colorful culture and rich traditions that I hold so close to my heart.
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