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Military Philanthropy Won't Change Pakistan's Priorities

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| October 20, 2010

| [Malou Innocent](#) ^[2]

Today's *Wall Street Journal* reports that the Obama administration is planning to increase military assistance to Pakistan, in the hope that this assistance will encourage Pakistan to do more to fight militants that frequently attack U.S. forces in Afghanistan.

This is silly.

As chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee Carl Levin (D-MI) [wrote](#) ^[3] recently:

“[T]he Pakistan military continued to avoid military engagements that would put it in direct conflict with Afghan Taliban or al-Qa’ida forces in North Waziristan. This is as much a political choice as it is a reflection of an under-resourced military prioritizing its targets.”

To some extent, Pakistan’s conventional military lacks the troops and equipment it needs to launch a full-scale clearing operation in North Waziristan. Nevertheless, [Pakistan also continues to assist select militant groups in order to reinforce Islamist bonds across its borders](#) ^[4] as a buffer against Indian encirclement. That's an open secret.

No amount of pressure or persuasion will affect Pakistan’s decision to tackle extremism because its priorities are tied directly to that strategic interest, despite what U.S. officials would have you believe. I’ve spoken with analysts at the State Department and they get this, so it’s beyond me as to why U.S. policymakers ignore these core issues and realities.

More by

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