



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on January 9, 2018

## Trump Calls Aid to Pakistan “Foolish” and Rand Paul’s Bill to End That Aid a “Good Idea”

President Trump has followed up on a tweet he made on January 1: “The United States has foolishly given Pakistan more than 33 billion dollars in aid over the last 15 years, and they have given us nothing but lies & deceit, thinking of our leaders as fools. They give safe haven to the terrorists we hunt in Afghanistan, with little help. No more!”

Another announcement made on that day by a National Security Council official stated: “The United States does not plan to spend the \$255 million in [Fiscal Year] 2016 Foreign Military Financing for Pakistan at this time.”



According to a January 6 report from VOA News, “Trump appears to be ratcheting up the pressure on Pakistan, suggesting he would be in favor of cutting all aid to Islamabad over the government’s refusal to take more decisive action against terrorism.” (Voice of America [VOA] is a U.S. government-funded international news source that serves as the federal government’s official institution for non-military, external broadcasting.)

Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.) weighed in on the matter of U.S. aid to Pakistan in a tweet on January 4: “I’m introducing a bill to end aid to Pakistan in the coming days. My bill will take the money that would have gone to Pakistan and put it in an infrastructure fund to build roads and bridges here at home.”

The next day, Trump replied to Paul in a tweet: “Good idea Rand!”

While the unnamed official cited by Fox News on January 1 gave the amount of military aid to Pakistan that would be withheld as \$255 million, the VOA News report on January 6 cited a much higher figure — \$1.9 billion in aid — given by another unnamed senior administration official. However, that statement suggested that the suspension was a temporary measure, not the permanent cancellation of aid advocated by Paul.

“I just want to be clear that it’s been suspended. Nothing has been reappropriated,” VOA quoted the official as saying. “We’re hopeful that we can lift the suspension and the aid will be able to go forward.” However, the report noted, the official also warned that the Pakistani government had pushed President Trump’s patience past its limits.

“He’s monitoring Pakistan and how Pakistan has responded to our requests,” the official said. “It was a matter of frustration. The kinds of information that were coming to him were not satisfying.”

“There has been ample time for Pakistan to show that it is taking our requests seriously,” the official added, describing the U.S. requests as “very clear.” “Unfortunately, we have not seen the type of meaningful action we are seeking.”



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But Pakistani army spokesman Major-General Asif Ghafoor told VOA that the U.S. action is a meaningless deterrent that would serve only to undermine security cooperation and regional peace efforts.

“Pakistan never fought for money but for peace,” said Ghafoor.

The general also denied U.S. allegations that Pakistan was giving either the Taliban or the Haqqanis any sort of safe haven from which they can attack U.S. forces in neighboring Afghanistan.

VOA News also cited a January 8 statement from a Pentagon spokesman who said the United States had conveyed to Pakistan “concrete steps” to take before the United States would resume hundreds of millions of dollars in aid, which was suspended after President Trump indicated Pakistan had lied and deceived the United States while providing safe havens to terrorists fighting in Afghanistan.

The next day, in a speech to the Islamabad-based, government-sponsored Institute for Strategic Studies, Pakistan’s Defense Minister Khurram Dastgir Khan said there is “... a wide field of intelligence cooperation and defense cooperation [with NATO], which we have suspended.” But he added that the supply lines for NATO troops in Afghanistan, formally known as the Ground Lines of Communication or the Air Lines of Communication, were still open.

In his address, Khan also told the United States that it needs Pakistan in its fight against terrorism in Afghanistan. “A reminder is in order. Logistics trump strategy,” he said.

In a January 7 interview with CBS’s *Face the Nation*, CIA Director Mike Pompeo said, “The president has made very clear that he needs Pakistan to cease being a safe haven for terrorists that threaten the United States of America. End. Period. Full stop.”

A press release posted on Paul’s Senate webpage on January 2 applauded the Trump administration for its decision to maintain its block on sending \$255 million in military aid to Pakistan. Paul also reiterated his support for the president’s tweet on January 1 that Pakistan has given the U.S. “nothing but lies & deceit” in exchange for billions of aid.

Paul stated in his release:

I cannot in good conscience look away as America crumbles at home, and politicians tax us to send the money to corrupt and duplicitous regimes abroad. I wholeheartedly agree with President Trump on this. The U.S. has given \$34 billion in direct aid and military reimbursements to Pakistan since 2002. That is not putting America first, and I will introduce new legislation in the coming days to stop aid to Pakistan.

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