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## Pakistan Reaches Out to Old Afghan Enemies

By John Glaser

October 27, 2012

Pakistan has begun to [reach out diplomatically](#) to some of its traditional enemies in Afghanistan, a policy shift that could have a crucial impact on post-2014 Afghan government and stability.

Islamabad has always supported the Afghan Taliban, a Pashtun movement, especially as a hedge against foreign influence and to counter the sway of its arch nemesis India.

But Pakistan is reportedly making overtures to non-Pashtun Afghan groups, many of whom are enemies of the Taliban, with the aim of some sort of inclusive political settlement.

Pakistan still does see the Taliban as a worthwhile proxy, but not an entirely reliable one. One quirk of this strategic relationship is that Taliban-allied groups inside Pakistan view Islamabad as their enemy.

“A Taliban victory on the other side of the border would give a huge boost to domestic militants fighting the Pakistani state,” journalist Zahid Hussain tells The Associated Press.

“These concerns have led Pakistan to the conclusion that a peace agreement that includes all Afghan groups is in its best interests,” AP reports experts as saying, “and contact with its traditional foes among the non-Pashtuns is necessary to achieve that goal.”

“I think the fundamental point here is that there is a serious realization among some people who matter in Pakistan that they can’t continue to put all their eggs in the Taliban basket because it is too shaky,” said Yusuf. “This is a major shift, and a shift that I think everybody should welcome.

It is possible that recent improvements, from historic lows last year, in the US-Pakistan relationship are influencing Islamabad towards this policy shift. But these moves are only preliminary, and many experts continue to warn the US-backed Kabul government is too weak, and the country primed for civil war, once the Americans draw down forces in 2014.