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## Pak-Americans Relations: Points of Divergence during War on Terror

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### Abstract

The research study is aimed at exploring the evolving nature and pattern of Pak-US relations with special emphases on the compatibility of their operational worthiness during the period of War on terror. The research is descriptive and analytical in nature based on secondary sources of data with high degree of authenticity. The research is built upon the history of their bilateral relations during Cold War and lessons drawn thereof. The background of the research study explains irritants that have initiated worsening of the amiable relationship of cold war turning most natural ally in to a most sanctioned ally. The research describes compulsions that influenced Pakistan to join American led War on Terror in Afghanistan. While analyzing bilateral relations, the research identifies various irritating incidents that have affected Pak-US relations and diverted them from pursuit of common goals. Some of these irritants fueling as major points of divergence include; trust deficit, challenging Pakistan's sovereignty through covert operation by America, rhetoric of "do more", drone attacks, disregard to Pakistan's sacrifices during the war, use of coalition support fund as a bargaining chips for arms twisting and evolving Indo-US strategic partnership at the cost of Pakistan's security constraints. The research also identified American need for permanent peace in post war Afghanistan and Pakistan's fundamental role in brokering peace. The research has significant importance for the students of foreign policy of Pakistan, and policy makers to understand American state behavior when in crises or out of crises. The research concludes that restoration of Pak-US relations is dependent upon the convergence of interests, and commitment for attaining common goals.

**Keywords:** Pak-US Relations, War on Terror, Point of Divergence, Convergence of Interests

### Background

The United States of America is one of the first few nations that established bilateral relations with Pakistan soon after Pakistan's independence on 20<sup>th</sup> Oct, 1947. It was the era when the Cold War between America and USSR was at its intensity and global politics was predominately defined by bipolar world order (Ali, et al. 2013). Pak-US relations were commenced with the Karachi visit of US diplomat Paul Alling and reciprocated by Liaqat Ali Khan's visit to America in 1950. Prime Minister Liaqat Ali Khan's visit tagged Pakistan with American's Ally status in the cold war politics. Pakistan's geographical location made it an integral part of CEATO and SENTO (Bashir, 2015). Since then the history of bilateral relations between Pakistan and the United States of America has moved along roller-coaster trajectory of seven decades reflecting continuum of close cooperation and sharp estrangements on regional and international issues (Baloch, 2007).

The degree of their bilateral engagement and schism have been directly proportionate to the commonality or divergence of their national interests with regard to the significance of a particular issue. The commonality of their bilateral interests labelled Pakistan as "Most Allied Ally" in 50s and conflicting interests turned the "most allied ally" in to a "most sanctioned ally" in 90s. The frequent drifts in the warmth of their bilateral relations were due to their differences over issues of regional conflict such as; Indian occupation of Kashmir, nuclealization of South Asia, democracy promotion, and Pakistan's looking towards East for its security concerns.(Baloch, 2007)

The research article surveys the pattern of Pak-USA relations over the last 73 years with special emphases on Post-9/11 bilateral environment as observed between the two during the War against terror (WoT) in Afghanistan and later. The article initially presents the brief overview of the bilateral relations from their commencement to disintegration of USSR, followed by the detailed analyses of the relations during the WoT since 9/11.

Pakistan experienced a sporadic depart in the US foreign policy towards Pakistan in 60s due to Sino-India war of 1962, Indo-Pak war of 1965 and the détente between America and the former Soviet Union. Pakistan felt ignored and found USA gradually leaning towards India which was obvious during indo-Pak wars

of 1965 and 1971. Pakistan felt betrayed because of the neutrality of its leading partner of CEATO and CENTO who stopped supply of arms and ammunition to Pakistan on the pretext that the alliances were meant for containing communism and India is not part of communist bloc. Pakistan has no option but “look towards China” to fill the void created by US and as counter balance the American closeness with India (Soherwordi, 2010). It was good offices of the Pakistan that brokered an imperative role in bringing Beijing closer to the US in 70s and helped in setting steps for Detent between the both (Mora, 1997). However, the bitter experience of 1965 and 1971 made Pakistan’s membership in SEATO absurd and, thus it joined Nonalignment Movement.

Indian’s nuclear explosion of 1974 multiplied Pakistan’s sense of insecurity from India thereby striking a deal with France to buy a nuclear fuel processing plant to check the Indian non-conventional military superiority. US reacted abruptly against the deal under the policy of non-proliferation and coerced France for the deferral of its agreement with Pakistan on sale of nuclear processing plant. In this period the discontinuation of economic aid also put Pak-US relations at the lowest ebb

Pakistan checked USSR invasion of Afghanistan of 1979 as a countervailing force and became an integral ally of United States in a fight against the expanding forces of Soviet Union (Hilali, 2017). USA provided financial and logistical support under operation Cyclone to Mujahideen through Pakistan and the bilateral relations between the both were further deepened with a substantial growth in mutual cooperation. The cooperation included the economic assistance to Pakistan worth US\$ 3.2 billion for 1981-87 and US\$4.2 billion for 1987-1993 and this made Pakistan the third leading recipient of American aid after Israel and Egypt (Weinbaum, 1991). Pakistan, as a front line state, enabled America to emerge as an only superpower of the World with the disintegration of USSR in late 1980 (Baxter, 1985; Akhter, 2010).

As discussed above that Pak-US relations has never been consistent and went through the frequent turns of ups and down with the convergence and divergence of national interests over the different regional or international issues. American foreign policy shift from friendship to frictions was influenced by its changing priorities in the area and moving Pakistan-once a ‘most allied ally’ of the US in to “most sanctioned ally of 80s. USSR’s withdrawal of forces from Afghanistan and its disintegration left America the sole power of the world and unipolar power having no regard for its old allies. This paradigm shift in American foreign policy outlook relegated Pakistan from an integral ally status to the most sanctioned ally with the promulgation of Pressler amendment and impositions of sanctions upon Pakistan (Meh mood, 1994). The sanctions were aimed at limiting Pakistan’s nuclear program through preventing acquisition of related technology from anywhere of the world. Resultantly US Pakistan relations started deteriorating and on the other hand, US relations with India started growing with rapid speed at strategic level of cooperation and nurturing it to the status of natural ally (Kamath, 2006; Baloch, 2007). The US-Pakistan bilateral relations remained worsened until Pakistan was once again needed by the USA with initiation of the US-led War on terror (WOT) in 2001.

#### **PAK- US Relations: Post 9/11 War on Terror**

On September 11, 2001, multiple coordinated terrorist attacks on the soil of the United States of America claimed to have nearly 3000 death and many injured. These attacks were first of their kind in terms of loss of civilian lives in the United States of America. The responsibility of these attacks was apportioned upon the Al Qaeda Network. In response to these attacks, the United States initiated a Global War on Terror (GWOT) along with its NATO and non NATO allies and launched ‘Operation Enduring Freedom’ in Afghanistan on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2001. The primary objective of this war was to dismantle international terrorist network such as Al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden and eliminate their sanctuaries at Afghan soil with a loud message for every nation that “either you are with us, or with the terrorists’. The “non-negotiable” list of demands presented to Pakistan implied (Sattar, 2007):

- a. Pakistan to publically condemn the terrorist act and abandon Taliban Government for good.
  - b. Provide territorial access inside and air space for US military and intelligence operation against Al-Qaida.
  - c. Provide intelligence support astride the Durand Line including Afghanistan’s hinterland.
  - d. Pakistan to stop supply of recruitment, fuel and diplomatic support to Taliban.
- Pakistan has no option but to ally itself with US on his War against terror. Pakistan’s decision to join US in War on Terror (WOT) was influenced by number of factors. These factors included:
- a. An experienced US ally who had successfully fought Afghan war against USSR and was still believed to be maintaining its tentacles on Afghan soil as intelligence network.
  - b. Pakistan’s close geographical proximity and socio-cultural ties with Afghanistan did not justify to stand aloof from operation and cooperation with US could facilitate WoT in its befitting conclusion.
  - c. Pakistan economic and political situation could not afford to stay on other side of the fence. Pakistan’s support to America in WoT could help it to get renewed economic and technological aid which was stopped on the wake of nuclear detonation of 1998.
  - d. General Musharaf was envisioning to cash the situation by seeking recognition of his military government and legitimacy of his government across international community.

- e. Pakistan's opting for not allying with US led coalition was likely to give India an opportunity to align Pakistan with terrorist network and rally America and NATO countries against indigenously led Kashmir Independence struggle.

Pakistan provided military, intelligence and logistical support besides passage through its land and air space to the US in order to facilitate coalition forces operating in Afghanistan. Pakistan's provision of numerous airbases and land access facilitated Coalition forces to launch an offensive right on the Kabul and other selected targets located even in the depth. To acknowledge Pakistan's cooperation the Bush administration lifted the economic sanctions on Pakistan and Pakistan was able to receive military and financial aid from the US (Riedel, 2013). Pakistan, once again, emerged as a frontline state in the region and US congress, in 2004, designated Pakistan as a 'major non-NATO ally' for the purposes of future military-to-military relations. (Chandio, & Khuhro, 2019). Under the provision of major non-NATO ally, Pakistan acquired sophisticated military technology such as F-16 fighter jets, PC3 Orion Maritime Surveillance and Recon aircraft, Tube-launched optically tracked wire-guided missiles (TOW), Advanced Medium Range Air – Air Missiles (AMRAAM), logistical aircrafts such as the C-130 Hercules, AH-1 Cobras and even a missile frigate (Riedel, 2013).

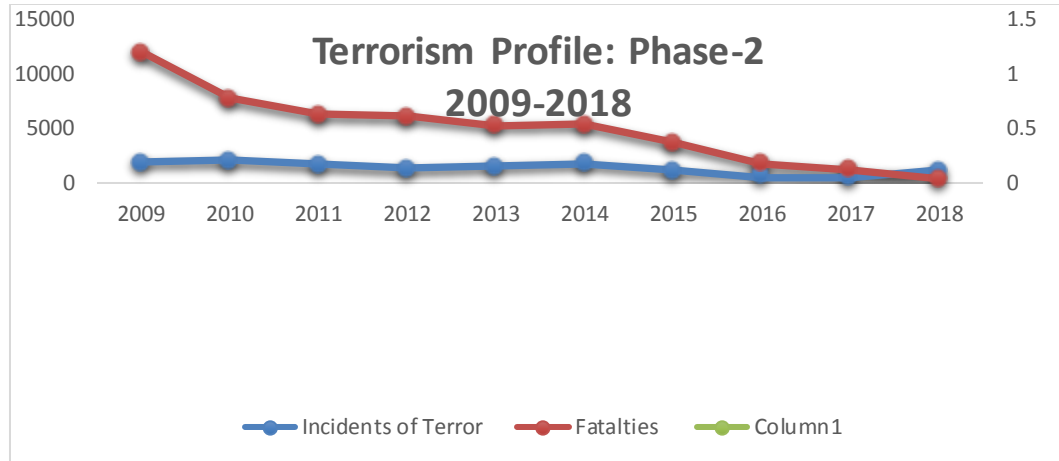
Pakistan's overwhelmingly provision of intelligence support to the US and the Coalition partners regarding various high-value targets and potential terrorist hideouts in Afghanistan (Nielsen, Syed, and Vestenskov, 2015). Pakistan also carried out various search operations in collaboration with the US authorities to apprehend high value targets such as, Abu-Zubaydah and Khalid Sheikh Muhammad, in 2002 and 2003, amongst the top tier Al-Qaida leadership (Nielsen, Syed, and Vestenskov, 2015). Therefore, it can be noted that Pakistan and the US were able to enjoy a jointly productive relationship in the early years of the War on Terror however, this relationship gradually deteriorated in the following years. One of the leading factors that contributed in the deterioration of Pak-US relationship could be trust deficit. And it was mainly due to different approach to the issue of Afghanistan, Pakistan always emphasized on a negotiated settlement, while the US insisted on the use of force in Afghanistan and Pakistan. There existed a trust deficit between both war allies and the trust deficit gradually weakened their relations and effected the results of war.

**Points of Divergence: Widening Trust Deficit:**

Some of the worth mentioning irritants those have affected the bilateral relations during the period of War on Terror are discussed in succeeding paragraphs below:

- a. **Covert Operation & Disregard for Pakistan Sovereignty:** On the operational side, the US and Pakistani forces also shared a lack of trust in each other's capabilities and Pakistani forces were subjected to number of air/ drone strikes lately covered up with the friendly fire syndrome or result of hot pursuit of terrorists (Waraich, 2008). On the other hand Pakistan viewed those incursions as a clear and direct violation of their sovereignty (Pennington, 2008). Such incidents have led to severe diplomatic row between the US and Pakistan, cases in point are covert operation of Raymond Davis case, Salala Check post incident, frequent drone attacks on Pakistan's territory, and launching of "Operation Neptune Spear" on May 2011 on Osama's compound at Abbottabad without taking in to confidence Pakistan's military and Intelligence establishment (Musarat, 2013). The raid at Osama's hideout was an embarrassing act from a War ally who total disregarded of Pakistan's sovereignty. Frequent occurrences of such cases infuriated Pakistan and Pakistan demanded immediate vacation of Shamsi base, suspended NATO's supplies transit facilities and lowered level of co-operation between intelligence agencies (Sattar, 2016).
- b. **Support for India:** Instead of acknowledging Pakistan's sacrifices and easing out its problems consistently emanating from its Eastern border, USA consistently supported India on political, diplomatic, technological and economic fronts (Ispahani, 2016). Considering India as a force capable of extending American interests in South Asia, was given free hand to thwart Pakistan's interests in Afghanistan and Central Asia; and sponsor terrorists and separatists' activities at Pakistan's sensitive areas of Baluchistan and Tribal areas. Successive American Administration continued displaying India as their favorite and Pakistan as a proxy for their War on terror only. Indo-US Strategic partnership including Civil Nuclear deal were shocking indicators of Indo-US cooperation (Ejaz, 2016). During the period US kept consolidating his strategic ties with India, while pressurizing Pakistan "to do more" in stopping / fighting cross-border infiltration. Obama's decision of enhancing bilateral trade with India, selling of military weapons/ equipment worth \$ 14 and overwhelming support for Indian's joining of Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG) without realizing Pakistan's security concerns was considered a betrayal of an Ally for Pakistan (Sattar, 2016).
- c. **Rhetoric of "Do More":** Pakistan sincerely joined American Led War against terror and fought relentlessly against Al-Qaeda affiliates, nabbed terrorists, and banned radical outfits. , and undertakes military tasks against militants in different parts of the country (Perveen, 2015). Instead of acknowledging and appreciating Pakistan's sacrifices and decisive role the US's kept pressurizing Pakistan for stretching out its operation to North Waziristan. The repeated demand of "Do More" became a rhetoric in US policy towards Pakistan. This coercive narrative in dealing with Pakistan became a major source of contention between the both countries. Pakistan viewed the 'Do more'

demands as reflection of American’s insensitivity towards the sacrifices that Pakistan (Tarar, 2018). There have also been allegations by the US leadership that Pakistani military and intelligentsia have been involved in providing assistance and relief to various outlaw outfits operating in Afghanistan. And the US viewed these organizations as tools of the Pakistan military to leverage its position in the region which was always denied by Pakistan and reiterated its resolve in cracking down on terrorist organizations without discrimination (Mullen, 2011). Pakistan urged instead calling for “Do More”, US to acknowledge its sacrifices and losses in men and material, it suffered because of siding American led WoT. Terrorism profile appended below depicts the number of incidents of terror and fatalities occurred there of:



Source: NECTA Pakistan Data Base

- d. **Drone Attacks:** Drone strikes carried out by the US in Pakistani territory created further hurdles in the positive development of Pak-US relationship. According to US the use of drones in Pakistani territory was an act of self-defense and was deemed to be legal under Article 51 of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter (Schulzke, 2017). The US argued that as the governments of such countries were unable to control the security situation and take action against terrorist outfits, the US was under direct threat from these terrorist organizations and could carry out drone strikes (Schulzke, 2017). Whereas, on the other hand Pakistani leadership maintained that these drone strikes were a clear violation of its sovereignty and territorial integrity (News desk, 2009). Pakistan also claimed that these drone strikes were more disadvantageous as they increased collateral damage despite the opposite claims of the US officials of targeting Al-Qaida leadership (Richard and Robert, 2013). Pakistan argued that such drone strikes created more resentment and anger among the local populace and therefore increased the recruitment chances of the terrorist organizations ((News desk, 2009). Therefore, issue of the usage of drone strikes on Pakistani territory created a rift in the US and Pakistani relations as both of these camps viewed the other with suspicions.
- e. **Coalition Support Fund:** US Economic Aid under the name of Coalition support fund, given to Pakistan during the WoT was mostly reimbursements of various expenditures incurred during the operations by Pakistan Army included cost of ammunition, and wear and tear of equipment wear and tear of its equipment. Instead of acknowledging and appreciating Pakistan’s sacrifices and achievements in WoT, the US started labelling allegations of misuse and misappropriation of funds and threatened to cut off future aid to Pakistan (Tarar, 2018). The degree of Pakistan’s sincere commitment can be judged from the cost Pakistan paid during the war. The War drastically effected Pakistan as a state and society, sacrifices unparalleled to any member of the alliance. The cost included (Khan,2018):
  - i. 75,000 casualties, & over \$123 Billion lost to economy against the US "aid" of \$20 billion in total
  - ii. The War devastated Pakistani tribal areas, displacing internally millions of uprooted people from their homes and polarizing social fabrics of the society in to “for and against” of the war alliance.
  - iii. Pakistan continued provision of free lines of communication on ground & air c (GLOCs/ALOCs).

**Analyses & Findings:**

The abovementioned instances indicate that the Pak-US relations have gradually weakened as compared to the initial years of War on Terror. Studies suggest that the population of both nations did not hold favorable opinions about each other’s sincerity of effort. For example, the annual World Affairs survey conducted by Gallup in 2015 revealed that only 15% of the US citizens had a favorable view of Pakistan. While interpreting the perceptions developed, Markey (2013) express the behavior of both countries towards each other like

adversaries and not partners or allies in a war. Markey (2013) also criticizes the USA policy makers by saying that, they failed to make policies to manage non-state actors in Pakistan as well as in Afghanistan. Markey suggests USA to learn from the past mistakes and make new strategies for the region by operationalizing three options. These options are defensive insulation, military cooperation and comprehensive cooperation. In defensive insulation, Markey (2013) advises to the USA policy makers to address the threat of terrorism faced by Pakistan; in military cooperation the USA policy makers focus on Chinese policy toward Pakistan and improve relations with Pakistan's military command; whereas, in comprehensive cooperation demands for improvement of relations between the USA officials and politicians with Pakistani politicians and civil society. Some of the findings of the research on US-Pakistan Bilateral Relations with specific emphases on the period of War on Terror are:

- a. History of bilateral relations between Pakistan and the United States of America is spread over along roller-coaster trajectory of seven decades of close cooperation and sharp estrangements on regional and international issues. The commonality of their bilateral interests credited Pakistan with the status of "Most Allied Ally" in 50s and conflicting interests turned the "most allied ally" in to a "most sanctioned ally" in 90s (Baloch, 2007. The degree of their bilateral engagement and schism have been directly proportionate to the commonality or divergence of their national interests in relation to the significance of the particular issue of that time.
- b. The frequent drifts in the warmth of their bilateral relations were due to their differences over issues of regional conflict such as; Indian occupation of Kashmir, nuclearization of South Asia, democracy promotion, and Pakistan's looking towards East for its security concerns.
- c. The continuum of relations speckled from one extreme of completely ignorance or discord, as in 1971, to the transformation of other extreme of cooperation and friendliness, as was evident at the times of; Cold War, Soviet's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 or during the War on Terrorism (WoT) in post 9/11 era. According to Kronstadt post 9/11 "a stable, democratic, prosperous Pakistan is considered vital to U.S. interest . . . U.S. concerns regarding Pakistan include regional and global terrorism; Afghan stability; democratization and human rights protection; the ongoing Kashmir problem and Pakistan-India tensions; and economic development."
- d. The history of US-Pakistan relations are repeated once again. American President Trump reentry to White House in forthcoming election passes through peace in Afghanistan. All of the American strategies to bring peace in Afghanistan without Pakistan have failed miserably. America had no option to involve Pakistan for manufacturing peace amongst Afghans. Hence, America, once again required Pakistan's all out support to bring resurgent Taliban on negotiating table which Pakistan did successfully. The brokered Peace Deal of February 2020 at Doha is a mile stone achieved in this regard. However, the permanent solution for peace in Afghanistan is dependent upon successful culmination of intra-Afghan Dialogue which needs consistent push from Pakistan.

### **Conclusion**

A rewarding peace in Afghanistan from the ashes of long drawn bloody War is immediate need of the US and Pakistan is the only linkage to reach their goal. America needs to revisit its war policies that have pushed Pakistan away from friendly ally to annoyance and alienation. In order to restore his friendly relations with Pakistan and revitalized trust America should start respecting Pakistan's territorial sovereignty and reestablished its relations with Pakistan Armed forces. America must relook its pro-India policy and facilitate peace and Kashmir and prevent further genocide there which has been unleashed by India forces on the behest of Moody's Doctrine. America should help to revive the balance of power in South Asia and stop looking India as a counter weight to China or its sole agent in Indian Ocean. Pakistan should also realize that restoration of American liberty, protection of Kashmiris basic human rights and of Kashmiris fundamental choice of self-determination can be realized through effective support of America. The USA should make the world realize about the Pakistan's unparalleled sacrifices in men and material in War on terror since 9/11. America shall work in building soft image of Pakistan from "sponsor of terror" to a "safe haven" for tourists. In short, all the misapprehensions and cageyness should be removed between the two through mutual respect and cooperation.

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