



A Perspective of Contemporary Pak-US Relationship

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Abstract:

Despite its feeble economy and political instability, the Pakistan's geostrategic position allows it to enjoy broader significance for the American interests in the region. Since the independence of Pakistan, the two sides remained engaged with each other, but various ebbs and cons have stained these relations. After the 9/11 incident, Pakistan became the front line state in the US Global War on Terror (WOT). Islamabad played a significant part in eliminating the scourge of terrorism globally. However, despite its active role in the WOT, Pakistan's contribution has not been appropriately appreciated, particularly in economic and military assistance. The US policy of South Asia hardly reflects Pakistan's perspective, which certainly echoes the mistrust in both countries. Hence, to ensure her security, mainly vis-à-vis its arch-rival India, Pakistan has to look for other options in its foreign policy choices like China and Russia. For maintaining the dynamics of power balancing in the region, Islamabad seems to revisit its ties with the US, particularly amid the changing environment of 21st-century international politics. The future of Pak-US relations has to be viewed in accordance with Pakistan's geostrategic significance in the region and the dominant American position in the global system.

Keywords: Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, USA, Relations, foreign policy, 9/11, South Asia,

INTRODUCTION

The Pak-US relationship requires deep insights to examine the nature of the relationship between the two sides since Pakistan's independence. More studies about the earliest interactions between the two countries reveal the true extent, scope, influence, and transformation of this complicated relationship (Amin & Naseer, 2013). In the bipolar world system, the US policymakers started to consider Pakistan as an important state, for the newly born country could fall into the orbit of communism, leading to a regional shift in the balance of power in favor of the Soviet Union (Kheli, 1982). The First Pakistani Prime Minister, Liaqat Ali Khan, chose to visit the United States instead of the Soviet Union when Pakistan was passing through the earliest phase of establishing its diplomatic connections with the world (Abbas, 2004). The Prime Minister's visit to the US is still considered an engagement that instituted the ties between the two economies and simultaneously a visit that also kept Pakistan inclined towards the US.

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A few years later, when Pakistan had to adopt a defensive stance in its war with India, the US policy contours towards Pakistan started to appear more blatantly. The war of 1965 exhibited Washington's stance on the Kashmir issue and unveiled the policy of arms sale or supply to Pakistan. The US did not rescue its ally in the war despite Pakistan being entirely under the American influence and shadows since it had signed the Southeast Treaty Organization (SEATO) and Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) accords (Hasnat, 2014). The war shaped the clash of interest between the two countries because Pakistan's expectations were not fully met, and the US response to Kashmir policy also remained minute. President Ayub Khan soon realized that the Kashmir solution has to be taken on international forums. The US was not eagerly assisting Pakistan in resolving and mitigating long-standing strategic issues (Kheli, 1982). The divergence of interests brought the initial phase of the relationship in jeopardy; however, Pakistan's strategically vital locality not only kept it alive but as an important part of US foreign policy. Having failed to get substantial US support in the 1965 and 1971 wars, the disintegration of Pakistan could not be prevented, for no real effort was made by the US for its client state. Regional developments and some vital events also compelled Islamabad and Washington to push the interests aside and ensure close coordination and liaison in both countries' interest.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the late 1970s turned the tables again; being adjacent to Afghanistan; Pakistan became a vital regional country for the US. President General Zia Ul Haq wished to grab the opportunity of having a strategic location by offering the US full support in its war against communist Russia. Although General Zia faced a stern internal response over Afghan policy that was mainly relying on promoting Jihad, the policy legitimized his regime (Haqqani, 2010). Meanwhile, the then US president Jimmy Carter had underlined some other priorities instead of exclusively defeating the Soviets in Afghanistan. Therefore, he gave Pakistan minute aid, which General Zia rejected, calling it a "peanut." After President Carter, President Ronald Regan swarmed in, and his administration wanted to defeat the Soviet Union in Afghanistan with an active Pakistani role. The time was ripe for Pakistan to upgrade its nuclear weapon as Islamabad was facing a serious nuclear challenge from its rival India. It is said that President Regan's administration kept its eyes shut despite knowing the reality that Pakistan was developing nuclear weapons at a sheer pace. Thus, Regan's deliberate silence was taken as assistance from the US, and then new phase of US-Pak relations started. Regan gave substantial aid to Pakistan, including the restoration of military aid by which Pakistan also got F16 jet fighters (Baxter, 1993). Such stance of the Regan government tied the relationship between the two countries, which history treats as a good omen.

After President Regan, George Bush senior who was operating from the White House decided to limit Pakistani aid, and it resulted in the decline of US-Pak relations, but conversely, the Pentagon was keen to keep the momentum of the relationship going. A few years later, the Clinton administration was sworn in, and it decided to employ the arms control and disarmament policy with full commitment. The US backed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in the UN General Assembly (Kux, 2001). By the time Pakistan had successfully prepared nuclear weapons, and in 1998, retaliating to the Indian nuclear tests, Islamabad tested its nuclear devices. Consequent to the nuclear test, the US imposed sanctions upon Pakistan, and during his visit to South Asia, President Clinton paid only a few hours of visit to Pakistan. During his brief stay in Islamabad, Clinton

stressed the restoration of the democratic process in the host country, which was shunned by General Pervez Musharraf's military regime (Kux, 2001).

PAK-US RELATIONS IN THE POST 9/11 ERA

After the catastrophic incident of 9/11, Washington was much closer to India than Pakistan. It would not be out of context to highlight that on the other side, Pakistan was facing numerous challenges, particularly in economic sectors, as the World Bank reports were showing no positive signs for the Pakistani economy. The debt was increasing, the financial hubs were not generating as per their capacity, infrastructure was feeble, and the homegrown products were facing international market competition. Thus, the entire bizarre situation in Pakistan led the social fabric to Islamic extremism and militancy (Akhtar, 2012). The incident of 9/11 transformed the American global policy, and Pakistan also had to make sharp changes in its foreign policy, particularly towards the US.

Moreover, after the US declared war on Afghanistan, Pakistan had to alter the years-long policy towards Kabul. The US blamed the Afghan Taliban for the deadliest attacks of its history. Therefore, the Bush Administration demanded Osama Bin Laden (OBL) from the Taliban regime. The Taliban leadership denied such demand, and eventually, the US waged war against Afghanistan. To achieve the required results successfully, Washington needed a trusted regional ally that could logistically support the American War on Terror in Afghanistan following the policy crafted by the Bush administration (Hasnat, 2014). The US was also seeking international legitimacy for the attack inside Afghanistan; thus, it tabled the case in UNGA that subsequently passed a resolution permitting the US to use force against Afghanistan. On the other hand, Article V of the NATO treatise was for the first time invoked against a rival (Bailey & Immerman, 2015).

As Afghanistan is a landlocked country, Washington's requirement for an adjacent state having a coastal-bed also increased. The need to establish arrangements for getting logistic support and a continuous supply of food and ammunition were the requirement of military maneuverings inside Afghanistan. Thus the strategic locality of Pakistan emerged as the most suitable option for fulfilling all such necessities. Conversely, Pakistan facing economic degradation and looming threats from India, decided to be part of the War on Terror (WOT) and became the frontline ally of the US (Ali, 2016). Pakistan supported the US stance on WOT and provided every possible means by which US-led NATO forces dislodged the Taliban regime in just a few days.

After the decision to intervene Afghanistan, the US started to employ all the resources to make the attack legitimate and backed by the majority of the world. Initially, diplomatic channels were made operational. The Pakistani embassy in the US was contacted soon after the attack, and then the US ambassador in Pakistan, Wendy Chamberlain, met President Pervez Musharraf and tabled seven demands (Musharraf, 2006). Several rounds of negotiations took place between the countries in which the US demanded the air space and support in logistics and intelligence gathering and sharing. President Musharraf narrated that 9/11 is a massive tragedy, and the event has hit the ego of a superpower. Therefore, a stern reaction like "wounded bear" became necessary for the US. A phone call made to the Pakistani President by US secretary of state Collin Powell in a very candid way (threatened) "*you are either with us or against us*" (Musharraf, 2006). At that time, several

theories emerged that whether Pakistan should be part of a new war or keep itself detached from the latest deadliest developments.

Moreover, a serious debate started in Pakistan that could Islamabad afford the refusal to join the American block (war against Taliban and Al-Qaeda)? Without an iota of doubt, the answer was no, never, and not at all! Pakistan was also under serious domestic pressure of joining the war with full commitment or otherwise (Jabeen, 2009). As soon as Pakistan decided to join the US war on terror, the Bush administration started to reduce economic and military sanctions imposed on Pakistan under Brownback II. A compensation amount was given to Pakistan in the name of economic recovery. However, it was again not as substantial as was expected. Islamabad had to convolute itself in the WOT, and this war was quite different from the war of the 1980s and to the earlier proxy wars (Jabeen, 2009).

Despite these new glitches and the snags Pakistan already had, it joined hands with the US and its allies. Pakistan provided logistic assistance to the Americans without signing any prior accord/agreement. Four airbases of Sindh and Baluchistan, namely; Pasni, Dalbandin, Shamsi, and Jacobabad, were offered to the US for their logistic and combat missions in Afghanistan. Being a part of the new global war, Pakistan underwent a nearly US\$ 10 billion economic loss in the initial year in addition to the dangers of a growing number of militants and sympathizers of the Taliban at Pakistan's territory (Abbas, 2004). The Pakistan armed forces started to eliminate the hazard of terrorists taking shelter in the FATA and northern areas of Pakistan.

On the other hand, in 2004, the US initiated Drone Strikes in Pakistan, calling it a better option to rout terrorists and their highly sophisticated hideouts in the country's border areas (Bergen & Tiedemann, 2012). Year by year, the number of drone strikes increased, killing terrorists by drone attacks. However, the drones eliminated hundreds of militants and became a reason for the killing of innocent civilians. 2011 was a year that turned out to be a disastrous period for Pak-US relations because a series of events led to both sides' trust deficit and reservations. The Raymond Davis issue, the American operation in Abbottabad to kill OBL, and the Salala Check post-incident were the events that shook the relationship between the two countries (Mahmood, Farooq, & Karim, 2015). Despite all these inadequacies in recent times, Pakistan is still a state with plenty to offer to the US concluding its campaign in Afghanistan. Hence, denying Pakistan's sacrifices and cooperation in the international peace-seeking efforts would pose several questions which the US government will not be able to respond appropriately. However, the world community still acknowledges Pakistan's role in bringing tranquility and sustainable peace on the earth.

Impact of 9/11 on the Realignment of Pak-US Relations

The catastrophic event of 9/11 revitalized the Pak-US relationship once again. Before the tragic incident, the relationship was strained because of several misperceptions, including the unresolved issue of delivery of F-16 fighter planes to Pakistan and the US lack of interest in the Kashmir issue (Khan, Khattak, & Marwat, 2014). By 2001, the nature of the Pak-US relationship was heavily dependent on three fundamental aspects; the signing of the CTBT, Islamabad's connections with the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, and the military rule in Pakistan. Before the 9/11 incident, Pakistan was among the most sanctioned nations by the US in the world (Wagner, 2001a). At the same time, Pakistan was also associated with the sanctioned Taliban regime in Kabul, and the UNSC severely

criticized the Taliban government for allegedly sponsoring terrorism and their refusal to hand over OBL to Washington together with complete failure to meet the UN Resolutions. The UN decided to station about eight UN Monitors of Sanctions Enforcement Team on the Pakistan Afghanistan border (A. Wagner, 2001b). The UN also suspected a strong connection between the Afghan Taliban and some militant organizations of Pakistan. All these actions were taken on the behest of the US as it completely dominated the largest International Organization.

The US administration strongly checked the trend of shifting terrorism from the Middle East to South Asia. Many reports highlighted this emerging trend. The report claimed that India was not sponsoring state terrorism; instead, the Pakistani government was fully supporting the Kashmiri fighters, and assisting them with all available means. The reports also indicated the connections of Pakistan with the Taliban. Such reports and the 9/11 incident turned the regional tables, and the situation became murky for Pakistan (Hilali, 2002). The US declared the Taliban regime as the sole responsible for the 9/11 attacks and wanted Pakistanis to be on their side or to face the American wrath. Active Indian propaganda and diplomatic channels added pressure on the Pakistani government for supporting terrorist groups in Kashmir and Afghanistan. Thus, in these thorny settings, Pakistan eventually decided to join once more the American block, which aimed to remove the terrorist and terrorism from Afghanistan once and for all (Franks, 2004). General Musharraf, the then President and the Chief of the Pakistan's Army, addressed the nation and highlighted the repercussions and reasons for joining the newly started WOT.

President's decision to join the American WOT got a mixed response from different social groups. He was criticized for his policies because critics believed that Musharraf's decision is not a unanimous one, and it does not represent the wishes of all segments of the societies (Khan et al., 2014). Religious parties were particularly prominent in labeling the war an unholy one and against Islam's ethics and norms. Moreover, some also said that the President's decision to join the WOT attempts to get American support in strengthening his military rule. However, it was a need of the hour. Pakistan was a weak state compared to the US and could not afford to have enmity with a superpower. Besides, the religious parties were also not covering all of the country's masses, and their roots were mainly in the north-western parts of Pakistan.

For example, in the 2002 general elections, the central government was formed by the Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid e Azam (PML-Q), a non-religious party. The PMLQ also managed to form government in three out of four provinces. The religious cum political party named Mutahidda Majlis e Amal (MMA) could only manage to get 11 percent votes countrywide, which showed that since 1970 the votes of religious parties could not increase; rather, it remained stagnant (Haqqani, 2010). Thus, the elections and the later developments showed that this was not a unanimous decision because the public did not vote for the anti-American parties.

The post 9/11 relationships between the US and Pakistan were established on the fight against terrorism. However, the following points may well describe other elements that involved in the post-2001 scenario. The US capitalized on reducing the debt burden of the Pakistani government and played its role in Islamabad's talks with the IMF and World Bank (Hilali, 2002).

The US government removed almost all the sanctions on Pakistan imposed after the 1998 nuclear tests. Moreover, the continuous threat of rolling back the nuclear programme was also diminished

afterwards. The US government also provided substantial economic support to Pakistan in reshaping the economic structure of the country. Washington also assisted Islamabad in formulating macroeconomic policies (Husain, 2004). The CIA Fact Book narrated that the US help to Pakistan enabled Islamabad to reshape its policies by which the international institutions and investors found the country suitable for business. Long-term goals remained dim but short, and medium-term goals were started to deliver after 2003. Many people were employed, and the job creation witnessed a sheer increase after more than a decade.

While Pakistan's macroeconomic and socioeconomic procedures had witnessed positive developments, progressively comprehensive and vigorous global retrieval has also assisted the country. After the 2001 attack on the Indian parliament, the relations between New Delhi and Islamabad were highly strained, and the two countries were on the brink of another war. Meanwhile, the incident of 9/11 brought the US to Afghanistan (Rizwan, 2010). As America sought more extensive Pakistani support from Pakistan in WOT, it could not have allowed the two nuclear neighbours to war. Thus, Washington brought New Delhi and Islamabad to Composite Dialogue in 2004.

Root Causes of the Trust Deficit in Pak-US Relations

Trust is defined by Diego Gambetta in these words "*trustworthy, and we implicitly mean that the probability that he will perform an action that is beneficial or at least not detrimental to us is high enough for us to consider engaging in cooperation with other*" (Kydd, 2007). A former Pakistani diplomat to the US believes that the Pak-US trust deficit signals how complicated the relationship is and how much deeper problems are embedded. Despite having commonalities in interests, Pakistan and the US achieve goals at a broader strategic paradigm (Hussain, 2010). The 70 years of Pak-US relations show that there has been nothing permanent except the mistrust that existed even in cordial engagements between the two countries. A large number of Pakistanis are unwilling to accept the US a friend of their country. This conception has not developed overnight, but it took decades to build. The following points would be helpful in thoroughly understanding the main reasons for mistrust between the US and Pakistan:

The US inclination towards India since independence and lack of logistic and military support during the Indo-Pak wars of 1965 and 1971 is one of the primary reasons that Pakistanis had to have a rigid stance towards the US. The Indo-US civil nuclear agreement is also perceived in Pakistan as an act of undermining the country's security against its arch-rival, India.

The US repeatedly inflicted sanctions on Pakistan in different eras, especially after the 1998 nuclear test, is also one of the key reasons for mistrust between them. Generally, the people of Pakistan dislike the American policies. Pakistan was an active supporter of the US stance towards Afghanistan after it was invaded by the Soviet Union in 1979 (Sattar, 2007). Moreover, Pakistan had nearly backed all the US strategies in the Cold War period, but after the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan, the US crafted new policies in which Pakistan was not only denied its due moral or strategic significance, but Islamabad had to face sanctions. The US neither helped Pakistan in shaping its security situation nor was it assisted in handling the issue of millions of Afghan refugees dwelling in camps all over Pakistan.

The US has always been prone to democratic regimes globally, for at least in statements, the US officials have shown respect for democracy. However, in Pakistan, the White House has

occasionally supported the nondemocratic regimes that have certainly unveiled the dual standards of the American policies before Pakistanis.

A substantial number of Pakistanis also believe that the US policies aim to sabotage Islam and their beliefs. The religious parties inside Pakistan have lifted this notion repeatedly. Initially, US-supported Jihad in Afghanistan favoured General Zia's Jihadi policies in Pakistan, but after the war was over in Afghanistan, the US called the Mujahidin as terrorists and a threat to the overall order. The Taliban, the offshoots of Mujahidin and sponsored by Washington in the 1980s, were labeled as militants/terrorists, and several military operations were conducted against them, especially in the post 9/11 era (Laub, 2014). Such a dual strategy also became a reason for mistrust and Anti-Americanism in Pakistan, primarily for the pro-Taliban section of the society.

The US has been providing aid to Pakistan; however, Pakistanis believe that the major and primary objective of the US is to destroy Pakistani nuclear weapons or take them in its custody somehow. This concept was strengthened in 1998 when the US had put sanctions on Pakistan, and in 2008 Washington concluded a civil nuclear agreement with India. The US support to India in its entry into Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG) is also considered a move to offset the Pakistani nuclear programme.

Stimulating Factors to the Element of Mistrust

In Pakistan, a widely believed notion is that Pak-US relations are severely disturbed by the nature and level of trust deficit. The prime objectives of the US-led WOT were also not achieved because of this primary factor. However, it is not one-sided; instead, both have a trust deficit in each other (Amin & Naseer, 2013). The US officials think that Pakistan has not been fully serious in eliminating terrorism from its soil and the region. It has allegedly kept supporting few factions of the Taliban, particularly the Haqqani Network, and it has not taken robust strides in commencing military operations in Waziristan. Moreover, Washington also considered that Islamabad has not provided solid intelligence reports that could help the US forces execute the operation effectively in Afghanistan.

On the other hand, Pakistan believes that the US has never been a trustworthy friend or ally to Islamabad. The US has always used Pakistan for national interests and gains. Starting from CEATO and CENTO to the 1965 and 1971 wars, economic sanctions, and minute military aid, the US has always been less friendly and more aggressive towards Pakistan (Soherwordi, 2010). Despite Pakistan's active role in the WOT, the US has given preference to building economic ties with India and has concluded a civil nuclear deal with New Delhi. Pakistan also thinks that its strategic position and standing are jeopardized by the India-Afghanistan strategic agreement on which the US had kept deliberate silence (Kux, 2001). The US could have pressured the Afghan government not to conclude any such agreement with India, but it did not; that is another example of mistrust between them. The more India is making its inroads in Afghanistan's political and security matters, the more reservations of Pakistan are increasing. The bitter past and contemporary situation have many things in common (C. Wagner, 2010). These inferences of mistrust between Islamabad and Washington have mostly and severely affected Pakistan. There is a need to alleviate the trust deficit to meet the foreign policy goals of the two countries and reconcile the bilateral glitches. However,

in this regard, some short and long-term measures could help bridge the rifts between Islamabad and Washington.

a. *Short-Term Measures –Breaking the Frustration Cycle*

- Resumption of Confidential Building Measures (CBMs) would engulf the trust deficit between Pakistan and the US.
- Enhancement of communication, harmonization, and constructive meetings at various levels can eradicate misunderstandings about each side.
- The opening of advantageous media drives those parodists the Voice of America to broadcast their constructive characteristics in both countries.
- A populace specific economic support designed for serving people can help make an optimistic public attitude.
- To address instantaneous military collaboration/synchronization matters.

b. *Long-Term Measures – Reinforcing Hope*

- **Modernize Connection:** Washington and Islamabad need to modernize relationships founded on long-term goals, regional stability/security, mutual interests, common goals, and better understanding.
- **Recognize Precincts:** The US ought to understand Pakistan's limits and strategic susceptibilities, while Pakistan has to utilize distillate keeping the house to function the mutual interests well.
- **Regional Approach:** Encouraging a regional methodology for combined security, linking key actors, is expected to progress the calming progression in the region.
- **Addressing Key Issues:** Accepting and determining Pakistan's anxieties about the Kashmir question and Indian impact in Afghanistan would not merely diminish the disagreement in the comforts of the two associates but also stimulate steadiness in the region

c. *Population-centric Approach*

To lay the base for a long-term strategic affiliation and an enhanced profit on its venture in Pakistan, the US needs to assume a more population-centric methodology and augment financial funding to the state that has obliged vibrant US comforts and important in succeeding regional US foreign policy objectives. This methodology should be espoused to undertake the following procedures:

- The construction of communication and development infrastructure like roads, bridges, and dams helps meet public preventions.
- Providing education through schools would lessen brainwashing in Madrassahs besides bringing moderation to the people at a minuscule cost of what is being consumed in firefighting against the graduates of those Madrassahs.
- Generating employment opportunities and encouraging a commercial culture involves the youth in productive actions and averts them from dwindling prey to radicalism. The US support in beginning entrepreneurship would diminish joblessness and dependency on foreign aid.

- Backing the private sector, providing technical proficiency in infrastructure, and enabling communal trade and export would be valuable for both.
- Progress in the energy area would help both in strengthening and addressing the complaints of the populace.

Consequences of Suspicious Relations between Pakistan and the US

Pak-US relations have been marred by several events and by trust deficit. However, none of the two countries can afford the bad relationship as a smooth relationship is a key to terminate terrorism from the region and also to restore a calm environment inside Afghanistan. What could go wrong if the changing nature of Pak-US relations continues to grow towards misperception and distrust?

If the relationship further deteriorates, the US's dream to make a stable and prosperous government in Afghanistan would not be realized. To achieve this goal, Washington has the utmost need for Pakistan's support to install the preferred regime. Moreover, Pakistan has connections with several sections and groups of Afghanistan, and therefore it can play a primary role in reshaping the socio-political structure of Afghanistan.

The Pak-Afghan border is an area in which the US wants to shelter from terrorists but cross-border narcotics movement. Again, this target can only be achieved if Islamabad and Washington remain in mutual understanding and closer connections. Both would have to trust each other and their respective security forces. If Pakistan pushes the militants from FATA, it is the US responsibility to capture them before they take shelter in Afghanistan. Similarly, if US/NATO forces squeeze militant hideouts in border areas of Afghanistan, Pakistani security forces must prevent them from entering into Pakistan and getting shelter in border areas of the country.

The only effective way to control the infiltration of militants in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and stopping them from attacking NATO/US troops, lies in the effective coordination of the militaries of both sides. Other than logistic sharing, intelligence gathering and sharing is vital to stop attacks and target the hideouts of the terrorists. If coordination fails, the consequences could be brutal for Pakistan and the US. The surge in attacks both in Afghanistan and Pakistan can be seen in the lack of coordination between the intelligence agencies and militaries of Pakistan, the US, and Afghanistan. The US has been blaming FATA-based militants for attacks in Afghanistan. Likewise, several times Pakistani security check posts have been attacked from the Afghan side in which casualties were reported. Like in 2012, six Pakistani soldiers were killed in such attacks from the Afghan side.

As long as Islamabad and Washington mistrust each other and the gulf amid them increased, the militants take advantage of it. Militants were against Pakistan's decision to join the WOT, and they pressurized the government to detach itself from the US led new alliance. In 2011, a large gathering of 40 right-wing parties gathered in Lahore and publically stated that the Pakistani government should disengage itself from the US. They also raised voices against the Salala Check post-incident. Moreover, the religious parties vowed people to commence Jihad against India. The salient figures of the parties spoke against the US too. Likewise, the head of Jamat Ud Dawa Hafiz Saeed said:

Today, I send out a message to Americans. We will give you due respect as guests in line with our religion. But if you come here to deprive Pakistan of its nuclear assets, to martyr our soldiers in Mohmand Agency-like incidents, kill innocent people as

Raymond Davis had done, and use our country's airbases for spying, we will defend our country with full force ("Defenders' vow jihad," 2011).

Such large gatherings and the rebirth of religious parties are the results of US discriminatory behaviour with Islamabad. The less the US pays attention to Pakistan, the more hardcore Islamism and Anti-Americanism make their way into Pakistani society ("Defenders' vow jihad," 2011).

After the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, the US had left Pakistan on its fate. Pakistanis now feel that Washington will repeat history by leaving Pakistan again in hot waters. So in such a state of affairs and vivid scenarios, the right-wing and religious parties have made inroads inside society, and anti-Americanism has increased in the last few years. Again because Washington's trust and assistance to Pakistan is far less than those of India. A survey conducted by Pew Research in 2011 highlighted the story quite explicitly. According to a survey, only about 12 percent of Pakistanis consider America a country with positive intent towards Pakistan (Kohut et al., 2011).

The cyclic and mostly troubling nature of the Pak-US relationship has already given space to India for its deepening footholds inside Afghanistan. This situation may not be unacceptable for the US, but certainly, it is a matter of serious concern for Pakistan. Moreover, the US support for a larger Indian role in Afghanistan is also a matter of irritation for Islamabad. The US wants a cover-up once it leaves Afghanistan, and it finds India as the best choice. On its part, India has also strengthened ties with the Afghan government soon after the Taliban ouster and still is on a course to cement its position there. Apart from keeping a check on Pakistan, the Indian objectives to establish a strong foothold in Afghanistan are also aimed at reaching Central Asia. Such scenarios would certainly create strategic and security vulnerabilities for Pakistan from the eastern side too. Therefore, Pakistan is looking at its US policy to change. Despite being the frontline ally to the US, Washington has given leeway to India, which is unacceptable to Pakistan's Afghan policy.

Another negative aspect that is emerging and could soar up in the future with an unsatisfactory Pak-US relationship is the world's perception about the US efforts in combating terrorism. The US has been in Afghanistan for around two decades. However, despite mammoth operations and marathon military maneuvering, Afghanistan's state is still bleak, and the threats to US security have also increased. The American citizens are posing questions from the government that despite spending trillions of dollars and sacrificing precious lives in Afghanistan, what the US success has been. As the growing American defense spending in the past couple of decades has put a considerable burden on its economy and other social sector programs too (Farooq & Khan, 2020). Does the cost justify the ends? Such perplexing questions are not only raised in the US but at a global level.

Moreover, Pakistanis also question the government that what Pakistan has gained in this war. It is a serious problem both for Pakistan and the US. Lack of trust and intelligence sharing has resulted in a bleak atmosphere while the public has turned its narrative against the war.

Re-defining the US-Pakistan Relations

Islamabad's relations with Washington have mainly been undergoing bitterness, and in the recent past, it has happened due to Afghanistan. Earlier in the 1990s, when the US nearly achieved all its goals in Afghanistan, it had pushed Pakistan aside, like many other states of the world o. In its

hegemonic triumphalism, the US had hardly bothered the genuine concerns of other states and took new strides in the unipolar international system (Farooq & Khan, 2020). This time, it appeared that even if the objectives were not achieved, the US still intended to pull itself out of Afghanistan (except some of its troops) and again leave Pakistan in a complex situation and extenuate the regional political environment. However, rationality demands that both sides curb the differences and establish a relationship founded on equality, trust, and understanding.

As Islamabad and Washington need each other, the question remains that how to persuade Islamabad to fulfill American objectives or desires. According to Daniel Markey,

issuing threats employing sticks, and leaning on Pakistan is precisely the wrong approach. These tactics will tap into distrust about American intentions, aggravate Pakistani insecurities about US abandonment, and increase Pakistani incentives to hedge (Hathaway, 2008)

Parallel to that, if the US forces remain unable to make a peaceful Afghanistan with a proper political set up, Pakistan's consequences would be dire. It is also the major beneficiary of negative or positive outcomes of the Afghan maze. Pakistan could also face diplomatic challenges and pressure from the international community. The US has pulled forces from Afghanistan in large numbers, yet the WOT is not over. Many objectives are yet to be accomplished, which could not be achieved exclusively by Pakistan or the US (Hasnat, 2014). So there is a need to re-define the terms of these bilateral relationships. For this very reason, the two countries can follow the following mentioned policies/principles.

Dealing with the security concerns of Pakistan

The main reason behind the Pakistani government's inefficiency in tackling the terrorism menace is the security threat from India. India is not only bigger, but it is also stockpiling massive conventional and non-conventional weapons. Moreover, India has always been supported by superpowers, while Pakistan has not earned any such support or even recognition from Kashmir. So in this scenario, Pakistan had established some links with groups fighting for liberation against India in Kashmir, and the Taliban battled against the Soviets since the Indian and Soviet march would ultimately have brought Pakistan into the vortex of vulnerability. Additionally, the US has concluded a civil nuclear deal with India, and superpowers have enabled Indian entry in the NSG, thus pushing Pakistan into further vulnerability (Yamin, 2014).

The US, however, could have rescued Pakistani security and strategic needs since Pakistan joined CEATO and CENTO in the early 1950s. After 9/11, Islamabad should have been given more trust and security assurance vis-à-vis India, but the US failed to do so, which has marred the situation for Pakistan. In the presence of nuclear weapons, South Asia's delicate security nature could result in a nuclear war that could subvert the region. Despite this exciting environment, the US can still address the genuine Pakistani security concerns (Sattar, 2007). Washington should also notice that Pakistan is looking towards other options like China and Russia to safeguard its security. To lose a tested partner from South Asia would be a major catastrophe for the US; therefore, it must seriously consider the Pakistani security qualms.

Strengthening democracy in Pakistan

Democratic regimes in Pakistan have ever helped the US, but surprisingly, the US has always come up with closer cooperation towards Pakistan in its military regimes. For example, the US had friendly connections with General Zia, while General Musharraf and George Bush were also found on the same page. Further, the data shows that a larger amount of US aid to Pakistan came in military rules instead of civilian governments. As a result, it is believed that the military has gained greater supremacy in Pakistan. It is internationally believed that democratic regimes can best guarantee the people's social and economic welfare, so the US, which always intervenes in other states on a slogan of liberating people from dictatorship (like in Iraq and Rwanda), started investing in civilian regimes. It is also said that the civilian governments would take better care of the American interests in the region than the nondemocratic regimes (Ali, 2009). Keeping in view the entire situation, the US must strengthen democratic forces and back up democratic norms and institutions in Pakistan. The level of trust between the two nations can be increased by repeatedly exercising such progressive policies.

Is Pakistan Looking for Undertaking Other Options?

Pakistan and China have always enjoyed unconditional and cordial ties throughout their diplomatic history. It was through the mediation of Pakistan that Sino-US relationships were initiated in the early 1970s. China has also consistently facilitated Pakistan in political, strategic, and economic terms, and this cooperation will continue in the future (Burns & Price, 2011). In the recent past, the high-level Chinese officials frequently visited to Islamabad like in 2010, the Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao came to Pakistan, and 12 MOUs were signed together with a pledge of US\$ 15 billion in different fields. The cooperation in oil and gas, transportation, defense, and many other fields was discussed. Beijing and Islamabad celebrated 2011 as the "Year of China-Pakistan Friendship." Pakistan also developed defensive ties with China and earned six submarines and two missile boats from Beijing in 2010, in addition to tactical assistance in developing the JF-17 Thunder aircraft as a joint venture.

In 2015, the Chinese President, Xi Jinping, also visited Pakistan and unveiled a blueprint of US\$ 46 billion investment in Pakistan (Shah & Page, 2015). The investment was unique indeed as the major portion of these deals was related to the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) that is considered a game-changing project for Pakistan. The corridor will connect Kashgar city of China with the Gwadar port of Pakistan, which was also commenced and later developed by the Chinese. Though the US has not given a stern response to the port; however, it has been piling pressure on Pakistan to avert the project (Bhutta, 2014). India is not happy with the Gwadar port's construction as it gives a strategic edge to Pakistan in the Indian Ocean.

Many observers say that in the strained relationship between Pakistan and the US, it is more likely that Pakistan would go nearer to China and even Russia to balance its strategic and security standing with India. But the US is concerned with this emerging relationship. Many in the US believe that China examined the stealth technology after Pakistan had given the wreckage of one helicopter crashed during the killing of OBL. They say that the Chinese would have got enough know-how about the latest urbane technology that only the US army possesses at the moment (Parsons, 2011).

CONCLUSION

The affection, trust, and coordination between Islamabad and Washington were there in the initial years, which kept disappearing in the preceding years. Therefore, the initial bond was highjacked by the differences of interests, and the same reason has supported WOT's prime objectives unachieved to date. Although one can count several successes in the WOT and several benefits for the US, the core objective that was probably to rout terrorism from the region and make the US safer has not been met successfully. Several media reports and surveys have shown that the public inside the US is not happy over the two decades-long war in Afghanistan due to the socioeconomic price the superpower has paid for it. Additionally, the US has earned more rivalries by opening another war front far away from its land. There is also a counter-narrative to this argument, which says that the US military maneuvering in Afghanistan has wiped out terror-associated government and has liberated the people of Afghanistan. Moreover, they also say that the US superiority at the international level has been vindicated with the removal of the Taliban and the elimination of OBL, the alleged mastermind of the 9/11 attacks.

For Pakistan, this war has plenty of lessons and experiences. The policymakers must have understood that being an American partner is not the key to socio-economic progress, and it cannot necessarily meet the military needs. The US paid substantial aid to Pakistan and has taken reasonably acceptable measures to upgrade Pakistan's armed forces' overall operational capacity. However, the benefits Washington has gained outnumbered the Pakistani remunerations by a thin margin. Pakistan paved the way for the Americans into Afghanistan. It assisted the ISAF forces, but the response it has gained from the US and the international community could not satisfactorily adequate for the losses it suffered. The cost Pakistan has been bearing of this war goes past US\$ 125 billion (Naazer 2018; 2019), much higher than the price the US or other allies/ partners of WOT have paid to Islamabad. Not only this, but the international community also has not bothered to rescue Pakistani needs that it deserves and instead fed the rival of Pakistan, i.e., India. The US signed a nuclear deal with India, supported Indian entry into the NSG, and welcomed Indian military training to Afghan forces, urged Delhi to invest more in Afghanistan. The US presidents have been visiting India to sign various agreements without considering Pakistan's serious concerns, a front line state in the American WOT.

On the contrary, Pakistan's plea of providing civil nuclear technology was turned down by Washington without offering any reasonable substitute. Islamabad and Washington have started Strategic Dialogues, but the dialogues have produced only media headlines and photo shoots. Moreover, the US had begun to give the Coalition Support Fund to Pakistan, but it has been occasionally put on hold, thus pressuring Pakistan's economic delicacy. After OBL was killed in Abbottabad, the US again made Pakistani aid conditional, and it has always been asking Pakistani governments to do more.

All these developments made the Pakistani case strong. Islamabad was compelled with the regional developments to look for other options like Russia and China. Pakistan now has signed several agreements in defense, strategic and economic fields with Beijing and Moscow. The Chinese decision to construct Gwadar port, CPEC, and joint ventures in defense are some examples of enhancing Pak-China ties. This move of Pakistan is not considered welcoming in Washington that sees its strategic assets being threatened by Sino-Pak defensive cooperation. Indian leadership has

also prorogated about the Pak-China relations and has demanded the US leadership to check this evolving relationship. Meanwhile, Pakistan's ties with Russia have also started to flourish after decades of mistrust and divergence of interests. High profile visits and military cooperation has been witnessed between Moscow and Islamabad.

Despite regional developments and Pakistani drift towards other options, it is still a reality that Pakistan and the US need each other. WOT's objective has not yet been achieved, and thus for this very purpose, the US needs Pakistan. However, it is hoped that with the changing gears of Pakistan's foreign policy, the US could balance the nature of ties with India and Pakistan in the future. It is only a myth because India is accusing Pakistan, and it also has closer economic cooperation with the US. One thing is sure, that only equality-based Pak-US relations can guarantee the smooth going of the two countries and the peace in Afghanistan.

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