

## Implications of Linking Development Assistance with Military Expenditure in South Asia

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### Conflicts in South Asia

South Asia<sup>1</sup> has had a history of violent conflicts since the end of British rule during the late 1940s. The most damaging conflict in the region is between India and Pakistan. As these countries account for most of the military expenditure in the region, this paper is largely confined to the conflict between India and Pakistan. However, China has an important bearing on the defence policies of South Asian countries (especially those of India). This has been taken into account in the paper.

The conflict between India and Pakistan has its genesis in the creation of the two countries. The partition of British India on religious grounds (Hindu-Muslim) in 1947 to create the independent states of India and Pakistan was accompanied by massive sectarian violence. Scores of thousands belonging to both religious groups lost their lives, and millions were made refugees. The tragedy of partition, which has left deep scars in both communities, was followed soon by a short war over Kashmir, which was claimed by both India and Pakistan. Since then India and Pakistan have fought two bitter wars, in 1965 and 1971. Pakistan was especially hurt by the 1971 war as it lost its eastern wing, which became Bangladesh. In spite of occasional moves towards reconciliation, hostilities have continued.

The most serious dispute between India and Pakistan concerns Kashmir (see **Appendix**). The other sources of tension between India and Pakistan include their nuclear weapons programs and the treatment of minorities. India's alleged role in the ethnic conflict in Pakistan (particularly in Karachi) has also added to the tension.

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<sup>1</sup>South Asia is dominated by India. In terms of area, population and economic strength, India is by far the largest country in the region. The other countries included in the region are: Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives. China, which shares borders with many of these countries, is an important player in the region. Burma also has common border with countries in the region.