

# **Irritants in Pakistan-US Relations: Way Forward**

## **President**

Ambassador Vice Admiral (R) Khan Hasham Bin Saddique, HI(M)

## **Editor**

Sarah Siddiq Aneel

## **Conference Coordinator**

Khalid Hussain Chandio

## **Assistant Conference Coordinator**

Sajid Aziz



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**Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI)**

Fifth Floor

Evacuee Trust Complex

Sir Aga Khan Road

Sector F-5/1, Islamabad, Pakistan.

**Ph:** +92 (0)51 9211346-9; **Fax:** +92 (0)51 9211350

**Email:** ipri.editor@gmail.com; editor@ipripak.org

**Website:** www.ipripak.org

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Noreen Hameed

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# IRRITANTS IN PAKISTAN-US RELATIONS: WAY FORWARD

## CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	i
Acronyms	ii
Introduction	v

## PART I

<b>Welcome Address</b>	
<i>Brig. (R) Sohail Tirmizi, SI (M)</i>	3
<b>Inaugural Address</b>	
<i>Ambassador (R) Inam-ul-Haque</i>	6

## PART II

### DIPLOMATIC MUSINGS

1. Overview of Pakistan-US Relations: Strengths and Weaknesses	
<i>Ambassador (R) Shamshad Ahmad</i>	21
2. Understanding the Making of US Foreign Policy and Pakistan	
<i>Ambassador (R) Riaz Hussain Khokhar</i>	32

### SCHOLARLY DELIBERATIONS

3. Pakistan-India Relationship & Role of US	
<i>Dr Salma Malik</i>	43

4. Afghanistan Crisis and Pakistan-US Disagreements on Operational Aspects of Countering Terrorism  
*Dr Tughral Yamin and Faryal Khan* 64
5. The Third Partnership: Afghan War and Pakistan-US Relations  
*Dr Rasul Baksh Rais* 85

## **FUTURE POSSIBILITIES**

6. Accommodating Mutual Concerns: Prospects of Pak-US Ties  
*Dr Farhan Hanif Siddiqi* 107
  7. *Epilogue*  
Nudging Pak-US Relations in the Right Direction:  
A Pragmatic Blueprint  
*compiled by Sarah Siddiq Aneel* 125
- IPRI Publications 133

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It is with great pleasure that IPRI presents this volume of essays, thought pieces and papers from the 2018 two-day national conference on *Irritants in Pakistan-US Relations: Way Forward*, held from 9-10 October 2018, in Islamabad, Pakistan.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the participants of the conference – invited speakers, chairpersons, and audience alike for their frank views and ideas.

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Along with these individuals, we wish to thank our current and former colleagues who contributed greatly to the organisation and success of the conference. This includes Brig. (R) Sohail Tirmizi, who was at the time Acting President of the Institute.

The IPRI Conference Coordination Team deserves a special mention and includes Mr Khalid Chandio, Research Fellow and Mr Sajid Aziz, former Junior Consultant. Mr Sajjad Haider's support during the final weeks of the conference, that of the Administration Branch, as well as media coordination undertaken by the Publications Team, is commendable.

We would also like to thank Ambassador (R) Inam-ul-Haque, who is not only Chairperson of IPRI's Board of Governors, but also someone whose candid Inaugural Address set the tone for the discussions that followed.■

# ACRONYMS

ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
APAPPS	Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
CENTO	Central Treaty Organization
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CPEC	China-Pakistan Economic Corridor
CSF	Coalition Support Fund
DoD	Department of Defense (United States)
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
FATF	Financial Action Task Force
FC	Frontier Corps
GLOCs	Ground Lines of Communications
GoP	Government of Pakistan
GTI	Global Terrorism Index
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IMET	International Military Education and Training
IMF	International Monetary Fund

<b>IPI</b>	Iran-Pakistan-India Pipeline
<b>ISI</b>	Inter-Services Intelligence agency
<b>ISIS</b>	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
<b>JCPOA</b>	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
<b>LoC</b>	Line of Control
<b>NATO</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
<b>NFC</b>	National Finance Commission
<b>NPT</b>	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
<b>NSC</b>	National Security Council (United States)
<b>NSG</b>	Nuclear Suppliers Group
<b>PN</b>	Pakistan Navy
<b>PPP</b>	Purchasing Power Parity
<b>PRC</b>	People's Republic of China
<b>SEATO</b>	Southeast Asia Treaty Organization
<b>TAPI</b>	Turkmenistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan–India Pipeline
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNSC</b>	United Nations Security Council
<b>US</b>	United States
<b>USSR</b>	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
<b>WoT</b>	War on Terror



# Introduction

***Brig. (R) Sohail Tirmizi, SI (M)\*  
Khalid Chandio\*\* & Sajid Aziz\*\*\****

Pakistan and the United States (US) established diplomatic relations on 20 October 1947. Pakistan was part of the US-led defence pacts - Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). The country also played a pivotal role in the US-China rapprochement in the early 1970s. Both sides witnessed the closest partnership and cooperation during the 1980s when the former Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. After 9/11, Pakistan once again joined hands with the US and the international community in the War on Terror (WoT); was accorded 'major non-NATO ally' status in recognition of being a 'frontline state' in this war.

In spite of this cooperation, the bilateral relationship between the two states has never been smooth nor based on an equal footing, rather has remained need-based and on an on-off trajectory.

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\* Brig. (R) Sohail Tirmizi, SI (M), has been Acting President and former Director Administration at the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI), Pakistan.

\*\* Khalid Chandio is Research Fellow at the Islamabad Policy Research Institute. He was also the Conference Coordinator.

\*\*\* Sajid Aziz is former Junior Consultant at the Islamabad Policy Research Institute, as well as the Assistant Conference Coordinator.

President Donald Trump's August 2017 speech on South Asia and Afghanistan and his New Year tweet have not helped to bridge differences.

The main source of concern between the two countries is the Afghan conundrum. While both have a declared policy of supporting reconciliation efforts, there appears to be serious differences on how to achieve it. Suspension of the Coalition Support Fund

*There have been times when 'great expectations' turned into 'great frustrations' and strong engagement was followed by disengagement. At present, this relationship suffers from mutual mistrust, which runs deep due to their divergent approaches and interests in the region.*

(CSF) to Pakistan and the US taking the lead in the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to put the country on the grey list have further strained bilateral ties. Growing US-India relations in total disregard of Pakistan's legitimate security concerns add to bilateral irritants and complexities.

Be that as it may, there is the strong realisation in Islamabad that despite recent setbacks, including placing restrictions on the movement of Pakistani diplomats in the US, the two countries should not allow the relationship to descend into an irredeemable situation. Complete disengagement will not serve either party.

Against this backdrop, the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) organised a two-day national conference titled *Irritants in Pakistan-US Relations: Way Forward*. The conference comprised of four sessions, in addition to the inaugural, with eight

## *Introduction*

eminent diplomats and academics who covered various themes ranging from Pakistan-US relations to identifying factors of the trust deficit as well as approaches to overcoming it, and the way forward. The aim of the discussions was to identify the major irritants that impede normalisation of Pakistan-US ties and suggest a course of action that could pave the way for at least a sustainable, if not, strong relationship.

In his Welcome Address, *Brig. (R) Sohail Tirmizi*, SI (M), former Acting President IPRI, stressed that the time had come for focusing on a state-to-state relationship between Pakistan and the US based on sovereign equality, rather than one which is based on expediency of personal interests and agendas. He was of the view that Pakistan needs to realise that what is important is not 'what we are required to do, but what is in our own national interest.' He pointed out that their divergence over regional issues has widened the strategic gap between the two former Cold War allies. He opined that President Trump's 20 August 2017 speech primarily revolved around India and Afghanistan, which indicates that the US looks at South Asia only through the prism of these two countries; and that such an approach towards the region is security-centric.

*Stability in Afghanistan, which is essential for regional peace, requires a holistic approach covering security and economic concerns. Under such an approach, Pakistan cannot be isolated from the region. Therefore, the US and Pakistan need to understand each other's security concerns and work in connivance to deter trans-regional threats.*

The Chief Guest of the conference, *Ambassador (R) Inam-ul-Haque*, Former Foreign Minister and Chairperson, Board of Governors, IPRI, in his Inaugural Address, said that the conference was timely and important since it provided an opportunity to assess the present state of relations with the US and their future trajectory in

wake of the 2018 meetings in Washington, D.C. of Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi, with the Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo and National Security Advisor John Bolton.

He emphasised that the bilateral relations need to be seen in the backdrop of the policy objectives and actions of the US in the region and the world at large; and highlighted that Washington has no intention of allowing a challenge to its global primacy by any country, including China.

He further added that the US and China are already engaged in a battle for resources – particularly energy and minerals, in Africa and elsewhere. The ongoing trade war of the US against China, the US opposition to Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) along with China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and the growing confrontations in the South China Sea are merely a reflection of this rivalry and competition. Ambassador Haque warned that the US'

*Interstate relations in today's world are complex and symbiotic. It is not possible to compartmentalize them or look at them in isolation.*

*The US will use all the means at its disposal to remain the undisputed and sole super power of the world. Full spectrum domination is its primary objective.*

## *Introduction*

rebalancing to Asia-Pacific is motivated to keep China in check with countries like Japan, India and Australia toeing the US line. He prophesied that Vietnam, Indonesia and Singapore, and even South Korea, may join the US if push came to shove.

*Foreign policy cannot be made on self-delusion, denial and false assumptions. Rather, foreign policy framers have to be clear-eyed, objective and logical, and must factor into policymaking the complex strategic, political and economic developments and the constantly emerging new equations.*

The Ambassador stressed that the US and China are super powers and Pakistan needs to maintain cordial relations with both players; and added that CPEC, a multifaceted economic project, is a manifestation of Beijing's support. He acknowledged that the US is equally important for Pakistan's economic well-being since it is a major trading partner and export destination for Pakistani goods.

*Without an autonomous economy, no country can have an autonomous foreign policy.*

He highlighted that the strategic dialogue, which was initiated during the Obama administration, is unlikely to be resumed in its original form. Therefore, Pakistan needs to find alternative ways to move forward with Washington on issues that are of interest to it.

*Relations with the US are vital for Pakistan because the former has influence in the decision-making process of international financial organisations like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.*

He further added that the US remains the most important relationship for Pakistan, since it has the maximum capacity to help the latter and also to inflict pain and damage directly as well as through proxies.

*Ambassador (R) Shamshad Ahmad*, Former Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, gave a talk on *Overview of Pakistan-US Relations: Strengths and Weaknesses*. He discussed the importance of foreign policy; and argued that it has no manuscript unlike trade or customs policy. In actuality, it is the external reflection of a country's internal well-being. He underscored that an economically vibrant and militarily strong country will have more diplomatic say, while a political actor having a fragile economy, will have a weaker international role. The example of the Soviet Union was cited in terms of how its domestic weaknesses resulted in the collapse of a once global super power.

On Pakistan-US relations, he stated that both, despite having differences in political standing, have remained allied partners. Ambassador Ahmad explained that the US interest in the region largely stemmed from defeating Communism during the Cold War, while in later years, terrorism was seen as a potent security challenge. He pointed out that Pakistan, being a neighbouring Afghan country, held significance in the US' policy circles. However, there has been a gradual downward trend in bilateral relations. Pakistan, once looked upon as a 'staunch ally', is now being viewed as a 'troublesome friend'. The post-9/11 political construct is reflective of this trend.

He emphasised this change in the US' policy needs to be seen in the regional and global contexts. The US' involvement in world theatres, including South Asia, is aimed at pursuing goals. Currently,

other than Afghanistan, the White House is concerned about China's phenomenal rise. The US inclination towards India, calling on the latter for a larger regional role in Afghanistan, is also meant to counter China.

*The spells of close ties between the two countries have been (and may continue to be) single-issue engagements of limited or uncertain duration. Unpredictability has been another consistent feature of this relationship, which has gone through regular interruptions in its intensity and integrity.*

He further added that the US' preferential treatment to India in the security and nuclear realm is of major concern to Pakistan, as it has widened the nuclear disparity between the two neighbours. Meanwhile, with the US' backing, India has a free hand in Kabul, thus, further complicating the security situation. He stressed that Pakistan, in view of its location, wants to have peace in Afghanistan.

*Pakistan has to be stable politically, and economically self-reliant to thwart the elements opposed to the country's existence and growth.*

*For Washington, it has remained a transactional relationship. On our side, the problem is the nature that our successive self-centred rulers have always sought to give to this relationship given their political and economic lifeline through their opportunistic policies and notorious deals. They always involved Washington, not in terms of securing Pakistan's interests, but securing their personal interests as to how America could help them to remain in power.*

He concluded that the future of Pakistan solely rests upon the people, it is their choice whether they want to be known as the Iran of 1979 or as a 'democratic, liberal, secular Islamic state.'

**Ambassador (R) Riaz Hussain Khokhar**, Former Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, spoke on *Understanding the Making of US Foreign Policy and Pakistan*, and explained that the US foreign policy is a complex subject given the super power's involvement in all world theatres. Its foreign policy is not the domain of a particular institution, rather, the President's office, Congress, Senate, Pentagon and the intelligence agencies contribute towards its framework. As per the Constitution, the US President is the Commander-in-Chief, and responsible for this policy. Meanwhile, the power to deploy troops abroad needs to have prior approval of the Congress, thus, congressional powers balance presidential domination.

Ambassador Khokhar also referred to the authoritarian role of presidential power and the failure of congressional powers in exercising legislation leading to an unbalanced power equation. He referred to the book *War on Peace: The End of Diplomacy and the Decline of American Influence* by Ronan Farrow which throws light on how presidential powers have systematically destroyed the State Department and its functioning.

He added that the non-diplomatic tone used by the US to deal with countries like North Korea such President Trump's 'they

*The US foreign policy over the years has been more militarily-driven, while the role of diplomats in policy formulation has been considerably marginalised.*



## *Introduction*

will be met with fire, fury and frankly power the likes of which this world has never seen before' has heightened security threats.

Explaining the role of think tanks in creating perceptions and biases within the US policy circles, he stated that retired diplomats as part of the think tank community give inputs into policy formulation. Besides, there are many lobbies working in the country, which indirectly impact foreign policy relations. He highlighted that the Indian diaspora has become strong over the years, and are part of the academia, and through their writings have become influential. According to the Ambassador, the Indian nuclear lobby successfully won their country's case.

While talking about Pakistan's presence within the intelligentsia, he remarked that the country has no representation and lacks any voice in the US policy quarters. The vacuum left is being filled by Indians and other similar voices with Pakistan's portrayal as a terrorist country being widely accepted.

*In order to project its voice and to negate the negativity linked with its image, Pakistan requires representation in the international think tank community and academia, as well as in government departments. The aim should be to reach out to the appropriate corners and audience.*

He concluded that to rebuild the trust deficit, Pakistan needs to put in diplomatic efforts to win over the US' confidence, and to assure that the country's efforts in restoring peace in Afghanistan are in the larger interest of the region.

In the second thematic session, *Dr Salma Malik*, from the Quaid-i-Azam University, gave a presentation on *Relationship between India-Pakistan and Role of US*. She pointed out that Pakistan since its creation has had a West-oriented foreign policy. The country had remained part of SEATO and CENTO; was also a recipient of US military and economic aid. Pakistan's nuclear weapons were also developed during this time. In fact, she remarked that the Americans knew about Pakistan's nuclear programme, but kept quiet because they had other strategic gains to achieve in the Afghan war against the former Soviet Union. She further added that on part of Pakistan, development of nuclear weapons on the sidelines of the Afghan war was a 'smart strategy' and it turned out to be a success. She said that in the aftermath of 9/11, Pakistan was granted the non-NATO ally status, which again brought the country into the US calculus. While looking at the impact of Afghan wars on the region in general and Pakistan, in particular, she highlighted that extremist tendency and militant threats have plagued the politico-security environment.

*Pakistan, being a neighbouring Afghan country, has had to bear the maximum fallout of the war. Pakistan (like Iran) should have adopted a more restrictive policy towards Afghanistan refugees.*

Dr Malik appeared critical of Pakistan's diplomatic efforts, and referred to the country's isolation during the Kargil episode. She identified that India has made diplomatic inroads into Western circles; and its narrative on regional security, Afghanistan, and Pakistan has widespread acceptance. She emphasised that to allay such negativity, Pakistan needs to gear up its diplomatic channels,

and look for innovative ways such as multi-track diplomacy to win over the international audience.

*Without a robust diplomatic force, Pakistan will not be able to prove to the outside world that the country's nuclear weapons are safe under a strong Command and Control system.*

She assessed Pakistan and India's regional positioning and said that the latter, due to its economic growth is seen by foreign players as an influential political actor. Its economic ties with China, relations with Russia and partnership with the US are a testament to this. Explaining Pakistan-China relations, she said that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is an important regional development, which will not only strengthen the bilateral axis, but will also give an impetus to Beijing's regional role.

*Convergence of interests between India and the US, owing to their opposition to China, has imparted greater vigour to their bilateral partnership.*

*Dr Syed Hussain Shaheed Soherwordi*, from the University of Peshawar, spoke on *Promoting Pakistan-US Cooperation in Countering Extremism*. He said that the US involvement in Afghanistan during the Cold War and WoT has been in pursuance of its own vested interest. In fact, the Cold War was fought against Communism, and

*Peace in Afghanistan or the region has never been a priority in the US' strategic pursuits.*

Pakistan as part of the capitalist bloc. Therefore, the country was executing the US' agenda. Resultantly, the war against the former Soviet Union witnessed the nurturing of *jihadi* groups in Pakistan; and provoked extremist tendencies in the region.

Looking at South Asia, he said that the region is one of the least integrated, with poverty and security issues common to all countries. Explaining the security situation in Afghanistan, he said that the country has seen war for decades and is still at war. Thus, to defeat extremism, any peace policy, rather than focusing on a military option, should work towards negotiations. He stated that extremist factions in the country, who are keen to talk, should be taken on board.

While commenting on Pakistan-US relations, Dr Soherwordi said that Pakistan has been at the forefront of the WoT. Leaving the country, based on a few accusations, is not the solution to fixing the relationship. More economic and financial assistance to Pakistan will contribute to the emergence of a more tolerant society. He cautioned that the US putting the country in the grey list of the FATF is counterproductive.

*The US policy towards Pakistan should not revolve around the Afghanistan and Indian perspective, rather Washington should look at Islamabad in the larger regional context. On Pakistan's part, the country should try to be part of an inclusive regional-oriented approach.*

In the third thematic session *Approaches to Overcome Trust Deficit*, **Dr Tughral Yamin**, from the National University of Sciences and Technology, gave a presentation on *Afghanistan Crisis and*

## *Introduction*

*Pakistan-US Disagreements on Operational Aspects of Countering Terrorism.* In his presentation, he emphasised the disagreements on diplomatic aspects rather than operational aspects in countering terrorism. He opined that for the most part, the US sees its relationship with Pakistan as transactional, whereby, the latter has not delivered on its part of the bargain, which is beyond its national interest. However, he argued that the relationship has had its fair share of high points as well. For instance, Pakistan and the US had a starry-eyed relationship during President Ayub's era which lasted till the 1965 war.

*Different circumstances, such as the war in Afghanistan or counterterrorism efforts, created unrealistic expectations which led to Pak-US trust deficit and souring of relations.*

Dr Tughral was also wary of the recent 'reset in relations' proposed by the US administration. He prescribed to the view that 'reset in relations' is just a buzzword because the US not only wants Pakistan to do more of the same, but also wants to create a hierarchy in the region with India at the top and not necessarily upgrade its relationship with Islamabad. He exemplified that the call between Prime Minister Imran Khan and the US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo exposed the stark divergence of interests between the two countries.

*The US wants a face saving exit from Afghanistan, Pakistan wants a stable government in Kabul and the Afghan government wants to survive at all costs.*

*Professor Dr Rasul Baksh Rais*, from the Lahore University of Management Sciences, discussed Pakistan-US relations under the Trump administration. He dispelled some common misperceptions that seem to have seeped into the Pak-US relations discourse. He argued that Pakistan needs to do away with the flawed argument that both countries do not have any common interest since they had one during the 1990s against the Soviet Union and then against terrorism (post-9/11).

Dr Rais emphasised that Pakistan and the US will have to find a new common ground to repair their relations since ambiguity for too long will lead to further trust deficit; and dismissed the notion that the former has not benefitted from the relationship and has been manipulated by the latter.

*States are rational actors and relations are always negotiated, therefore, Pakistan needs to stop looking at its US relationship from the manipulation angle.*

While commenting on the ongoing Afghan war, he said that it cannot be won decisively and there will not be any clear winners. The Afghan Taliban, he said, believe in raising the cost of occupation of the US forces, but they too, are becoming unsure of their own victory. Consequently, they have shown their willingness for directly engaging with the US.

*The simultaneous  
duel Afghan  
strategy of the US  
– talk and fight –  
will continue as  
the country is  
compelled by the  
conviction of its  
commitment.*

## *Introduction*

In the final session on the way forward, *Ms Nasim Zehra*, author and journalist, outlined the prospects of accommodating mutual concerns from the US perspective. She said that there is a relationship paradigm that cannot be ignored when analysing Pakistan-US relations. According to this paradigm, interstate relations are dependent on first, a country's experiences over time; and second, critical events which may force a country to change its attitude about and towards an issue. She explained that some of these issues include the

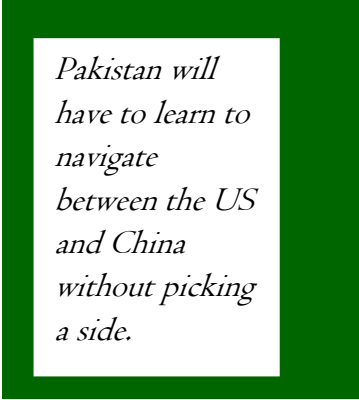
*China and CPEC do not figure highly in the belligerent attitude of the US towards Pakistan. The Afghan conundrum is the bone of contention for Washington.*

war in Afghanistan, different regional threat perceptions (such the US' disregard for Pakistan's security concerns vis-à-vis India), and concerns over its tactical nuclear weapons and field tactical weapons. Within this relationship paradigm, she emphasised that history cannot be ignored. Historically, the US wanted India to become an ally during the 1950s, but could not succeed due to its Non Aligned Movement. This increased Pakistan's strategic importance for the US that led to military alliances. During the 1990s, Pakistan became important for the US owing to the Soviet threat in Afghanistan.

She pointed out that now the US wants to downsize the relationship; and it will not change its condescending and arrogant attitude because it feels it can afford it, owing to its strategic partnership with India in the region. Hence, the recalibration of this relationship remains in the hands of Pakistan, not the US.

Pakistan needs to ask itself why its ally (the US) does not factor in its biggest strategic threat (India) into its strategic discourse. The answer may lie in wrong decisions taken by Islamabad in the past, she concluded.

Outlining Pakistan's perspective on the same subject, ***Dr Farhan H. Siddiqi***, from the Quaid-i-Azam University, highlighted that unlike popular opinion, Pakistan has been able to exercise its autonomy whilst being allied to the US. He referred to Pakistan's growing relations with China during the 1950s and 1960s as a case in point.



*Pakistan will have to learn to navigate between the US and China without picking a side.*

*Pakistan and the US have concentrated too much on national interests while looking at their bilateral relations. Instead, both countries need to go beyond national interests and adopt an ideational identity-based framework, which may improve Pakistan's image in the US.*

Pakistan could make a concerted effort to sustain its democratic dispensation, which leads to convergences with the Western model and improve Pakistan's image as a progressive, modern and democratic state.

While referring to mutual concerns, he pointed out that the ongoing war in Afghanistan is a bottleneck in improving bilateral relations between Pakistan and the US.

Explaining the Pakistan's measures for improving the security situation in the country, he said that it has taken many important



## *Introduction*

steps such as fencing its western border to ensure that cross-border terrorist activities could be curtailed; and mainstreaming the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) to ensure socioeconomic development, which would act as a bulwark against extremism and terrorism. He concluded that all these steps go unappreciated by the US because the country is pursuing a 'self-serving narrative' to justify its failure in Afghanistan domestically. ■



# **PART I**

**Welcome Address**

**Inaugural Address**





# Welcome Address

***Brig. (R) Sohail Tirmizi, SI (M)\****

I welcome you all to the Islamabad Policy Research Institute's two-day National Conference on *Irritants in Pakistan-US Relations and the Way Forward*.

The relationship between Pakistan and the United States (US) spans over seven decades and is characterised by periods of intense engagement to periods of coldness. At times, there has been convergence of interests between the two states, but at certain other times, their interests have diverged while creating mutual mistrust and suspicion towards each other. During periods of cordiality Pakistan-US relations remained exceptionally good especially during the height of the Cold War; and then again after 9/11 with Pakistan being given the status of a 'major non-NATO ally'.

Permit me to say, in this roller coaster relationship, cordiality has been marred by frustrations and strong engagement has been followed by disengagement. For the present, this relationship suffers from mutual mistrust and suspicion due to divergent approaches and interests in the region. President Trump's August 2017 speech on South Asia and Afghanistan and his New Year

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\* Brig. (R) Sohail Tirmizi, SI (M), is the former Acting President and Director Administration of the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI), Pakistan.

2018 tweet have not helped to overcome the trust deficit; and the US continues to demand from Pakistan to do more in the War on Terror. To further increase pressure on Pakistan, the present US administration has ceased military training for defence personnel and the Collation Support Fund (CSF) for Pakistan, resorted to the use of diplomatically harsh language and exercised its influence in the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to put Pakistan on its grey list. Pakistan, on the other hand, maintains that its efforts and sacrifices in the global fight against terrorism go unacknowledged.

*India and Afghanistan, the two regional states, factor significantly in Pakistan's strategic interests, while the US relations with these states have been instrumental in formulating its policy towards our country.*

The US disregard of Pakistan's sensitivities, its legitimate security interest vis-à-vis these states has not helped to bridge the mistrust in their relationship.

To remove mutual mistrust between Pakistan and the US and to revive cooperation, it is important to holistically debate key irritants that mar bilateral ties, understand each other's security concerns, acknowledge contributions made in achieving peace in the region and work on commonalities, in which, both sides can work together and expand cooperation.

Such an approach will help achieve the goal of a peaceful and prosperous region.

*Welcome Address*

We are holding this two-day conference to have an in-depth and open discussion on the subject of Pakistan-US relations. A holistic discussion calls for inclusion of views of our foreign policy experts and analysts for which, we strove to be as inclusive as was practically possible.

I cannot thank enough the distinguished chairpersons who will be presiding over the academic sessions of the conference and the distinguished speakers who would be sharing their invaluable expert opinions and knowledge with us.

I, once again, welcome all the participants of the conference who have taken time out from their busy schedules and have come to add value to our conference. We all look forward to a very lively and engaging discussion.

I thank you all. ■

*The US, in its relationship with Pakistan, has more often than not, followed an issue-based approach with security being central, dominating all other areas, of our bilateral relationship. The key challenge for both states, therefore, is to build a relationship that transcends the security-centric approach of bilateral engagements to focus on furthering cooperation in areas of trade, development and culture.*

# Inaugural Address

## ***Ambassador (R) Inam-ul-Haque\****

I am honoured to deliver the Inaugural Address at this two-day National Conference organised by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute to discuss Pakistan's relations with the United States.

The Conference is timely and important since it provides an opportunity to assess the present state of relations with the US and their future trajectory in wake of the recent meetings in Washington of Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi with the Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo and National Security Advisor John Bolton. In my remarks today, I will speak about the evolving situation around the world, trace the history of our bilateral relations with the US, the present status and what lies ahead.

Interstate relationships in today's world are complex and symbiotic. It is not possible to compartmentalise them or to look at them in isolation. As such, the bilateral relations between the US and

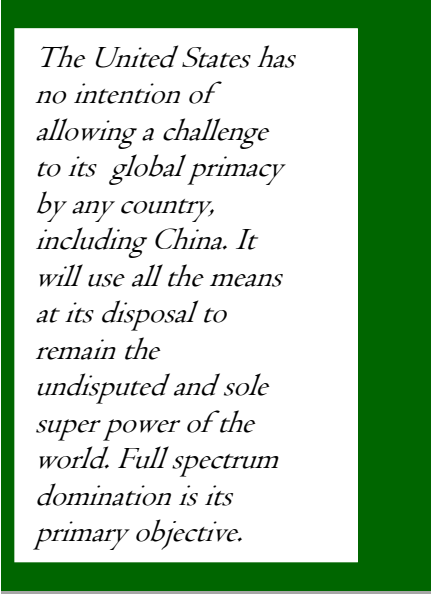
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\* Ambassador Inam-ul-Haque is a Pakistani career diplomat who has served as Foreign Secretary, the highest post of Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Pakistan as well as the Foreign Minister of Pakistan (2007-08). He also remained Minister of State for Foreign Affairs (2002). Mr Haq served as Pakistan's Ambassador to Turkey and China (1997-99). Due to his excellent advocacy and negotiation skills, he was given the charge of Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations (1999-2000). Ambassador Haque is also Chairperson, Board of Governors at the Islamabad Policy Research Institute, Pakistan.



Pakistan need to be seen in the backdrop of the policy objectives and actions of the former, the sole super power of the world, in the region and rest of the world.

The US is also preparing for the possibility of a confrontation and conflict between itself, a *status quo* power and China a rising power, also referred to as the 'Thucydides Trap'. Apart from the Peloponnesian wars, between a *status quo* Sparta and a rising Athens, which Thucydides wrote about, Professor Graham Allison's book *Destined for War* is instructive. He has discussed



*The United States has no intention of allowing a challenge to its global primacy by any country, including China. It will use all the means at its disposal to remain the undisputed and sole super power of the world. Full spectrum domination is its primary objective.*

16 cases over the last 500 years where similar situations arose. In 12 cases out of 16, there was a war.

The US and China are already engaged in the battle for resources - particularly energy and minerals, in Africa and elsewhere. The ongoing trade war, initiated by the US against China, the former's opposition to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), of which the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is an essential component, and the growing confrontations in the South China Sea, are merely a reflection of this rivalry and competition.

The US is also engaged in acquiring allies all around China. The Pacific Pivot, the rebalancing to the Asia-Pacific, now renamed the 'Indo-Pacific', has the primary objective of keeping China in check.

Rex Tillerson spoke of a 100 years of partnership with India. This policy enjoys bipartisan support in the US. The QUAD, namely the US, Japan, India and Australia is already in place. Vietnam and Indonesia and other countries like Singapore and South Korea may join the US if push comes to shove. The objective is to contain China and hedge in its geographical space.

*The United States has made no secret of the fact that it has chosen India for a long-term strategic partnership in the region.*

In the Middle East, an alliance between the US, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Israel is already in place against Iran, Syria, Yemen, the Palestinians and others in the region. Even Qatar, which hosts the CENTCOM<sup>1</sup> forces, has been ostracised by the new KSA-UAE combine. Recognition of Jerusalem, as the capital of Israel, by the Trump administration has opened another Pandora's box.

*The secular, albeit authoritarian, regimes in the Middle East, namely Iraq, Libya, Syria and Yemen have been, and are being, systematically destroyed by the US, aided and abetted by Western countries, and with the support of some Arab countries themselves, while the monarchies and the Emirates which are antidemocratic and deny fundamental human rights to their populations continue to enjoy the US' umbrella and blessings. This is how the US is spreading democracy, promoting and protecting human rights and confronting religious fundamentalism*

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<sup>1</sup> United States Central Command.

*Inaugural Address*

*in the Middle East.*

Since 9/11, millions of civilians have been killed and injured, in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria and in Yemen. Many more millions have been made homeless. Millions are facing famine and outbreak of epidemics like Cholera. Hardly any voices are raised about their plight. When some of these uprooted people seek asylum in the West, the doors are shut in their faces.

In South Asia, apart from the bilateral disputes between India and Pakistan, and the fact that India refuses to hold a dialogue with us to resolve long-standing issues like Kashmir, Siachen and Sir Creek, religious intolerance is rising alarmingly: Hindu saffron vigilantes, Muslim *Takfiris*, persecution of religious minorities are becoming a regular feature.

*The US has no intention of leaving Afghanistan. Nor do the Afghan elite in their hearts want the US, a cash cow, they and the war lords have been milking for 17 years, to depart. The US has nothing to show for the close to one trillion dollars it has sunk into the Afghan conflict except death and destruction, and wishes to shift the blame of its failure.*

So, it accuses Pakistan of harbouring the Haqqani Group and providing safe havens to the Taliban. We would be justified in pointing out that since the Taliban occupy more than 40 per cent of Afghan territory, even according to the US military sources, they do not really need any safe havens in Pakistan! The US and the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) should prevent them from crossing over. Furthermore, if they do, in fact, cross back into Afghanistan

and launch forays there, the latter should welcome rather than oppose placement of a fence on the border by Pakistan, which would prevent such illegal crossings. In fact, with a tiny fraction of the one trillion dollars that the Americans have sunk into their efforts to pacify this territory, they could have erected an impenetrable barricade across the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The US could not defeat the Taliban insurgency when the coalition forces had more than 150,000 troops and security contractors in the country. How are a mere 15,000 or so soldiers going to win the conflict, particularly when the Afghan Armed Forces and other security personnel, who have been trained, armed and paid by the US do not have the will to fight and according to the President of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani would collapse within six months of the US' departure?

*And finally, how does stopping illegal cross-border movement become the sole responsibility of Pakistan both on the Afghan border as well as on the Line of Control and the working boundary in Jammu and Kashmir? Shouldn't India and Afghanistan accept the responsibility for protecting their own borders and stop blaming Pakistan?*

The US and Europe are also edging towards extreme right and ultra-nationalist, anti-refugee and anti-Islam policies. Neo-fascism is rearing its ugly head in Europe. The West first creates millions of homeless and refugees through armed aggression and destruction in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria and Yemen and when these homeless

*Inaugural Address*

people seek refuge elsewhere they are given a neutral title of migrants and denied entry.

In an interesting twist, the US and the West - the great champions of globalisation and open economies - are moving towards protectionism, by imposing limitations and tariffs on imports, while China has become an ardent votary of globalisation.

*Relationships between countries are need-based and transactional. There is, as the Americans say, no such thing as a free lunch. There is always a price to pay. It is a cost-benefit calculation. There is always a trade-off. It is up to each country to try to extract the maximum benefits at a reasonable cost.*

There is nothing wrong with this. Both sides hope to benefit. Assistance and loans always come with multiple strings, and power equations play a crucial part in all deals, whether political, defence-related or economic, and there are times when the weaker party is confronted with a situation where it has limited options and room for manoeuvre.

A 'State' is an amoral entity - it has aims, objectives, interests and strategies. If ethical and moral principles advance national interests they will be used, if not, they are jettisoned.

Let us take our own example. Pakistan joined SEATO and CENTO<sup>2</sup> because we needed weapons, not to fight communism but

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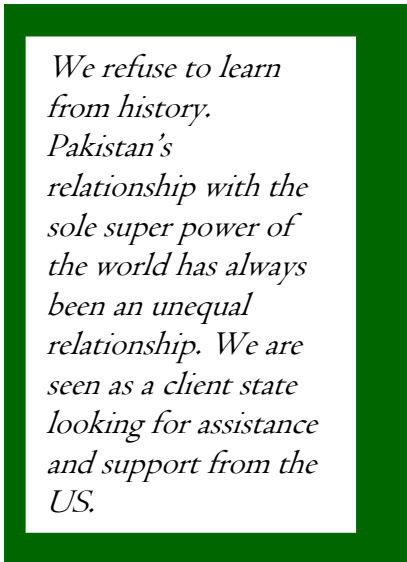
<sup>2</sup> SEATO was the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (1955-77) – a defence treaty between the US, France, United Kingdom (UK), Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines and Thailand. CENTO was the Central Treaty Organization (1955-1979), a military alliance, originally known as the Baghdad Pact or the Middle East Treaty

to keep India at bay, and the US wanted allies in the Cold War. We became a part of the Afghan war because General Zia was looking for international legitimacy for himself, and the US was willing to turn a blind eye to our nuclear programme, despite the Symington, Glenn and later Pressler Amendments, because of our support. For its part, the US was out to avenge its humiliation in Vietnam and to hasten the demise of the Soviet Union.

We joined the international community in 2001 after 9/11, since the entire international community was on the side of the US. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1368 was adopted on 12 September 2001, and India offered its airfields and naval facilities to the US. Pakistan was faced with an economic crisis, and was under a triple layer of US sanctions because of our nuclear tests, missiles programme and military rule. The US, for its part, wanted to use our airspace and the land routes to Afghanistan.

Let us look at some landmarks in the history of our relations:

I have already referred to SEATO and CENTO. However, during the 1965 war with India, the US suspended the supply of weapons to Pakistan when we needed them most. Lyndon B. Johnson, President of the US at that time, was a Democrat.



*We refuse to learn from history. Pakistan's relationship with the sole super power of the world has always been an unequal relationship. We are seen as a client state looking for assistance and support from the US.*

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Organization, formed by Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey and the UK.

## *Inaugural Address*

Pakistan and the US were partners in the Afghan conflict against Soviet occupation. We were the conduit for money and weapons for the Afghan *Tanzimat* fighting in Afghanistan. The Soviets completed their withdrawal in 1989 after the Geneva Accords of 1988.

In 1990, President Bush Senior refused to issue the certification required under the Pressler Amendment of 1985, and nuclear sanctions against Pakistan were resumed. Bush was a Republican.

In 2000, we witnessed the 'love fest' of five days in India by President Clinton. He spent only about five hours in Pakistan and treated us to a lecture on national television on how to conduct our affairs. He was a Democrat.

In 2005, the US agreed to a Civil Nuclear Agreement with India, which became operational after approval by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) of a special nuclear Safeguards Agreement, and a green signal by the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) in 2008. Despite being a non-NATO ally, Pakistan was denied this privilege. Bush Junior was a Republican.

President Obama, a Democrat, visited India twice but did not deem it appropriate to pay a visit to Pakistan. The gulf between Pakistan and the US continued to widen during the Obama years. In 2011, both Leon E. Panetta, the Defence Secretary, and Admiral Mike Mullen accused Pakistan of acting against US interests and objectives in Afghanistan and threatened consequences. Admiral Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, called the Haqqani Group 'a veritable arm of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency.'

The relationship has continued to slide downhill under Trump.

The Afghan Strategy of August 2017, followed by his 2018 New Year day tweet accusing Pakistan of 'lies and deceit', the denial of at least 900 million dollars in reimbursements under the Coalition Support Fund, the growing role assigned to India in Afghanistan and in the 'Indo-Pacific', the designation of India as an anchor in the region, talk of a 100 years of strategic partnership, and repeated accusations against Pakistan in Indo-US joint communiqués are some examples of the US mind-set. Trump is a Republican.

And let us also keep in mind that if Trump can turn on his European allies, on NATO, on Canada, Mexico, Germany, Japan and South Korea and others to impose compliance with American demands, it is highly unlikely that he would have any love lost for Pakistan.

In the US today, there is bipartisan support for India. Pakistan has very few friends in the US. The Trump White House, the NSC,<sup>3</sup> the State Department, the CIA,<sup>4</sup> the DOD,<sup>5</sup> both Houses of Congress, media, think tanks, opinion makers, are all against Pakistan. We have no regular access at higher levels of policymaking. Our diaspora is ineffective and suspect because of growing Islamophobia in the US and the West.

Times have also changed. Our friendship with China did not rankle with the US because both were on the same side against the Soviet Union for more than two decades. Today, the US is arrayed against China which is a strategic rival and competitor, with an

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<sup>3</sup> National Security Council.

<sup>4</sup> Central Intelligence Agency.

<sup>5</sup> Department of Defense.



economy already larger than that of the US in Purchasing Power Parity (PPP), has a burgeoning military budget, and is making massive investments in technological research and development and is increasing its outreach and soft power. As a time-tested friend of China and as a partner in China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which the US and India and perhaps the Europeans, are not happy about, Pakistan is, as far as the US is concerned, in the opposite camp.

*Foreign policy cannot be based on self-delusion, denial and false assumptions. Foreign policy framers have to be clear-eyed, objective and logical, and must factor into policymaking the complex strategic, political and economic developments, and the constantly emerging new equations. Finally, without an autonomous economy, no country can have an autonomous foreign policy.*

Since the takeover by the new government, there have been a number of contacts at a high level. The most recent was the visit of the Foreign Minister to Washington and his meetings there. People ask: has the ice melted?

Let us note that for once the US did not ask Pakistan to

*Bilateral ties will improve only if Pakistan is seen to be helping the US achieve its objectives in Afghanistan. Perhaps that is why our Foreign Minister is reported to have commented that the road to improvement in bilateral relations lies through Kabul.*

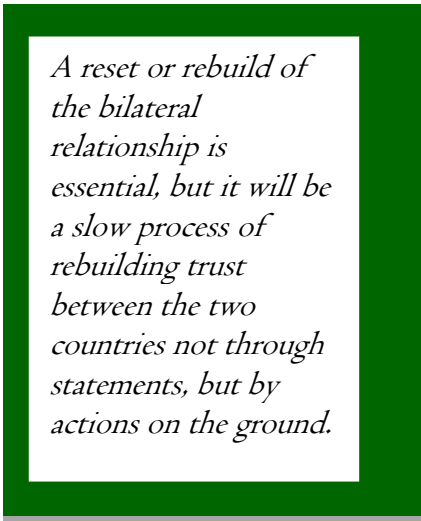
‘do more’; it did not accuse us of harbouring the Taliban and the

Haqqanis; it spoke of a political solution and bringing the Taliban to the negotiating table. Pakistan is expected to help bring the Taliban to the table. Zalmay Khalilzad was in Pakistan to pursue discussions that had begun in Washington. However, we should also note that the discussions have so far been primarily on the end game in Afghanistan. Bilateral relations were not discussed at any length.

The interrupted strategic dialogue between Pakistan and the US, which was initiated during the Obama administration, is unlikely to be resumed in original form. We must find alternative ways to move forward on the issues that are of interest to us.

The subjects that were included in the dialogue process related to: energy; security, strategic stability and non-proliferation; defence; law enforcement and counterterrorism; finance; education, science and technology. There could be additional subjects as agreed upon by both sides. Free flowing discussions on regional issues like Afghanistan, South Asia, and West Asia including Iran, could be held by policy planning groups in the two countries.

To conclude, both the US and China are super powers. Pakistan needs friendly and close relations with both states. Our relations with these two countries cannot be at the expense of one over the other. Our Chinese friends always advise us to maintain and develop our relations with the US.



*A reset or rebuild of the bilateral relationship is essential, but it will be a slow process of rebuilding trust between the two countries not through statements, but by actions on the ground.*

*Inaugural Address*

China and Pakistan are 'strategic partners'. This partnership has evolved over decades. CPEC, a multifaceted economic project which is essential for our medium and long-term growth, is the most recent manifestation of China's support to Pakistan. No other country has offered a similar economic opportunity to us.

The US is equally important for our economic well-being. It is a major trading partner and export destination for Pakistani goods. The bilateral trade between the two countries has crossed six billion dollars with the balance of trade being in Pakistan's favour by about 800 million dollars. The US also plays the most important role in decision-making in International Financial Organisations (IFIs), like the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

When, and not if, we approach the IMF for another Extended Fund Facility, which should be done sooner rather than later, support of the US for our request would be essential.

All said and done, the US remains the most important relationship for Pakistan, since it has the maximum capacity to help us, and also to inflict pain and damage directly, as well as through proxies.

Thank you.■



# **PART II**

## **DIPLOMATIC MUSINGS**

- Overview of Pakistan-US Relations:  
Strengths and Weaknesses  
*Ambassador (R) Shamshad Ahmad*
- Understanding the Making of US Foreign  
Policy and Pakistan  
*Ambassador (R) Riaz Hussain Khokhar*



# Overview of Pakistan-US Relations: Strengths and Weaknesses

## *Speech*

### ***Ambassador (R) Shamshad Ahmad\****

I am supposed to give you an overview of this important relationship, but I will be dwelling on the second part of the topic which is ‘strengths and weaknesses’ of the Pakistan-United States (US) relationship.

For any important relationship, we need to understand what we mean by foreign policy? There is a great deal of misunderstanding about our country’s foreign policy, and often people tell me that we should ‘change’ our foreign policy. There is an impression that foreign policy is like any other policy in the country, like trade, customs or economic policy. However, this impression is incorrect. All those policies are written and scripted.

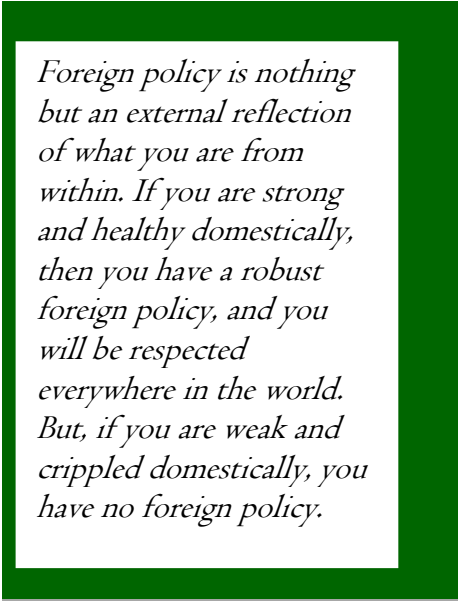
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\* Ambassador Shamshad Ahmad is a former Foreign Secretary of Pakistan (1997-2000). He has distinguished public service experience in bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, regional cooperation, conflict resolution, preventive diplomacy and public affairs. He has held various diplomatic assignments in Pakistan missions in Tehran, Dakar, Paris, Washington and New York. He served as Ambassador of Pakistan to South Korea and Iran, held responsibilities as Secretary General of Economic Cooperation Organization and as Pakistan’s ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations (2000-02). He has also served as Senior Consultant to the UN on economic and social matters. He writes regularly in English dailies of Pakistan and participates as a speaker in national and international conferences.

Foreign policy has no manuscript. It is not like any other document with bullet points, that if you want to change any part, you remove it and add something new. No!

Even a super power, formerly known as Soviet Union, could not survive as a super power because it was politically and economically crippled at home. Having said that, let us look at what is wrong with the Pakistan-US relationship.

During my earlier visits to the US, I stumbled upon a book at a yard sale, titled



*Foreign policy is nothing but an external reflection of what you are from within. If you are strong and healthy domestically, then you have a robust foreign policy, and you will be respected everywhere in the world. But, if you are weak and crippled domestically, you have no foreign policy.*

*America's Stake in Asia.* It was written in 1968 by Drew Middleton. He was a renowned foreign correspondent for the Associated Press. He covered World War II from D-Day to V-Day; as well as several important developments in Africa and Asia before returning to New York in 1965. That is the year when I joined the Foreign Service of Pakistan. He became the New York Times' Chief Correspondent at the United Nations. He had a chapter in his book entitled 'Pakistan: A Lost Friend' and gave an incisive account of how Washington's total insensitivity to its close ally and partner's legitimate security concerns had generated a sense of alienation among the people of Pakistan. While deploring Washington's near-sighted policies, Middleton presciently called Pakistan the 'pattern' for Asian nations of the future: independent, tough and opportunistic. In his view:



*Pakistan's geographical situation and a dozen other considerations made it virtually important to peace in the whole of Asia and the world at large.*

This old book on the US' stake in Asia may have ended up in trash, but Pakistan as a fiercely independent country has rarely disappeared for any length of time from its strategic radar screen.


So, Pakistan is not a 'lost' friend. For more than 70 years now, it has loomed large in one form or another, either as a staunch 'ally' or a 'partner' of the US or a 'troublesome' friend, although Pakistanis do not think that Pakistan has been troublesome, but we are considered and we were considered as such for sometime. The post-9/11 War on Terror may have provided a rationale for the ongoing unpalatable US 'engagement' with Pakistan, but this war neither limits the relationship's scope nor exhausts the challenges it faces.

*The only mutuality they have is one of self-serving expediencies, with each side always aiming at different goals and objectives to be derived from their relationship. No wonder, this relationship has lacked continuity, a larger conceptual framework and a shared vision beyond each side's narrowly based and vaguely defined issue-specific priorities.*

What Middleton visualises of this relationship in the 1960s still holds good, even more than half a century later. It remains an important relationship that we agree has survived many ups and downs, remaining crucial for both sides of this equation - if at all this is an 'equation'.

No relationship is without problems. Every relationship has its lows and highs, so the Pakistan-US relationship is no exception. Because of the US' global outreach-driven compulsions, and our quest for security and survival, this relationship, despite no conflict of interest, could not develop a genuine mutuality of interests.

For Pakistan, the issues of security and survival in a turbulent and hostile regional environment have been the overriding policy factors in its relations with Washington. The US' policy goals in Pakistan, on the other hand, have traditionally been rooted in its own regional and global interests, specifically issues of nuclear and missile proliferation, India-Pakistan hostility, issues of democracy, human rights, economic reforms, terrorism, Afghanistan logjam, and lately its China-driven agenda.



*The US' unusual relationship has seen rotating phases of engagement and estrangement depending on the nature of regional and global dynamics, and their own preferences and compulsions.*

The first of three major US engagements with Pakistan occurred during the height of the Cold War, from the mid-1950s to mid-1960s. The second was during the Afghan *Jihad* in the 1980s; and the third engagement is still ongoing with Pakistan being kept hostage to US' China-driven agenda in the region.

*The spells of close ties between the two countries have been (and may continue to be) single-issue engagements of limited or uncertain duration. Unpredictability has been another consistent feature of this relationship, which*

*Overview of Pakistan-US Relations: Strengths and Weaknesses*

*has gone through regular interruptions in its intensity and integrity.*

The US would lose interest in remaining engaged in any cooperation once it achieved its objectives vis-à-vis Pakistan. In this process, we have fought wars - and Pakistan is still in a war that was in the first place, a wrong war. Our strategic location was pivotal to the dynamics of the Cold War era. In

*Pakistan was either consigned to benign neglect or hit with a succession of punitive sanctions that left in their trail resentment and a sense of betrayal.*

that era, the policy of 'containment' was enacted from our soil. We undertook historic errands, which included the use of our air bases by US spy planes over Soviet air space in the 1960s. We made seminal contribution in the US-China rapprochement in the 1970s. Following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in late 1979, Pakistan again became a key ally of the US, and a frontline state in the last and decisive battle of the Cold War, which hastened the collapse of what the free world, called the 'Evil Empire' of the former Soviet Union and its symbol the Berlin war.

Once the war was over and Soviet Union pulled out, the US just walked away, leaving Afghanistan and its people at the mercy of their fate. We were also left in the lurch with a painful legacy in terms of a massive refugee influx with which we are still burdened; and a culture of drugs and guns known as the 'Kalashnikov' culture, which has almost torn apart our social and political fabric. In the years that followed, the US not only turned a blind eye to our

strategic concerns vis-à-vis India, but also started bringing us under greater scrutiny and pressure for our legitimate nuclear programme, which we were forced to start after India's nuclear explosion in 1974, which the West hailed as the 'Smiling Buddha' ironically.

Pakistan's post-9/11 alliance with the US was indeed the beginning of another painful chapter in our history. In the blink of an eye, we became a battleground of the US' War on Terror; and have been paying a heavy price in terms of human and material losses.

*The Afghans are not the only victims of the Afghan tragedy - we have suffered irreparably in multiple ways in terms of socioeconomic burden, rampant terrorism, and unabated violence and protracted conflict in our border areas with Afghanistan.*

To further complicate the situation, growing Indo-US nexus gave India a strategic ascendancy in the region, as well as assuming an unprecedented role and influence in Afghanistan. The Pakistan-India hostility and conflict now finds an extension in the key Afghan theatre. This is not without serious

*Despite all that we did for Washington after 9/11, Pakistan was de-hyphenated from India and bracketed with stone aged Afghanistan in terms of regional role and relevance.*

implications for the prospects of Afghan peace or even for the prospects of India-Pakistan, because New Delhi feels emboldened in its intransigence. What disturbs Pakistan is US' indifference to its legitimate security concerns and sensitivities. Instead of continuing with a lamentable blame game, using Pakistan as a scapegoat for its

own failures in this war, the US and its allies must accept the reality that for Pakistan, Afghanistan is an area of fundamental importance.

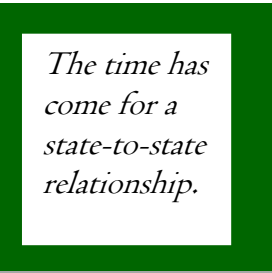
*The risk of Pakistan-India proxy war in Afghanistan is fraught with perilous implications for regional and global peace and must be averted at all cost. If the Soviet presence in Cuba in the 60s almost triggered a nuclear war, India's ascendancy today remains a danger of no less gravity to the already volatile security environment of this nuclearised region.*

If the turbulent political history of this region has any lessons, Washington should be working overtime to promote a sense of security and strategic balance in the region. It should be eschewing discriminatory policies in its dealings with the India-Pakistan nuclear equation - the only one in the world that grew up in history totally unrelated to the Cold War, all other nuclear powers were the product of the dynamics of this war.

The Indo-Pak nuclear equation is the only nuclear equation which is the product of actual live and outstanding disputes. This shows the volatility of this equation. But, instead of remaining sensitive to this situation, the US gave India a country-specific nuclear deal with a *carte blanche* in Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) with access to nuclear fuel and technology. The country-specific preferential treatment that India is receiving since 2009 is not only widening nuclear imbalances in the region, but also undermining the prospects of India-Pakistan restraints and stabilisation in which Washington claims to have deep stakes. Therefore, any measures that

contribute to widening the strategic balance, lowering of nuclear threshold and fuelling of an arms race between the two nuclear-armed neighbours with an escalatory effect on their military budgets and arsenals, are no service to the peoples of the region. Unfortunately, besides persistent trust deficit, the two countries in recent years have had no control over the growing list of irritants, some of which could easily have been avoided if both sides were guided by mutuality of interests, and had given an opportunity to their diplomats to look at and address them. Unfortunately, they never relied on diplomatic engagements.

This brings me to another interesting feature of this relationship. No doubt this is an important relationship, but the problem is not in the relationship. The problem is its poor and self-serving management on both sides. For Washington, it has remained a



*The time has come for a state-to-state relationship.*

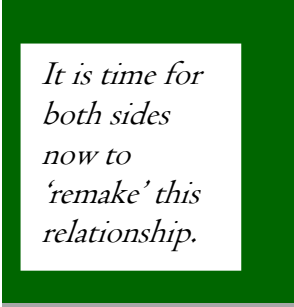
transactional relationship. On our side, the problem is the nature that our successive self-centred rulers have always sought to give to this relationship as their political and economic lifeline given their opportunistic policies and notorious deals. They always involved Washington, not in terms of securing Pakistan's interests, but securing their personal interests as to how Washington can help them to remain in power. Three consecutive foreign secretaries are witness to this reality.

To conclude, this relationship must be based on sovereign equality and state-to-state mutual respect; personalities are not important. We have had personalities at the helm of states. They now

have personalities at the helm of the US itself. Personalities keep changing. It is what the policy of the state is which is important.

Fortunately, the initial vibes that have emanated from the new leadership in Pakistan are quite encouraging since they are interested in evolving a new relationship or re-setting the relationship with this new approach.

I say 'remake' this relationship as a normal and bilateral functional relationship – one which is no longer a transactional one; and one that must go beyond the War on Terror. This is the blueprint of a future relationship that we should seek. This



*It is time for  
both sides  
now to  
'remake' this  
relationship.*

reality could not have been described more eloquently than by Joe Biden who, in his November 2007 address at the New Hampshire Institute of Politics, then-Senator and soon to become Vice President, publicly admitted that 'beyond the current crisis lurks a far deeper problem in this relationship which is largely transactional and this transaction isn't working for either party.' From 'America's perspective,' according to him, 'Pakistan despite receiving billions of dollars never delivered on combating the Taliban and al-Qaeda. From Pakistan's perspective,' he acknowledged, 'America is an unreliable ally which for its own interests has only bolstered its corrupt rulers.'

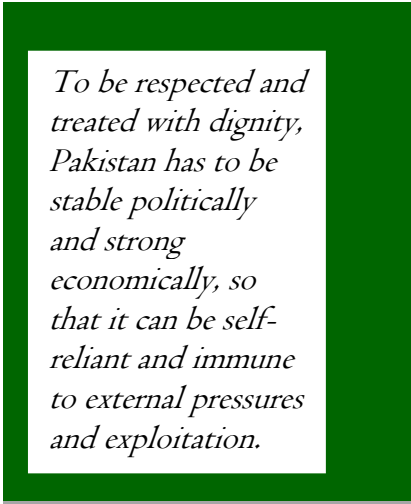
Like Drew Middleton, Joe Biden also couldn't escape painful soul-searching to be able to sum up the hard reality of US-Pakistan relationship as Washington's yet another unlearnt lesson:

*History may describe today's Pakistan as a repeat of 1979 Iran or 2001 Afghanistan. Or history may write a very different story: that of Pakistan as a stable, democratic, secular Muslim state. Which future unfolds will be strongly influenced - if not determined - by the actions of the United States.*

Biden may be right, but our tryst with destiny will be determined only by our own actions, by our own acts of omissions and commissions. What is important for us at this critical juncture is not what we are required to do for others' interests; it is what we ought to do to serve our own national interests.

Our dilemma was best described by George Washington, the first founding President of United States in 1796, 220 years ago. He had an advice for Pakistan and I share that advice - alluding to the fate of small nations that leave themselves at the mercy of larger powers or tag their destiny with that of another state, he said that they are not worthy of

independence as they are doomed to be the satellites of those powers. He also said that it was:



*To be respected and treated with dignity, Pakistan has to be stable politically and strong economically, so that it can be self-reliant and immune to external pressures and exploitation.*



*Overview of Pakistan-US Relations: Strengths and Weaknesses*

*...folly in one nation to look for disinterested favors from another; that it must pay with a portion of its Independence for whatever it may accept under that character.*

With these words, which were also appropriately said by a prominent Pakistani poet, Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi several years ago, I would like to conclude. ■

# Understanding the Making of US Foreign Policy and Pakistan

## *Speech*

***Ambassador (R) Riaz Hussain Khokhar\****

Foreign policymaking in the United States is a very complex subject since we are talking about the policy of a superpower which has huge interests all over the world. And this is a country that does not want to give up world domination. It wishes to retain its supremacy, no matter who the challenger is, whether it is China or Russia or a combination of both.

However, more recently, foreign policymaking in the US has been simplified from being a very complex subject to being downsized to a tweet. Trump tweets something – first, Washington is shocked; and then, the world is shocked. Pakistan has also been at the receiving end of this attitude of President Trump. People in Washington are unable to deal with him; and there is chaos in the capital.

*The US' foreign policy establishment is in two parts. One is, of course, the government; and the other is the huge foreign policy security establishment which comprises of former government officials, experts, and think tanks.*

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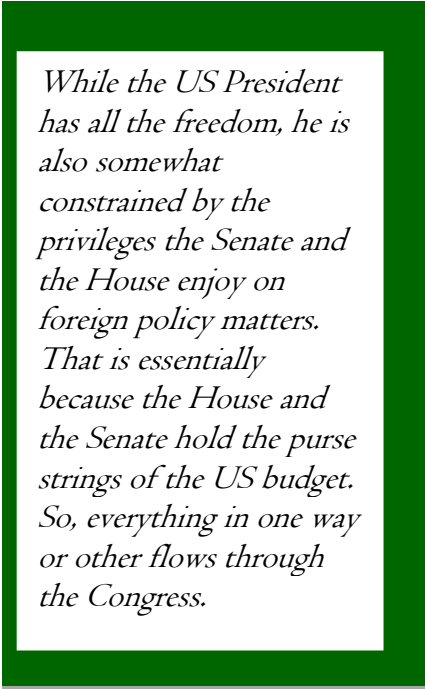
\* Mr Riaz Hussain Khokhar is a former Foreign Secretary of Pakistan (2002-05). He also served as Pakistan's Ambassador to India (1992-97), the United States (1997-99) and China (1999-2002). He frequently appears as a speaker in national and international conferences on regional and global issues.

*However, they are all in a state of shock as to how to deal with the policy edicts of President Trump.*

The US Constitution parcels out foreign relations powers to both the executive and legislative branches. It grants some powers, like command of the military, exclusively to the President and others, like the regulation of foreign commerce, to Congress, while still others it divides among the two or simply does not assign.

The President is responsible for the formulation of policy, with assistance of the State Department and more importantly, the National Security Council (NSC) - an agency in the office of President - a critical power centre. The NSC has the President as its head, the Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State, head of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and one or two other people who are required from time to time.

If one want to understand what is happening to US' foreign policy, three recent books need to be read. One is by Ronan Farrow titled *War on Peace: The End of Diplomacy and the Decline of American Influence*, written about how systemically President Trump



*While the US President has all the freedom, he is also somewhat constrained by the privileges the Senate and the House enjoy on foreign policy matters. That is essentially because the House and the Senate hold the purse strings of the US budget. So, everything in one way or other flows through the Congress.*

is destroying normal diplomatic approaches; how US foreign policy is undergoing a dramatic transformation after deep budget cuts with diplomats walking out in droves. Offices across the State Department sitting empty, while abroad the military-industrial complex is assuming the work once undertaken by peacemakers. The other book is *Fire and Fury: Inside the Trump White House* by Michael Wolff about the craziness of President Trump and how he is running his administration – about the man who at the United Nations podium threatened North Korea in rather abusive terms. A lot of people do not understand why he is using such crude language. I think it was Kissinger who said, ‘it may be dangerous to be *America’s enemy*, but to be *America’s friend* is fatal.’ We have to keep that in mind.

My approach is that we should not be so emotional about our relationship with US. One has to take a cold-blooded attitude. They use us, we use them. It is a bad marriage. They do not get out of it and we do not get out of it. May be it is because of the children or various other things. But, the fact of the matter is that we are stuck in this situation.


Foreign policies in Washington do not work through the State Department or the Pentagon alone. It is true that in our relationship with Washington, our officials deal with the State Department and the NSC, but there is also considerable interaction between the Pentagon and the Armed Forces of Pakistan. They have a deep relationship and there is deep relationship between the intelligence agencies of both countries as well. However, I want to emphasise how important it is to see how Congress works. For example, the Pressler Amendment was a very bruising experience for Pakistan.

Congressional Committees are also very crucial. The US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations is clearly the most important, as is the House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs. But the difference between the two is that in the Senate, the intellectual calibre of the people is far superior. So when foreign policy is made by the State Department, and if the Senate feels its needs to know more, they hold what they call a 'Congressional Hearing' and those are very critical. I think there is no other country in the world, perhaps besides Israel and Palestine, that has drawn the attention of the Committee more times than Pakistan.

Then, there are the Intelligence Committees of both houses. Those are also very significant, because much of the nature of our work, especially the war against terrorism, has been of great interest to Congress. Then, there is the Appropriation Committee. Aid bills or bills like the Kerry-Lugar bill go through a very long process, both in the House as well as in the Senate. Several amendments are added to it. This shows the importance these committees have over foreign policy matters.

There are 13,000 think tanks in the US, but there are some which are very critical and important depending on which think tank is associated with which political party. In think tanks, you have very seasoned former diplomats, generals, and experts who have served their lifetimes in these organisations. They contribute a lot in the form of articles and advisory notes sent to the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs. So, they are a very important part of the process.

Then, there are many lobbies in Washington. There are 35-40 Indians heading various multinationals today. They are spread out in the academic world; and are also very active in the think tanks. Hence, they are often consulted not only by the State Department, but also by the



*There is, of course, the Indian lobby which is extremely active because the Indian Diaspora is politically active; very well-entrenched; and has enormous contribution to the US economy.*

CIA and the Pentagon about how they see situations evolving in South Asia, whether it is India-Pakistan relations or Afghanistan.

Then, there is the Israeli lobby. They do not openly or actively work against Pakistan, but when the Indians are active they usually summon the support of the Israeli lobby.

There is the nuclear lobby. Pakistan's nuclear programme has never been a palatable subject for the US. Although, they may have accepted it reluctantly, but this lobby is active because they think that Pakistan acted very irrationally after the explosion, especially in the context of Kargil.

Then, there is the human rights lobby raising all sorts of questions. Take the case of Shakeel Afridi. There are people in the Congress who take up causes - there were people who took up the cause of the Baloch freedom movement, and there are some who are now talking about a freedom movement in Sindh.

The problem now is that because Pakistan has been falsely painted as a country that has been supporting terrorism, because Osama bin Laden was discovered here, this has all contributed to building hostilities between the bilateral relations of the two countries. As a result, there are no longer any people in Washington who speak for Pakistan. We did not face this issue some years ago, but now it has become a very serious problem.

Then there are, of course, issues about Afghanistan. It has become a nightmare for Pakistan. How do we change this scenario? I think, as I said before, we should be cold-blooded about this relationship. If there is something we are not able to pursue or do, we should be very clear about it.

What are those major irritants as far as Pakistan-US relations are concerned? The first is Afghanistan. President Trump, during his election campaign,

*No Congressman or woman likes to be seen advocating a Pakistani cause or supporting Pakistan. There were times when they would call us and offer their help. Now, this does not happen.*

*We cannot afford to be an enemy of the US. It is not in our interest at all. Rather than expecting resumption of the same good old relationship, it is important that Pakistan should start looking to develop a working relationship, so that we have a decent, civilised relationship, in which we do whatever is in our interest.*

talked about the withdrawal of forces. Once he came into power, he faced this powerful defense and security establishment both in the government and outside of it, and he realised he had to change his position. So, what he is really looking for is some kind of settlement where they do not look as if they are losers or they have lost the war, and yet they continue to stay in Afghanistan.

The US feels Pakistan has the ability to help bring about a certain level of stability in Afghanistan by supporting a settlement. I personally think we ought to be very frank with the US. I do not think we have that ability. I do not think we have that much influence over the Taliban. We are giving the impression that we have influence and we will be able to bring them to the table. Recently, the US Army Commander, in one of his statements, said Pakistan should help the US in Afghanistan and stop allowing them to cross over. I think if we are able to resolve this issue with the US, we will be able to bring about some degree of change in our relationship

*I do not think the US is looking for friendship or strategic equation with Pakistan. We need not exaggerate that thing. The US has a new strategic partner in India. They feel they can afford to discount Pakistan. We are not on the radar for being a potential strategic partner, we are on the radar screen for the problems between the US and us; and because of the problems in the region, and because of the issues of extremism and terrorism, that is still very much haunting Washington.*



The US have also not really stomached our nuclear programme. That is also bothering India. Former US Ambassador Anne Peterson, during a seminar at Carnegie Endowment, said that that the US has an excellent network of intelligence in Pakistan, which is basically meant for counterterrorism, but the US also has experts to keep an eye on Pakistan's nuclear programme. This is very interesting because I do not think the same eye is being kept on India's nuclear programme or other major countries, except Iran.

So what do we do to turn things around?

Pakistan needs to launch an aggressive diplomatic campaign. We

have to get our message across. I do not like using the word 'narrative'. I do not know what that really means.

Secondly, we should activate Pakistani Diaspora in the US. They have been very shy for good reasons. One, they keep fighting among themselves. Second, they are somewhat concerned that if they become too active, they might get noticed by the US intelligence and security agencies. So, they are a little cautious. Also, there is a lack of commitment on part of the government in terms of follow-through.

I am not a person who favours lobbyists since they cost too much and do very little. So instead, the Government should strengthen its embassy and send the very best young people who can take the country's message to the US officials because our own

*Pakistan should convey the message that we are sincere, we are committed to a good relationship and we want to explore all the areas that will further entrench bilateral ties with the US.*

people will fight for our cause with greater faith and conviction. Thirdly, our government needs to take bold foreign policy positions believing that what they are doing is right. Finally, what are we doing in Afghanistan? Are we up to mischief? If we are not up to mischief, then take a clear position. We must do what is in our interest. If we continue to maintain that we are not doing anything, let us be honest about it. Otherwise, we will remain out-of-step not only with the US, but also with the world. ■

## **SCHOLARLY DELIBERATIONS**

- Pakistan-India Relationship &  
Role of US  
*Dr Salma Malik*
- Afghanistan Crisis and Pakistan-US  
Disagreements on Operational Aspects of  
Countering Terrorism  
*Dr Tughral Yamin and Faryal Khan*
- The Third Partnership: Afghan War and  
Pakistan-US Relations  
*Dr Rasul Baksh Rais*



# Pakistan-India Relationship & Role of US

## *Scholarly Essay*

***Dr Salma Malik\****

### **Introduction**

The foundational stone of any relation, from interpersonal to interstate, is based on mutual trust and empathy. Trust in each other's intent and actions, and empathising with the other, especially when there are many common values at stake. However, in the case of India and Pakistan, the trust deficit that germinated with the traumatic Partition saga, has consolidated into a multifactorial rivalry over the past seven-plus decades. However, in the realm of realism, empathy is often reinterpreted as mutual interest and strategic needs in interstate relations. Whether interpreted in the classic *patron – client relationship*, as laid down by Galtung (1971), colonialism or *complex interdependence model*

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\* Dr Salma Malik teaches as an Assistant Professor at the Department of Defence and Strategic Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan. Her work focuses on security dynamics in South Asia, with a special interest in small arms and politics. Dr Malik is the editor of *Pakistan's Security Problems and Challenges in the Next Decade* (NUST Press, 2015). She has also contributed many research papers and articles in referred journals. Her publications include *Reviewing Pak-US Relations under the Obama Administration* (2009) and *Terrorism: Implications for Pakistan's Security* (2006).

(Keohane and Nye 1977) as the bi-product of a globalised and strategically knit world.

Where the relations between India and Pakistan have been understandably problematic, the United States (US) as an active third party, though not in the classic sense, has been central to this triad. Viewed initially by a newly decolonised and independent state of Pakistan as a power balancer, the US through these decades has been a half-hearted benefactor and an ally during the Cold War, to complete alienation immediately after and then reengagement post-9/11. Through the 17 long years after 9/11, Pakistan was initially the principle *non-NATO ally*, considered most critical to US' successful execution of its war

*Where it would be unjust to consider US-Pakistan alliance as a complete policy failure or uni-directional, there has been a clear lack of empathy for Islamabad's genuine concerns and a mutual trust deficit that seems to have widened over the years.*

against terrorism in Afghanistan, later to become a convenient scapegoat for all of Washington's failures in the realisation of its goalposts.

This essay primarily focuses on the bilateral relations between Pakistan and India and how the United States of America (USA), despite New Delhi's mantra of *bilateralism* and *non-interference doctrines*, has been effectively roped in by the latter and made an active stakeholder; and how the de-hyphenation of India and Pakistan by the US after the Cold War, has adversely affected regional

dynamics and worked to the detriment of the just freedom struggle of Kashmir. Lastly, how the pursuit of independent strategic objectives by each of the three state-actors, has affected mutual relations in the contemporary times, and what policy objectives Pakistan can pursue in the coming decades.

## **Between Rhetoric to Trust Deficit**

Loaded with the burden of history, conflict between Pakistan and India has become both complex and intractable. Despite strong and visionary leadership, when it came to mutual contentious issues, there has been no settlement of even minor disputes. With New Delhi not agreeable to third party mediation, it has also in recent years barred all efforts towards a meaningful, result-oriented open dialogue, thereby, making conflict resolution elusive. Each time, even when India did agree to an official parley, it has been conditional with a closed mindset and staged for the media and the international audience. Unfortunately, each such exchange, is soon followed by a significant terrorist activity, which retards the tiniest progress made (if any), and inversely worsens the conflict environment.

As mentioned previously, New Delhi has been most insistent upon bilateralism as its preferred means of conflict resolution and interaction. During the Cold War and even after, it openly voiced resentment with regards the US' alliance with Pakistan. Considering itself as the natural successor to the British colonial legacy, and bestowed with a natural geographic centrality in the South Asian region, New Delhi through its *Indira*, and later, *Gujral* doctrines openly declared its intent and self-assumed right to mentor and

monitor the region. Its displeasure to have any extra-regional presence or involvement in its sphere of influence, which it even extended to Afghanistan, was made clear, when New Delhi showed displeasure at the 1979 Soviet intervention. With the exception of Pakistan, none of the regional states were big or strong enough to voice their opposition to this self-imposed regional order, and if any of the smaller states tried to exercise any autonomy, they ended up paying a heavy price for it.

*Whether it was the economic blockade of Nepal, support to Tamil insurgents and India's highly controversial role in counterinsurgency operations in Sri Lanka or the staged coup in the 1980s against the Maldivian government – the message was well conveyed that no other power, even the United Nations (UN) was allowed to intervene. Evident from the fact that after the signing of the 1972 Shimla Agreement, India conveniently disregarded the UN as a superior body, and downplayed the resolutions and efforts made by the international organisation about Kashmir. However, contrary to this projected policy option, India even prior to, but more so after the Cold War, very tactfully used Washington to its advantage.*

For the US, Pakistan was not the first choice of an ally in the post-World War II configurations. The most coveted country in South Asia was India by virtue of its size, geography, centrality in position and with a major foothold in the Indian Ocean, which the latter ferociously guards as its great lake and strategic backyard. Nehru's India was well aware of its clout and chose to remain neutral. However, Pakistan as an alternate, proved far more beneficial to the US than India would have. At its very inception, Pakistan was in



genuine need for a strategic power balancer, and between the US and Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), the former was a preferred option.

In the post-World War II period, the US emerged as the natural successor power to replace the mighty British Empire. With Great Britain, now dependent on American-led military support and economic assistance package, any concrete support with regards a favourable settlement of the Kashmir problem did not appear likely from Britain. The US' rise from its isolation period, and consolidating itself

*Though Pakistan's entry into the US-led Cold War alliance system is criticised and disapproved at the domestic front for valid reasons, and often considered a deal with the devil, holding very little benefit to the former. However, this alliance was driven purely by strategic needs and interests, of which both sides remained fully cognizant, and thereby, benefitted from this relationship.*

on the world platform as the technologically advanced and the better entrenched of the two super powers were few of the major considerations weighed by Pakistani policymakers.

Another important factor was the USSR's aversion to the emergence of an ideology-based country that it also dismissed as marginal to its interests. Soon after its traumatic inception, Pakistan and India had their first war over the disputed territory of Kashmir, and the acute need for weapons and strategic support was felt. Mated by US' desire to have strong allies, Pakistan not only joined various multilateral arrangements, but also signed a (bilateral) Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement. The alliances, namely the South East

Asian Treaty Organisation (SEATO) and Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO) ensured a supply of much needed military grade armament and weapon systems as well as military training and above all strategic clout. Though most of the weapons being provided by the US to its allies, were deemed outdated and replaced by newer generation systems within the US, as security analysts such as Klare (1984) and others opined, still for third world newly emerged states such as Pakistan (and many others), this arms super market was highly beneficial. In comparison, while the Soviets were much more generous in the terms of engagement with their allies or treaty partners such as India, their systems were not as sophisticated and agile as those coming from the West, thereby, providing Pakistan a technological edge in its conventional equation, which contributed to balancing India's modest numeric superiority.

The Pakistan-US relations suffered their initial major setback in the 1960s, firstly, the US assurances of support on Kashmir, in lieu of the latter not entering the 1962 Indo-China border war; secondly, when an arms embargo was placed on both Pakistan and India during the 1965 and then 1971 war. This was considered a major letdown to the alliance partnership. The fact that India was also embargoed did not matter as US' conventional military support to it was marginal, whereas Pakistan fully relied on Washington for its military muscle. This US *betrayal* and *backstab* has been voiced vehemently by all quarters in Pakistan, even provoking General Muhammad Ayub Khan, the country's President and military chief to author a book titled, *Friends Not Masters*, enlisting the good deeds by Pakistan and their non-reciprocation by its superpower *friend*. However, amidst this emotional and popular rhetoric, suitably

overlooked was the fact that the weapons supplied under this arrangement, were 'purely' for Soviet containment and not to be used against other states. Where Pakistani policy and decision-makers were aware of these terms and for domestic consumption, allowed anti-US popular narrative to gain strength, Washington was equally mindful of the country's security needs, and the fact that eventually these weapons could be used against India, was conveniently disregarded. So, for both to claim foul play was for mere domestic consumption. However, it created a fracture in the relations and public perceptions, which has increased over the years.

The other popularly perceived act of betrayal by the US government was during the 1971 East Pakistan crisis, where the much anticipated Seventh Fleet of the US failed to reach South Asian waters. This popular narrative, however, does not take into account the US administration's deliberate silence and dismissal of the missive by Archer Blood, its Consul General in Dacca, regarding the highly troubled situation in the Eastern wing, which later became known as the *Blood Telegram*.

Though the US administration by this time was also seeking ways to get rid of its old-time ally, yet Pakistan's role in the US-China rapprochement was not only central but also highly critical, and protecting its ally from any international castigation was a small price to pay. The purpose here is not to provide a counter narrative, but to be introspective, in order to avoid making similar mistakes in times to come.

*Irritants in Pakistan-US Relations: Way Forward*

*One must not ignore that in a realist world, there are never any permanent friendships or alliances, the only permanence and priority is national interest. With these critical setbacks, Pakistan prudently embarked on creating its own power balancer in the shape of its nuclear programme that helped develop a strategic leverage and safeguard its national interests.*

The various sanctions and US legislatures regarding nuclear non-proliferation have been much talked about, and so has the fact that till the US needed Pakistan as its conduit and proxy in Afghanistan against the Soviets, a policy of convenient disregard was maintained with regards its nuclear ambitions. The mandatory US presidential waiver with regards to the country's nuclear status was annually issued without any problem, till such time that strategic calculations required a review of Washington's South Asia policy.

*Not only did Pakistan in the post-Cold War period become the most heavily sanctioned ally, with many of its military purchases including F-16s being held back despite payments made, but the policy pundits also pressed for de-hyphenating Pakistan and India in the US strategic calculus.*

The trust deficit widens further. The US policymakers, disregarding the role played and sacrifices made by Pakistan in helping them defeat the mighty Soviet empire, soon indulge in seeking new grounds to break. With a mercantile mindset, the US felt that its financial input and investment in the *Afghan jihad*

through narco-dollars, weapons and raising a generation of religiously motivated Muslim youth, was enough a payback and countries such as Pakistan had been amply rewarded.

*The Cold War, its discourse and associations were no longer in vogue, thus, making redundant the friends and allies of that time. With many skeletons in its strategic closet, Washington aimed to sever all links to its past, as it prepared for the sole supremacy of the world in the approaching American Century.*

However, the skeletons did come back to haunt in the shape of 9/11 that brought terrorism to the US homeland, and again the focus shifted back to Afghanistan. Statements ranging from all out condemnation, blaming Pakistan, threats, near-threats, persuasions, incentives offered to the latter to cooperate along with a sincerely worded acceptance and apology by then-US Secretary of State Clinton with regards to the US' moral responsibility and role it played in creating the Taliban, and how the country had to deal with the worsening security situation and its aftermath, alone.

Apologetic about calling Pakistan a *moral threat* to the world, Secretary Clinton and those who understood Islamabad's centrality in any peace or security building process, embraced the country once again as a *non-NATO ally*. However, the apprehensions about support to the Taliban as well as its military and key intelligence outfits working at variance with the US, were consistently voiced by policymakers in Washington.

*Pakistan's earlier and repeated suggestion of keeping a window of dialogue open for moderate (good) Taliban to negotiate with and bring on board was dismissed as its complicity with anti-US and anti-Afghan lobby. Today, after 17 long years of checkered progress in Afghanistan, the Trump administration is negotiating an exit and settlement with precisely the same elements, and the major global actors consider these moderate Taliban as major stakeholders in future Afghan peace and stability, much to the discomfort of the Western-propped democratic set-up in Kabul.*

Where the US viewed Pakistan with skepticism, bordering on disdain – for us, this realignment was also very troubled. Anti-US rhetoric of the past decades had created a very strong domestic mindset, which viewed the *American led war against terrorism*, as a grand global conspiracy to unhinge the Muslim world. The brutal detentions, renditions, images of humiliating torture, mock trials and summary executions of Muslim leaders such as Saddam Hussein and Muammar Qaddafi as well as mass *collateral* killings of Muslims through carpet bombings, cluster munitions as well as drones in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan intensified the hatred. The government, military and moderate voices were considered in cahoots with the infidel forces, and killing them was a religious duty. Pakistan lost more than 60,000 people during this time, bearing the heaviest toll on its governance, internal peace, stability, security and economy, besides international image and credibility. However, not only did the US sought Islamabad *to do more*, it remained skeptic of the latter's intent and motives, and conveniently shifted the entire blame of its

failures and short-sightedness on it. Additionally, Washington viewed and weighed every sacrifice made by Pakistan against the Coalition Support Fund that it dished out piecemeal.

Did this fractious relationship between the two unequal partners hold any advantage for Pakistan?

What we achieved: for a country breaking free from the clutches of colonialism, cash strapped, traumatised by the human catastrophe befalling it as well as resource deprived, compounded by a crisis of leadership and national vision in its initial decade, was a power balance and more importantly, strategic foothold in the global platform. It also provided Pakistan with economic and military aid. In the region, Pakistan gained leverage and a prominent position with regards to monumental issues such as Afghanistan, where during the 1980s, it was virtually calling the shots. Above all, it enabled an environment, in which the country could develop its nuclear weapons programme.

What Pakistan could not achieve through this relationship, was an advantageous position and unequivocal support in the settlement of the Kashmir dispute as per UN accords. Pakistan could not negotiate on Kashmir beyond a certain point. Furthermore, it could neither achieve *nuclear normalisation* the way India is being accommodated. Thirdly, the alliance partnership as per its fundamentals was naturally tilted in favour of the superior partner, because of which Islamabad could not benefit from deals akin to the Indo-Soviet treaties that ultimately benefitted New Delhi more.

Viewing this scenario from a realistic lens, Pakistan also did not extract the maximum benefit from this arrangement. With repeated opportunities such as the 1962 Indo-China War, US-Chinese

rapprochement, the decade-long Afghan war, and even the re-engagement post-9/11, Pakistan could have sought better leverage.

*The fact that Pakistan, time and again, bore the worse brunt of the Afghan conflict is as much to be blamed on us as on the external powers who were engaged only for their national interests. Pakistan's domestic compulsions required it to seek a US alliance, and to claim that we were not aware of the strings attached or the price tag of this union would be both naive and foolhardy.*

## **Pakistan-India Relations and the US Factor**

The New World Order coincided with India opening its economic markets to the world. With one of the largest consumer markets in the shape of a growing middle class, the Republic emerged on the strategic platform as a country, which had through its 15.6 million Diaspora population managed to leverage itself very strongly by packaging its strategic interests well through Bollywood song and dance.

With the classic *Kautilyan Mandala Theory* at work, the common enemy (China) helped draw both Delhi and Washington into a strategic partnership that enabled India to position itself at par with global powers. India during the Cold War period, not only benefitted well from its partnership

*The US was happy to court New Delhi, as its proxy in the South Asian region as well as challenger to China.*

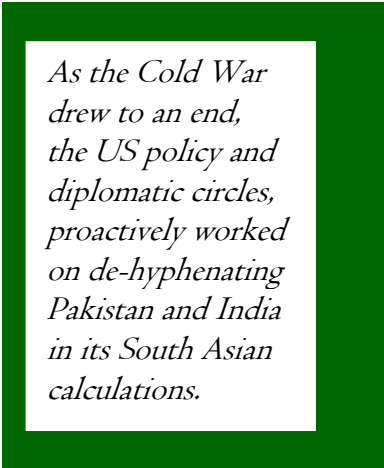
with the USSR, equipping its military and strategic outfits through



the softest term loans, barter trade system as well as rupee-to-ruble exchange schemes. It also had the US and European powers providing it military assistance, which helped enormously, without having to suffer sanction regimes like Pakistan did.

Contrary to New Delhi's strong insistence on bilateralism, and most vocal opposition to Pakistan's alliance with the US, the India-Pakistan conflict history is replete with examples of how tactfully it involved the US to its advantage.

The implications of this policy, though deliberated upon by Pakistani policy circles were never fully realised. This was the beginning of the US enabling India's rise to a global power status, as a power challenger to China. But above all, this also meant strengthening it militarily, and inconspicuously working towards its nuclear



*As the Cold War drew to an end, the US policy and diplomatic circles, proactively worked on de-hyphenating Pakistan and India in its South Asian calculations.*

normalisation and legitimacy. The Indo-US strategic partnership, and complimentary agreements such as the 123 Agreement (US-India Civil Nuclear Agreement), the 2018 2-plus-2 Dialogue (where the COMCASA, or Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement was signed), Washington's all-out efforts and lobbying for India to gain access to nuclear regimes are few examples in this regard.

The credit for the success of US' gravitation towards New Delhi goes largely to the efforts of the Indian Diaspora, who since

the 1940s, have steadily occupied and risen to positions of influence and power in Western policy circles.

*Where traditional diplomacy was always India's strength, the critical role played by the lobbyists and Diaspora community working in policy and decision-making institutions have been commendable in advancing and consolidating New Delhi's interests worldwide. Added to these twining factors is India's media manipulation and projection.*

As New Delhi's economic profile improved, the largest consumer market appeared extremely attractive to foreign investors, and so did its purchase power. For a world facing extreme economic recession, India's ambitious shopping list of military merchandise has been enthusiastically hailed.

*The corporate-driven cash-strapped Western world does not realise that facilitating India fulfill its naked military ambitions, would also in the future jeopardise their allies and direct interests and influence in the region, let alone totally destabilise the regional order.*

Where this romancing of India is primarily to upstage or at best counter Beijing, an ancient power that holds a very unique strategic vision and culture, it also disregards the region's precarious conflict profile - conveniently turning a blind eye to India's abysmal treatment of its minority and marginal communities, as well as

blatant human rights violations in the occupied Valley of Jammu and Kashmir.

Within the region of South Asia, the dynamics of conflict altered significantly after the 1998 nuclear tests. A detailed study of the Kargil conflict provides a much clearer understanding of when and how Washington gravitated closer towards New Delhi. Although both India and Pakistan perceived Kargil and other emerging crises, including Mumbai, through their respective strategic lens, the US effectively performed the role of a mediator, guarantor of peace and crisis manager, in order to prevent further escalation. Yusuf (2018) in his seminal work on US crisis management in nuclear South Asia discusses the reckless and dangerous strategy employed by the conflict actors to create a demonstrative crisis in order to lure third party support, without realising that in a post-nuclearised environment, the rules of engagement and competition demanded a mature and deeper contemplation of the conflict situation. Unfortunately, for Islamabad, according to Yusuf (2018), its singular pursuit of evoking third party intervention proved counterproductive, and Washington gradually but steadily aligned its interests with New Delhi. To the extent that post-Mumbai attacks, the US policymakers conveyed to Islamabad, New Delhi's desire for a surgical strike inside Pakistan's heartland (Kasuri 2015).

## **Changing Trends and Transformations**

What Pakistan needs to realise and comprehend are the changing times and dynamics. Both India and the US, despite boasting about their strong democratic norms, each voted in ultra-nationalist

leadership, who in its euphoria has made a mockery of ethics and moral values.

At the same time, the US administration's attitude and visible disdain towards Muslims in general, and Pakistan in particular, provide India with more freedom for impunity.

Islamabad faces many challenges, of which the most compelling are economic recovery and sustainability and governance. With a troubled domestic profile, the country's credibility and position at the international platform will remain compromised and weak. There is a dire need for Pakistan to reclaim its international markets, whether it is commodities-based or human resource. India, in recent years, has intentionally signed enhanced labour agreements with Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and other Muslim states, which were traditionally considered Pakistan-friendly markets, and this has caused a significant drop in domestic remittances.

The current government's policy of enhanced trade and increase in foreign labour markets' quota is certainly a welcome initiative in the right direction.

*To rebuild investors' confidence and interest in Pakistan's domestic market, not only is there a dire need for stable, secure and sustained economic policies, but also a stable and secure environment, which ensures protection of assets and human resources.*

*India's atrocities in occupied Jammu and Kashmir and its systematic and ruthless persecution of Muslims is overlooked, as the US is more interested in appeasing New Delhi for its economic interests.*

This cannot be fully realised, unless there is a complete clampdown on any and every shade of extremism and terrorism, whether affecting and emanating from the eastern or the western border. The assets and emotional narrative of yesteryears needs to be replaced by a pragmatic and fresh approach to comprehend changing global realities. Unless, Pakistan does not offer a strong and sustainable economic profile, there would be very little support on vital policy issues, including Kashmir.

India, through its smart diplomacy, economic strength and media projection has managed to not only hoodwink the global community, including the Muslim world to its immoral stance on Kashmir, but also craft-fully turned the righteous Kashmiri struggle for self-assertion into a terrorist-infused insurgency, openly mocking the human rights' covenants, and bringing about drastic demographic changes to transform the disputed region into an Indian territory.

With a strong economy, stable governance that ensures a promising domestic profile, Pakistan would not only be in a position to support and stand for the Kashmiri freedom struggle with confidence, but its opinion would also be taken seriously. This aspect could not be more obvious than Pakistan's role in the post-9/11 Afghan set-up. As mentioned earlier, the US negotiates with the same Taliban cadres, that Pakistan would time and again advise them to, but having less credibility and the deep trust deficit, which India exploited to the maximum, Washington chose to ignore and reject. Resultantly, years of bloodshed and instability, have brought the Americans back to the same negotiating table with the same actors, making Pakistan relevant again.

The 2019 Indian false flag operation in Pulwama and its staged surgical strikes across the Line of Control, has brought home the acute realisation that such adventurism for limited domestic gains, could have easily slipped the two countries into a nuclear catastrophe, had Pakistan not acted with utmost restraint and caution. New Delhi, in its election

*Islamabad must, in the future Afghan scenario, weigh the complex dimensions carefully, learn from its past experience and interact with all stakeholders, with its own national interest as the utmost priority.*

mania, continued to project false bravado and colour the Pakistani restraint as its victory. The US and world community did indulge in brokering peace, but there was no open sanctioning of India over this costly mischief, that endangered the lives of one fourth of humanity. Had Pakistan indulged in such a misadventure, the US reaction would have been much different.

Where, on the one hand, the befitting response to Indian incursion, tempered down any further sense of adventurism and misperception of a unilateral muscle flexing by New Delhi, it also signaled to the world, that Pakistan today is a stronger and more confident state, with a vision and will to progress and aspire to be a peaceful regional power. The Chinese investment, in the shape of the economic corridor, development of the deep-sea port of Gwadar, Russian military interaction with Pakistan and Islamabad's proactive outreach to neighbouring and other countries, are positive and prudent steps towards realising its foreign policy objectives.

*The need is to develop a foreign policy vision, beyond mere securitisation, by investing in human capital development, recognising and exploiting the limited windows of opportunity available. Incremental measures, such as a different approach towards settlement of the Afghan refugee population, improving ties with Iran on the sectarian, ethnic (Baloch) and economic front is very important.*

Chabahar and Gwadar can both complement rather than compete against each other. Developing a proactive but friendly regional approach will best enable Islamabad to effectively counter India's strategy to isolate and encircle Pakistan.

Where Pakistan's traditional and deep friendship which China is most fundamental, it also needs to remain alive to the fact that the US remains powerful and pertinent. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and development of the Gwadar port has received enormous negative press by the US, an aspect that has been fully exploited by New Delhi. The US, threatened by the growing Chinese presence, through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), has and will in the future actively encourage an increased Indian naval presence in the Indian Ocean as a force multiplier. With its growing nuclear triad, nuclearisation of Indian Ocean would further destabilise the region and fuel an arms race that would pitch many current allies against each other in the future. The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue between Japan, the US, India and Australia may appear a mere grouping of like-minded democracies, but it reflects the unease these member states have with regards to China's presence in the Indian

and Pacific Oceans, and in the foreseeable future, will dramatically change the region's security landscape. Where there is room for better relations with Afghanistan, Iran and many other states, it seems most unlikely that India, under the Modi regime, would respond to any peace overtures by Islamabad.

*Though, Islamabad must seek the path of regional peace and stability for the common good of the region and domestic prosperity of the country, it should never do so from a position of compromise. Pakistan needs to remain cognizant of the various global trends and transformations, by aligning and adjusting its national interests as an utmost priority.*



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# Afghanistan Crisis and Pakistan-US Disagreements on Operational Aspects of Countering Terrorism

## *Scholarly Article*

***Dr Tughral Yamin\* & Faryal Khan\*\****

### **Introduction**

For the past seven decades, the relationship between Pakistan and United States (US) has been characterised by bouts of estrangement and inconsistency, interspersed with sporadic cooperative endeavours. For the most part, this relationship has been like a rollercoaster ride. There have been prominent highs and painful lows in this uneven partnership, entailing self-interest driven transactional engagements. In the Twentieth Century, the relations were shaped by dynamics of the Cold War. For Pakistan, the military

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\* Dr Tughral Yamin is the founder and Associate Dean of the Centre for International Peace and Stability (CIPS), National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), Islamabad, Pakistan. His areas of expertise include nuclear stability between India and Pakistan; as well as Confidence Building Measures between the two in Information Space. He is the author of three books, including *The Evolution of Nuclear Deterrence and its Impact on South Asian Stability* (The Army Press, 2014). Dr Yamin's research articles include 'How Pakistan Negotiates with United States of America?' (2014) and 'Examining Pakistan's Strategic Decisions to Support the US War on Terror' (2016).

\*\* Faryal Khan is an MS Scholar of Peace & Conflict Studies at the Centre for International Peace and Stability (CIPS), National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), Islamabad, Pakistan.

alliances with the US were considered essential to keep India at bay. In the second decade of the Twenty-first Century, this relationship has become one-sided, with the US blaming Pakistan for all its troubles in Afghanistan, and asking it to 'do more' to bring about peace in the war-ravaged country. This paradigm shift has occurred because of changed US regional policies. The US government has discarded the Indo-Pak hyphenation and built a strategic partnership with India to counterbalance the rising power of China in the region. In this changed scheme of things, Pakistan's utility has been reduced to its *perceived* ability to bring the Afghan Taliban to the negotiating table as a prelude to peace and as a means for the US to find a face-saving exit from Afghanistan.

As a new world order takes shape, it is time to revisit the troubled Pak-US relations. An early death of this relationship has been foretold due to US' exasperation with Pakistan's alleged non-cooperation in Afghanistan. US President Donald Trump in an infamous 2018 New Year tweet declared Pakistan unworthy of its financial and military aid. Even before this angry outburst, the volume of US aid was undergoing a systematic reduction. The symbolic US displeasure has been demonstrated by suspension of the International Military Education and Training (IMET) programme and the threat of economic sanctions if blacklisted by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). The Trump administration also warned the International Monetary Fund (IMF) not to offer an economic bailout to Pakistan, so that it does not repay loans accumulated on account of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) with US dollars.

Policymakers realise the need to repair and rest relations, but there are obvious problems based on perceived expectations on both sides. The Americans, in particular, now merely view this relationship on the basis of finding an acceptable solution to the Afghan conundrum - the only apparent converging interest. On the other hand, Pakistan seeks a balanced relationship that will ultimately lead to peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan without compromising on its national security concerns.

*This article posits that Pakistan should premise its relations with the US and all other state parties with shared interests and concerns on practical national aims and objectives. In this vein, it chronicles the history of relations between US and Pakistan, especially with Afghanistan at the centre of their engagement, and suggests future avenues for cooperation.*

## **Historical Perspective of Pak-US Relations**

Pakistan, since its inception, has sought to have good relations with the US, but this has rarely ever been an easy foreign policy objective. The complex relationship has taken varying manifestations such as staunch ally, troublesome friend and even a threat (Hussain 2005). In recent years, it has become problematic to say the least because areas of convergence have reduced.

*Afghanistan Crisis and Pakistan-US Disagreements on Operational Aspects of  
Countering Terrorism*

*It would not be wrong to say that Pak–US relationship depicts a recurring theme of engagements and disengagements. The US has always pursued its relations keeping in view ‘global dynamics’, whereas Pakistan has formed its stance while paying attention to ‘regional impulses’; the imbalance of perceptions has resulted in an irreversible trust deficit and an inherent discontinuity in relations.*

Their cordial engagement can be viewed in three phases: the first commencing from mid-1950s to mid-1960s; the second conciliation was evident during the Afghan *Jihad*; and lastly, their united resolve to curb global terrorism after 9/11. Ironically, Afghanistan has been a unifying as well as a divisive theme in their relations.

These relations were initiated to contain the rise of global communism. Pakistan found it an ideal solution to build its military forces to counter India (Akhtar 2011). With the Cold War at its height, the US was, of course, looking for regional allies to hinder the expanding Soviet influence. Both soon entered into a system of alliances. The US provided Pakistan with economic and military aid, and the latter pledged its support to Washington while denouncing communism (Ibid.).

However, lack of shared perspectives of cooperation became evident when the US withheld its support to Pakistan (and India) after the war of 1965 between the two South Asian neighbours. This brought to an end the first phase of a mutually beneficial partnership (Khan 1967). One can argue that the blossoming of Pakistan and

China relationship also led to the cooling off of the US enthusiasm towards the former, but this would become more pronounced during the Twenty-first Century (Lieven 2002).

Pakistan and the US once again scaled new heights of cooperation in expelling the Soviets from Afghanistan during the period of the so-called Afghan *Jihad* (1979-89). The viability of relations between them was so critical that it overshadowed the concerns of nuclear proliferation and undemocratic regimes rampant in Pakistan's governance practices. The country was used as a sanctuary and a training ground by the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) (Marker 2010). As a US partner in the Afghan war against the Soviet Union, Pakistan received 3.2 billion dollars in 1981; 600 million dollars a year in military and economic assistance thereafter; 40 F-16s; Cobra helicopters; anti-aircraft cannons; and unprecedented support from the CIA to the ISI (Soherwordi 2010). More than guns and stinger missiles, the biggest weapon against the Soviet military was the call for *Jihad* from all over the Islamic world. This left radiating repercussions in the form of radicalism in the region. It also established Afghanistan as a pivot of focus between Pak-US relations for years to come. Incongruous to united efforts against the Soviets, the US abruptly left the region in 1989, and its ally – Pakistan, as it hit the country with a wave of sanctions.

The sanctions against Pakistan at the end of the Afghan *Jihad* came in three sets, and left a lasting impact on their mutual relations. The first one was the Pressler Amendment of 1990; the second was enacted in 1998 after Pakistan conducted its nuclear tests; and the third one after the military takeover of 1999 (Haas and Halperin

1998). The Pressler Amendment, enacted in 1985, turned out to be the most destructive as it stipulated that military and economic aid to Pakistan was conditional upon certification by the US President over non-possession of nuclear devices by the country (Ibid.). The lack of certification led to detrimental consequences for the economy and security all through the 1990s. This decade also witnessed rise of the Taliban. Heightened tensions in Kashmir and the Kargil conflict added to instability in the region. Pakistan faced more isolation due to the increasing coercion by the US. The end of the Twentieth Century marked significant cooling in Pak-US relations (Kux 2001). The turn of the century brought new changes in the regional dynamics, making it necessary for the US to seek renewed cooperation with Pakistan.

## **War on Terror: Operational Engagement on Counterterrorism in Afghanistan**

*9/11 sent violent tremors across the globe and exposed vulnerability of the US to independent, non-state actors. In order to extract revenge from al-Qaeda and their hosts, the Taliban, the US Government put the entire world on notice, and specifically presented the Government of Pakistan (GoP) seven demands, including inter alia, intelligence and logistic support or else threatened dire consequences. The GoP immediately renounced its relations with Taliban in Afghanistan, and agreed to all the demands without demur.*

This timely action saved Pakistan from the wrath of the US, but it created new enemies in the shape of those who were earlier fighting the Soviets and had now become sworn enemies of the Americans.

The US *Operation Enduring Freedom*, aimed to defeat and destroy al-Qaeda and the Taliban (Taddeo 2010), brought in more instability in the region. The Taliban fled to the countryside and al-Qaeda morphed into other forms of resistance in other parts of the world. The most recent incarnation of anti-US insurgency is the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

*The Taliban in Afghanistan have also (re)emerged as a potent force challenging the writ of the government in Kabul.*

Pakistan had no other option but to support the US in Afghanistan. It also became embroiled in a counterinsurgency campaign on its own soil as anti-state elements began to target government forces. The Pakistan Navy (PN) and Air Force also became part of the overall effort to defeat those elements hostile to the state. The PN was the only regional navy which participated in Coalition Maritime Interdiction Operations – the maritime component of Operation Enduring Freedom (Hussain 2005). Since Pakistan became a willing partner in the war against al-Qaeda, it became the recipient of US military and economic aid. In view of its unrelenting and active support, the country received ten billion dollars in aid since 9/11 till 2007 (Cohen and Chollet 2007), and all previously imposed sanctions were lifted. The war dragged on.



*Afghanistan Crisis and Pakistan-US Disagreements on Operational Aspects of  
Countering Terrorism*

*The Obama administration introduced a (re)think in the US regional policy through the Af-Pak Strategy. The strategy hyphenated Pakistan and Afghanistan - separate foreign policies were designed for both, but they were essentially treated as a similar challenge for the US.*

The Af-Pak strategy further engaged Pakistan and Afghanistan in a trilateral framework to induce better bilateral ties in terms of political, economic and security cooperation (Ahmed 2010). Under the same strategy, the US allotted 400 million dollars to train and equip the Frontier Corps (FC), and further proposed a Pakistani counterinsurgency capability fund, under which an amount of three billion dollars was allocated over the next five years to train and equip Pakistan's Army and paramilitary forces for counterinsurgency missions (Markey 2009: 2).

The US also significantly increased its troops in Afghanistan, enhanced drone strikes in Pakistan, and asked for a greater troop contribution from the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) members (Sultana and Aquil 2012).

Pakistan's Army Chief General Ashfaq Pervez Kiyani and General Ahmed Shuja Pasha, head of ISI visited Kabul (Sethi 2010). In similar context, the conclusion of the Afghan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement in July 2010 was an astounding success as it opened trade

*The US-led efforts to improve bilateral relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan were productive as the frequency of interaction between the top security officials increased.*

routes for both countries (Ahmed 2010). The similitude Pakistan shares with Afghanistan across the border has given it precedence to act as a peace-broker and this assertion was affirmed by the talks facilitated between Afghan government representatives, the Taliban, the US and China in Murree in 2015 by Pakistan (Boone 2015).

More recently, a high-level Afghan delegation visited Pakistan to deliberate about security concerns and counterterrorism measures (Gul 2018). The delegation met with Pakistani National Security Adviser Nasir Khan Janjua before holding crucial talks with the country's military chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa (Ibid.). The meeting was held to consolidate intricacies of the latest bilateral engagement between Pakistan and

*Initial years, primarily the Bush presidency, somewhat marked the treatment of Pakistan as a **solution** to the problem, but the later years such as the Obama administration, began to see it as **part** of the problem. The Trump administration has further exaggerated the country's role as a cause of instability in the region.*

Afghanistan: Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity (APAPPS). The flourishing bilateral ties between Pakistan and Afghanistan symbolise the possibility of peace in the region, without necessarily the support of the US.

## **Recurring Irritants in Pak-US Relations**

The most contemporary alliance between Pakistan and the US was to curb the international threat of terrorism. However, the course of

time and engagement proved that the US shifted its stance and treatment towards Pakistan, its frontline ally in uprooting this menace. The establishment of US' strategic depth with India, continued cordiality between Pakistan and China and the rampant disregard and repeated undermining of Pakistan's sovereignty by Washington has accentuated the disengagement of Pak-US relations (Schaffer and Schaffer 2011).

Afghanistan has, unfortunately, become the sticking point in Pak-US relations. The partnership reaffirmed Pakistan's fears of being encircled by India – as an anti-Pakistan and pro-India government took power in Afghanistan while replacing the Pakistan-friendly Taliban regime. Furthermore, the US, especially in the early Obama years, started to imply that Pakistan was playing a 'dual/double' game (Yusuf 2010), and was indirectly supporting the Taliban in Afghanistan and the Haqqani network (Felbab-Brown 2018).

The US cites Pakistan's inherent insecurity as an underlying factor to instil instability in Afghanistan and establish pro-Pakistan support in the country, while its elected government tilts towards India. Pakistan denies such claims.

*The repeated  
maligning and  
criticism by the US  
has deteriorated the  
alliance of trust and  
partnership between  
both nations, and  
this continues to be a  
leading cause of not  
being able to arrive  
at a coherent  
political framework  
to bring positive  
change in  
Afghanistan.*

Another fundamental factor that has considerably impacted relations is the developing strategic partnership between the US and India. The US has accorded a significantly more prestigious treatment to New Delhi by recognising it as the regional pivot in South Asia to serve its interests. This geostrategic recognition has a lot to do with its rising economic power. At the same time, Pakistan was increasingly seen as a perpetrator of terrorism in the region and an inherently unstable state (Constable 2017).

Quite naturally, there was disappointment in Islamabad because it has a number of unsettled issues with India such as the unresolved issue of the state of Jammu and Kashmir (Wirsing 2007). The US not only ignores Pakistan, it has tilted the regional balance in favour of India by offering it a civil Nuclear Deal irrespective of the fact that it is not a signatory of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) (Bajoria and Pan 2010). This unequal treatment has led to resentment within Pakistan.

*India has played its cards well. It not only has good relations with the US and has Russia and Israel as major defence partners; it has also developed cordial relations with the government in Kabul by investing more than two billion dollars in development aid.*

The mistrust or distrust of the US policies in the region has been aggravated by a number of incidents. Some experts are of the view that the rise of anti-American sentiments within Pakistan witnessed an increase because of a proportional increase in drone strikes in its tribal areas bordering Afghanistan (Bruno 2010). The

drone strikes have been justified by the US because they insisted that Pakistan lacked the will to take decisive action against the insurgents hiding in its territory that would randomly cross into Afghanistan to carry out raids against the forces of the Kabul government (Rashid 2008). The GoP retaliated by blocking the Ground Lines of Communications (GLOCs) for the NATO troops in Afghanistan until an apology was rendered.

In January 2011, a CIA contractor Raymond Davis killed two Pakistanis riding a motorcycle in Lahore. Under intense diplomatic pressure, the GoP had to allow him to leave the country after blood money had been paid to the kin. Pakistan was to face more humiliation, when US SEAL teams attacked and killed Osama bin Laden on 2 May 2011 in a daring raid on his compound in Abbottabad near its military academy and get away with it without its air defence sounding any alarms or its ground troops retaliating (Haqqani 2015). Another blatant disregard for Pakistan's territorial sovereignty was the unprovoked attack on the Salala border check-post in which 24 Pakistani soldiers were killed in cold blood by US helicopter gunships in November 2011 (Firdous 2011). These incidents depict the nadir of Pak-US relations.

Under the new Prime Minister Imran Khan, this relationship may well improve, if expectations are kept at a bare minimum and practical steps are taken to improve the situation. This may not be as easy as it may appear on paper. Donald Trump is not in a good mood and in an infamous 2018 New Year tweet criticised Pakistani leaders for being unworthy of the 33 billion dollars in aid and having given nothing in return 'but lies and deceit' (Chaudhary 2018). The

Trump administration has also halted the transfer of 300 million dollars to Pakistan under the Coalition Support Fund (CSF), citing ineffectiveness against terrorism as their rationale (Malik 2018). The US has not stood in the country's favour to prevent it from being grey-listed under the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) requirements of implementing stringent measures against United Nations (UN) designated terror outfits, in order to choke their finances. The US has repeatedly echoed that the process followed and implemented by Pakistan is slow, leading to inevitability of the imposition of sanctions (Iqbal 2018).

Reoccurrence of the drone policy under President Trump (Luce and Naylor 2018) might agitate the Pakistani public, despite US claims that it solely targets the Taliban. The communication deficit between the two countries has deteriorated bilateral ties even further.

China has proven to be a considerably trustworthy ally of Pakistan and their cordial partnership over decades is evident in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a 60 billion dollars-plus economic engagement over infrastructure and energy (Zheng 2018).

*Pakistan, in the face of being side-lined by the US, has all through its existence sought the support of China to balance its national interests, primarily to counter India's expansionist designs.*

The US has always been wary of cooperation between the two, and believes that Pakistan's role as a linchpin to Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) would essentially distract it from its

responsibilities to curb terrorism in the region, contain nuclear proliferation and bring a decisive end to the Afghan instability (Markey and West 2016).

## **Future of Pak-US Relations: Options for Pakistan**

The new government in Pakistan made a declaration within days after assuming office that it would build 'trustworthy' ties with the US (Jorgic 2018). It is clearly understood that it is not in its best interest to antagonise the sole superpower of the world, particularly when the country is in a precarious economic condition. It is quite evident that it needs a 12 billion dollars bailout to survive a default, and the FATF is breathing down its neck to improve its anti-money laundering regime. The US Government is also insisting that Pakistan not allow anyone to operate inside Afghanistan from its territory. Of course, the prevailing situation demands that there be no change in the official policy that there should be an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process.

Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi took time out from the annual summit of the UN General Assembly in September 2018 to meet top US officials such as Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and National Security Advisor John Bolton, and to reassure them that Pakistan honestly wants to improve its relations, and would like to cooperate as much as possible in finding a solution for a peaceful Afghanistan. A similar message was given to the US President's Special Envoy Zalmay Khalilzad as he went around the region to

muster support for peace in Afghanistan. It appears that Khalilzad's visit has already started paying dividends with the release of Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar in October 2018. Baradar is co-founder of the Taliban movement and had been in the custody of Pakistani authorities since 2010. The US is also actively engaging with the Taliban office in Qatar.

The parliamentary and presidential elections in Afghanistan may throw up a relatively new leadership. Although the Taliban have rejected the elections, have renewed their activities in the country and struck at places where they were least expected. The assassination of the governor of Kandahar and his police chief General Abdul Raziq, on the occasion of the visit of the new US NATO Commander General Scott Miller, shows that they have the upper hand against the government, but Pakistan should refrain from taking sides.

## **Conclusion**

Keeping in view the intractability of conflict in Afghanistan, a small achievement in the peace process, even in the form of cordial relations between states with stakes in Kabul, seems to be of a greater magnitude. In view of Pak-US relations, the *conditional* engagement should grow and foster a deeper strategic cooperation. Pakistan needs to prompt a (re)think in its foreign

*The US needs to realise that the benefits and productivity of Pak-US strategic engagements go far beyond intersecting on terrorism in Afghanistan. Pakistan holds a unique strategic place to bring considerable influence in the US-China relations, China-India relations and US-Iran relations.*



policy practices, and formulate a doctrine which clearly pursues its national interests without compromising to other states and their self-interest driven propagandas.

In order to secure its national interests, it is pragmatic to diversify options for support and alliances in the international political system. Therefore, keeping in view the record of relations with the US and its repeated record of abandoning the country at crucial times, Islamabad should form alliances and engagements with other states, such as China and Russia. Moreover, it should open avenues of engagement between US and other states leading to strengthening trilateral relations.

The country should also draw parameters for a foreign policy of a 'developing' nation where it should seek to rectify past mistakes and hold an unflinching stance on its sovereignty. The utility of Pak-US ties remain pivotal in bringing peace and stability in the region, but it should also be understood that the latter no longer retains position of the sole influencer in the region, and that power dynamics are now shifting.

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# The Third Partnership: Afghan War and Pakistan-US Relations

## *Scholarly Article*

***Dr Rasul Baksh Rais\****

### **Introduction**

In 2002, Pakistan and the United States (US) entered into a strategic partnership for the third time, and it obviously lacked the charm and excitement of the first one. Those were very different times and the dynamics of regional and global security were equally unusual. Pakistan was a new country finding its place in the regional geopolitical order, and the US a new global power, taking a global responsibility to defend the 'free world' against the 'menace' of communism. The first alliance (1955-70) ended with

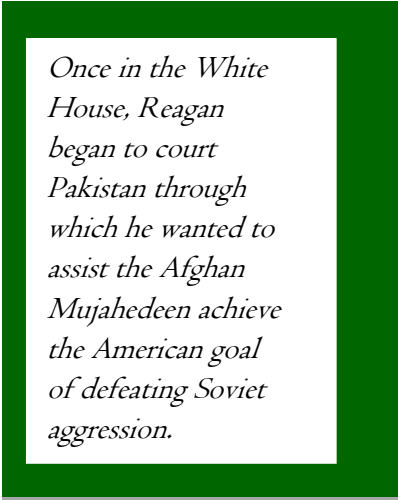
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\* Dr Rasul Baksh Rais is Professor of Political Science in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Lahore University of Management Sciences, Pakistan since 2002. Before joining LUMS, he remained associated with the Quaid-i-Azam University for nearly 22 years as Professor/Director, Area Study Centre for Africa, North and South America; and prior to that as Associate Professor in the Department of International Relations. He was the Quaid-i-Azam Distinguished Professor of Pakistan Studies at Columbia University, New York for three years (1991-94). He has also held the Fulbright fellowship (1997-98), Social Science Research fellowship at Harvard (1989-90), and the Rockefeller Foundation fellowship at the University of California (1985-85). He is the author of several books, including *Recovering the Frontier State: War, Ethnicity and State in Afghanistan* (Lexington Books, 2008); *War Without Winners: Afghanistan's Uncertain Transition after the Cold War* (Oxford University Press, 1996); and *Indian Ocean and the Superpowers: Economic, Political and Strategic Perspectives* (Croom Helm, 1986). His current research interests are modernism, state and challenge of radical Islam in Pakistan.

mutual dissatisfaction, both accusing the other of betrayal, bad faith and not staying firm on commitments (Graham 2015).

Overall, it was not without benefits to each, if we consider the geopolitical developments of early Cold War years. The Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan in 1980 revived old fears about Soviet expansionism, as it came about a year after the US had lost its main pillar of regional security and stability with departure of the Shah of Iran. Rather, the Islamic Revolution generated anti-American sentiments throughout the region. The US West Asia security policy suffered a setback with these developments as its regional allies began to question its credibility.

The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan provoked fierce resistance from the local populations that rose up against the invading forces and its puppet regime. Widespread but unorganised groups quickly transformed into a national resistance. Pakistan fearing the Soviet threat had begun arming the *Mujahedeen*. Many Middle Eastern countries shared Pakistan's security concerns and also provided assistance to them. As a presidential candidate, Ronald Reagan had taken a hard position against Moscow during his 1980 campaign, and had an ideological aversion against Communism.



*Once in the White House, Reagan began to court Pakistan through which he wanted to assist the Afghan Mujahedeen achieve the American goal of defeating Soviet aggression.*

Pakistan and the US found common ground on supporting the resistance, raising the cost of the Soviet occupation, finally forcing it



to withdraw in February 1989. This shaped the second partnership (1980-89). It also ended on a sour note, as the US left the regional scene without addressing the issues of stability and regional security after the withdrawal of the Soviet Union. As the state in Afghanistan collapsed, the country plunged into a civil war (1992-2002). The US turned to some of the issues that were pushed to the backburner, like Pakistan's nuclear programme. Washington was equally concerned about the Islamic militancy that was shaped by the post-Soviet civil war in Afghanistan and the region. Pakistan was left to fend for itself in dealing with the debris of the Afghan-Soviet war.

*Eventually, Afghanistan became a safe haven for transnational militant groups, including al-Qaeda. A new regional 'great game' shaped and perpetuated the conflict in Afghanistan with Arab militants playing a significant role in support of Taliban battles against the Northern Alliance.*

The events of 9/11 became a turning point in the US policy towards the entire region with a new mission - finding and defeating a new enemy in transnational Islamist terror groups, with a focus on al-Qaeda. No amount of sane advice or argument could prevent the US from invading Afghanistan to avenge the 9/11 humiliation.

*There is hardly any evidence that the Taliban leaders knew anything about the planning of the attack or were materially involved in assisting al-Qaeda.*

However, they were old allies from the anti-Soviet war, had a shared common interest in defeating the rivals of the Taliban. The hard fact was that Afghanistan was the country from where the attack had been planned and where, Osama bin Laden, the founder of al-Qaeda was hiding. To succeed in its mission, the US turned to Pakistan for a fresh alliance, third time in history. Pakistani leaders, under pressure from Washington to align with them, had made some of their own calculations.

*Islamabad knew well that even if it refused to cooperate and declared neutrality, the US would attack Afghanistan at any cost, and that it would be more damaging to its strategic and national security, just as India offered its bases to the American bombers.*

There was also a compelling domestic reason: a military government under General Pervez Musharraf that was in dire need of support after removing a legitimate democratic one. Incidentally, a military government happened to be in-charge whenever a strategic partnership with the US was struck. Compared to the Cold War decades, the third partnership

*Aligning with the US and support its war of intervention next door in Afghanistan, where they both had collaborated to defeat the Soviet intervention would leave the worst impact on Pakistan's internal security.*

assumed more significance in terms of what was at stake domestically, and for the national security of Pakistan.

Pakistan had to fight its own militant groups that sprang up in reaction to the US intervention in Afghanistan and its support for the war.

The argument of this essay is that there is a qualitative difference between the Cold War military-oriented relationship, which was largely shaped by global systemic and ideological considerations, and the one against the Taliban movement that Pakistan once supported. It seems, Pakistan made a reluctant, difficult choice at gunpoint. Never was it to be a genuine convergence of interests. Nor did Pakistan think that the US could really achieve its objective of creating a 'new' state and 'nation' in Afghanistan.

*Once again, Afghan history repeated itself - the great power hubris met tribal resistance, but with many added layers of war experience, victory against the Soviet Union, and the many follies Americans would commit during the war.*

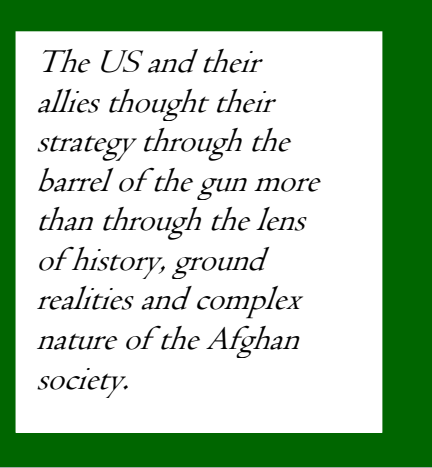
As these lines are written, the US is negotiating with the Taliban to end the longest war in American history in a 'responsible' way (Iqbal 2019).

## **Troubled Partnership**

With the exception of the initial few years, relations between Pakistan and the US have differed more on strategic, political and security issues relating to war in Afghanistan. Problems started from

the beginning. One needs to understand the reasons why this partnership became so difficult to manage and anchored in mutual trust. Contrary to Pakistani advice, the US did not include the Taliban factions in the Bonn process called to extend international recognition to the post-Taliban regime and framing of the constitution and political process.

They, like other two great powers - Britain in Nineteenth and the Soviets in Twentieth Century - installed a puppet government after winning the first battle, but could not sustain 'victory' even by using every conceivable weapon and tactic in Afghanistan. If we closely analyse the political developments after the removal of the Taliban, it looks like a civil war, and the US fighting against the majority community, the Pashtun populations where the Taliban melted, hid and planned their next move.



*The US and their allies thought their strategy through the barrel of the gun more than through the lens of history, ground realities and complex nature of the Afghan society.*

*On the face it, Hamid Karzai and Ashraf Ghani - the two successive 'elected' presidents represent an 'inclusive' coalition of ethnic groups, but the hard fact is that much of the power within the critical sectors of the state has shifted to the non-Pashtun minorities.*

There are many factors - nationalistic, ideological - that may explain resurgence of the Taliban after 2005, but the most important one is the fact that the Pashtun territories, like during the Soviet-*Mujahedeen* war have remained the key battleground. This is where popular resentment against drone strikes, air bombardments and night raids has nurtured the Taliban narrative of resistance against the US forces.


The US was eventually caught in the deadly cycle of war - changing commanders on the ground, tactics and weapons - with a vain hope that the Taliban would realise the 'futility' of their resistance, and join the state and nation-building process under the shadow of US power.

Perhaps, that was not the objective.

A close scrutiny of the US war in Afghanistan, which has been studied and will be studied for decades to come, more for its failures than success, suggests ambiguity of its objectives (Akram 2017).

It came as a rude shock to the US commanders on the ground in Afghanistan and their local allies when President Barak Obama in 2014 declared that US troops would leave the country by the end of 2016 (Landler 2014).

President Trump, once in the Oval Office, revisited his view of the Afghan war as 'futile' by outlining a new strategy for Afghanistan in 2017. He had campaigned on the pledge that he would 'extricate'



*The US has changed its own goals and priorities several times, ending up with losing domestic consensus on continuing the war in Afghanistan.*

the US from foreign conflicts (Davis and Landler 2017). Since 2018, the US has finally devoted its regional diplomacy in finding a peaceful, negotiated solution of the longest war (Lute and MacDonough 2018).

Change in US strategy in Afghanistan, in the face of often fierce and unending resistance from the Taliban, has invariably affected its relations with Pakistan. One of the narratives it created was the Taliban ‘sanctuaries’ in Pakistan from where the fighters and commanders crossed over to the Afghan war zones (Jones 2018).

Now this is a big question: was it conflicting interests between the US and Pakistan, or was it the American failure in its war that prompted it to scapegoat Islamabad?

This question invokes two conflictive answers. That should be understandable, as the going in Afghanistan got tougher, the Americans began to demand Islamabad to ‘do more’, even in the face of reactive Taliban insurgency in border regions of Pakistan. It has taken Pakistan more than a decade, loss of 70,000 lives, including 15,000 security personnel and an economic opportunity cost of over 123 billion dollars (Jamal 2017).<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the war, one finds weak common ground and thin band of converging interests between Pakistan, the US and other members of the international coalition.

This, quite often, created bumps in the way of forging a common outlook.

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<sup>1</sup> Figures vary from year to year and source to source.

*There are many issues that have made this relationship very complex, but one of the most significant issues is that there has never been a single view of who the enemy really is; what kind of threat it poses; and what are the best means to defeat it.*

There is a greater problem in the domestic situation of Pakistan where perceptions about the War on Terror (WoT), and cooperation with the US and other partners, have widely differed over the years.

The current Prime Minister Imran Khan has very categorically stated that the US war in Afghanistan was never 'Pakistan's war', and never will Pakistan fight others wars in the future - a clear reference to the country's policy of extending support to the US war, and consequently, the WoT (Dawn 2018).

Pakistan's post-9/11 Afghan policy doesn't seem to have a consensual view. At the popular level, the salient view is that the WoT is not Pakistan's war, but the country became involved in it because the US pressurised it to the point it had no option but make good of the situation for its interests.<sup>2</sup>

Contrary to the popular view of the war in Afghanistan, the security apparatus of Pakistan weighed all options - rational calculations of costs and benefits - before joining the international coalition.

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<sup>2</sup> This view comes out clearly when one reads Musharraf's *In the Line of Fire: A Memoir* (2008).

The Pakistani media, particularly, the vernacular press has debated the famous U-turn in moralistic tones, missing out on lessons of *realpolitik*.

*Pakistan, like all states in the modern world system, has always adapted and adjusted to new circumstances to protect its primary interests. So, the change in the Afghan policy was merely familiar repositioning in a new balance of power, and in a vastly changed environment created by American determination to wage a war.*

Quite a few Pakistanis, however, do not look at the world system and the pressures of power politics from a pragmatic point of view. When it comes to serious questions about its relationship with the modern Western world, most notably with the US, a common commentator intuitively reverts to an irrational view of history involving the medieval conflict between Islam and Christianity.

*Modern nation states are new animals, the kind we never experienced before the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. They have rationality and morality of their own which is largely determined by how the elites that control power of the state view threats to national security.*

When it comes to hard and difficult issues of world politics, common Pakistanis tend to mask incoherent idealism with raw and rough nationalism that also has a thick spattering of pan-Islamism.

My obvious reference is to some Pakistanis (and Muslims from other countries) who think they have a right to tell the Afghans what



is best for them, and if the Afghans do not listen, to intervene to support those in Afghanistan who share their religious and political views. This view comes into conflict with the territoriality of the state and the basic principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

However, there can and must be a debate on what can really be the best course of action at a given point in time, and which foreign policy option would be better to pursue fundamental values and national interests.

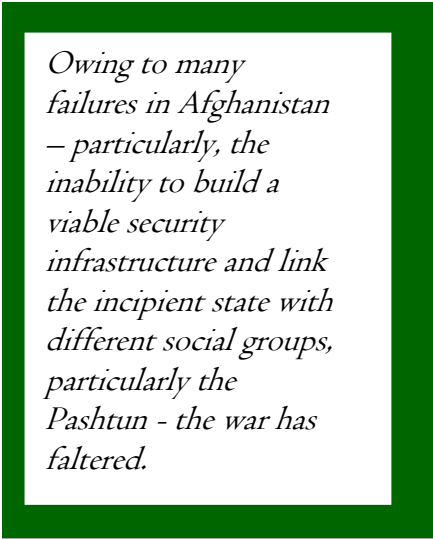
## **Failure and Its Impact**

The WoT is one of the most complex military engagements - domestically divisive - and hard to win through coercive means alone.

It is natural, then, that the states together in it will experience stress and strains, and this happened to be the case between Pakistan and the US.

This has left a big impact on Pakistan's relations with the US as well as the Kabul regime, both of which blame the failure on the infiltration from Pakistan's tribal border (The Economic Times 2018). That may be true, but it is not the only factor that makes the resurgent Taliban so threatening.

Afghanistan and Pakistan would continue to face a grave security situation with the rise in the Taliban insurgency, if the



*Owing to many failures in Afghanistan – particularly, the inability to build a viable security infrastructure and link the incipient state with different social groups, particularly the Pashtun - the war has faltered.*

question of war is not peacefully settled. There is reason to be concerned in the Western capitals as well. As a reaction to alliance with the US, Pakistan confronted an unconventional security threat in an environment charged with religious and cultural split. The country faced mostly young militants armed with a self-righteous, dogmatic and prescriptive mythology of faith. That was not all - they were well-armed and funded, willing to die for their cause. They have transnational linkages with like-minded groups, and, more dangerously, have growing domestic social support among certain sectors of society.

*These are defining times for Pakistan as well as powerful international players like the US, and call for cool reflection on how best to cooperate meaningfully toward mutual advantage rather than drift and diverge, and in so doing stifle the efforts to defeat terrorism.*

## **Misperceptions and the Reality**

There have many misperceptions about Pakistan's relations with the US that persistently influenced, for a long time, political and diplomatic discourses. The first one that needs to be re-examined for objective and professional analysis of Pakistan's foreign policy is this:

Pakistan has not benefitted from the US, and has always been manipulated and used by Washington; that the country's foreign policy has never been independent enough or successful.

This view is not only negative and self-denigrating but also divorced from reality of the real world of international politics.

American scholars and leaders have viewed Pakistan almost from a similar prism. Many a times, they have argued that Islamabad has used Washington for its own ends.

One wonders how an unequal power can continue to manipulate a great power, every time they got into a strategic relationship (Tahir-Kheli 1982). The same view came out very bluntly in the famous New Year tweet of President Trump in which he wrote:

*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!* (Khan 2018)

The facts of history and the facts of politics, any facts, can be woven into some kind of narrative that would always strengthen a particular point of view at a given point of time in any country. For policy analysis, we need to examine closely why leaders would say things like that. President Trump is a very special case, not used to niceties of diplomacy.

It is always disagreement over policies, which is very obvious from the trajectory of Pakistan-US relations. That states are rational actors, committed to their national interest, is a basic lesson of international politics. The problems start the moment one's assessment of gains and losses is very different. Security policies in war zones require a continuous review.

*One of the major failures of Pakistan and the US has been absence of institutional mechanism to bring their perceptions of interests and policies closer to each other. Much was left to individuals in powerful positions, but they kept changing on both sides.*

The fact is relationships are negotiated and re-negotiated. Never can they be in the same mold or frame because of the dynamic nature of international politics.

In my view in assessing relations between Pakistan and the US, one needs to keep in mind how and why the American war remained in perplexingly ever shifting gears, hardware, strategy and actors on the ground.

## **Managing the Endgame**

The US and Pakistan are locked into a relationship where it is necessary to manage the end game. This is the time that we manage the end game in such a way that we do not end up being at the receiving end.

Rather, we end up at the right side of history. We end up on the right side of Pakistan's national interests.

As we have finally entered negotiating the endgame in Afghanistan, we need to focus on Pakistan's vowed policy and long-term interests: a unified, stable and friendly Afghanistan.

*If there is any single state or people that have lost the most over the past 40 years, it is Afghanistan and the Afghans. Wars have lot of destruction, dislocation, and a*

*lot of fragmentation. In long wars, post-conflict reconstruction becomes an arduous task.*

When you destroy a state, it is very difficult to rebuild it with the same of kind of historical consensus. It takes a long time. This is what is happening.

The famous statement of former President Obama that the US would end fighting in Afghanistan, followed by transfer of responsibility to local Afghan security forces and government in 2014 was too late a realisation - too much damage to Afghanistan and regional security had already been done, as reactive militancy also engulfed Pakistan (Dawn 2014).

More than historical realism, the Bush administration was driven by emotions when they decided to invade Afghanistan. Their sense of history has always been a problem, particularly in their relations with Afghanistan.

Negotiating with the Afghan Taliban has been Pakistan's consistent policy, for which it can take credit. Pakistani leaders counseled restraint, and suggested negotiation with the Taliban as a better option than fighting a long war, which the US believed would end with a quick victory.

If one looks at US documents and policy debates, one realises that the US policymakers thought they had won the war, the Taliban were vanquished, gone forever. After about 15 years of more war, there is a realisation that war would not end unless there is direct negotiation with the Taliban.

The negotiations are now underway with about five rounds of talks already completed and a sort of framework agreement reached.

This is a positive sign. However, the US and the Taliban are compelled by the logic of conflict, both pursuing dual-track strategy: fight and talk.

Stalemate does not benefit even the great powers.

The senseless prolongation of war has created conditions in which every neighbour of Afghanistan, the US and the Afghan people have suffered great losses. However, the Taliban are the only side in the war that stands to benefit.

But, they also need to be realistic about their capacity to recapture Kabul by force. Never should the Taliban undermine US power to prevent that from happening. The domino effect and consequences of the Taliban recapturing Afghanistan will be unimaginable, especially in the

backdrop of what we saw in the Middle East in the wake of emergence of the 'Islamic State' which destroyed many countries there. It seems the Taliban leadership has come to terms with this reality in agreeing to negotiate with the US.

Pakistan has played its cards very positively in nudging the two sides toward negotiation, playing the role of facilitator.

*The success of the Taliban lies in creating a stalemate - war, no peace, and no winners.*

*Raising the cost of war for a stronger adversary is the old tactic of insurgencies. The Afghans have the greatest experience of it.*

One can discern many changes in Pakistan's outlook toward the war in Afghanistan in the light of the horrible experience of fighting the Pakistani Taliban insurgency.

*Geoeconomic realism seems to be taking stronger roots in the longer policy outlook of Pakistan than the conventional thoughts on military security, which no doubt is very essential, but requires sustainable economic means.*

## **Conclusion**

Afghanistan has been a meeting point, mostly due to its wars for the last 40 years. It can also be a meeting point for regional peace and security.

What is the meeting point now?

The meeting point now is how can we stabilise Afghanistan?

How can we unify Afghanistan? How can we help make Afghanistan stand on its feet?

We are back to where it all started. These are challenges and we must tackle them head on. But addressing them will require clarity of mind, sincerity of heart, and also, clarity of vision about securing Afghanistan and Pakistan from the threats of militancy and insurgencies.

It has been said so many times: *Pakistan will never be a stable and peaceful country without Afghanistan being the same.*

We can fence the border and we are doing it. However, the effects of war cannot be contained by walls on borders.

The positive way of looking at politics and diplomacy is that there are things that can be done in mutual interest. Peace in Afghanistan is one of those things - a common challenge and a common interest.



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## **FUTURE POSSIBILITIES**

- Accommodating Mutual Concerns: Prospects of Pak-US Ties  
*Dr Farhan Hanif Siddiqi*

- Epilogue  
Nudging Pak-US Relations in the Right Direction: A Pragmatic Blueprint  
*compiled by Sarah Siddiq Aneel*



# Accommodating Mutual Concerns: Prospects of Pak-US Ties

## *Scholarly Article*

***Dr Farhan Hanif Siddiqi\****

### **Introduction**

Pakistan-United States (US) relations provide for a fascinating theoretical and empirical case study into the dynamics of a great power establishing relations with a considerably less powerful state. This was indeed the case in 1947 when the US was the world's foremost military and economic superpower while Pakistan, a newly independent state setting out to find its feet in the international community of states. In the 1950s, Pakistan established military ties with the US for its security needs, as relations with India experienced tumult in the wake of tensions over the disputed region of Kashmir. While one would assume, according to theory of realism, that the more powerful a

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\* Dr Farhan Hanif Siddiqi is an Associate Professor in the School of Politics and International Relations (SPIR) at Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU), Islamabad, Pakistan. His research interests focus on ethnicity, nationalism, comparative politics and conflict resolution. He is the author of *The Politics of Ethnicity in Pakistan: The Baloch, Sindhi and Mohajir Ethnic Movements* (2012). He also co-edited *The Challenges of Conflict Resolution and Security in 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Problems and Prospects*. Besides contributing chapters in different edited books, Dr Siddiqi has published multiple research articles on different themes in refereed journals. He regularly participates in national and international conferences as a speaker.

state, the more leverage it exercises over the less powerful state, this was not entirely the case with Pakistan.

While Pakistan during the 1950s remained dependent on the US militarily, it still managed to exercise its foreign policy and strategic autonomy. This was manifest in the early 1960s as the country consolidated ties with China as a consequence of Sino-Indian hostility and war. This exercise of strategic autonomy implies that realist theory is deficient in explaining policy outcomes of

*American influence on Pakistan was limited to begin with despite the military and economic differential between the two. This has to be recognised as a seminal variable in analysis of Pakistan-US relations: Pakistan's strategic autonomy vis-à-vis the US from the very early years of independence.*

even the world's foremost superpower. Realism would have us believe that Pakistan merely followed what was put in front of it by the US. But, this was not entirely the case (Holsti 1964).

Second, when one focuses on the stresses and strains in Pakistan-US relations, a key undertaking is to estimate why has this been the case? The article answers this by asserting that Pakistan-US relations have been entrenched in the language and practice of 'interests.' While any acute observer of international politics would reiterate the dictum, 'there are no permanent friends and there are no permanent enemies, the only thing permanent is national interests', the Pakistan-US relationship has been a victim of this assertion. That is, because it is perceptibly only interests that guide relations, policy outcomes have been less stable when the interests of one party have

waned relative to the other. Academic works on Pakistan-US relations identify the essence of ties as a ‘tortured relationship’ (Markey 2013) or that the US and Pakistan have been ‘disenchanted allies’ (Kux 2001). Hence, if Pakistan-US relations need a reorientation, the definition of a firmer foothold needs to be broached. In recent times, the American administration has concentrated focus on a *reset* of ties with Pakistan (The Express Tribune 2018a), but efforts will remain ineffective if only material motives and incentives remain supreme between both states. Hence, the need for an ideational orientation.

The ideational imperative is a cornerstone of Pakistan-China relations which are characterised in phrases such as, ‘higher than the mountains, deeper than the ocean, stronger than steel and sweeter than honey’ (The Nation 2010) or as the Chinese Vice Premier put it in the 1960s, *mujahidana dosti* (Sattar 2007: 105). This has not been the case in our relations with the US. Gallup Polls indicate that Pakistani public’s sense of trust in the US has remained low over a 24-year period between 1991 and 2015. The sense of distrust was 60 per cent in 1991; and 56 per cent in 2015 (Gallup Pakistan 2015), and corroborates with the ebb and flow of American interest which Pakistanis regard as hypocritical of the US government (Heeg 2016).

The key questions, thus, are: what are the mutual concerns between Pakistan and the US, from a Pakistani perspective? Second, how to accommodate these mutual concerns? At the end, the article contemplates as to ‘why’ an accommodation of mutual concerns is needed and whether Pakistan is better off breaking ties with the US,

while moving towards China and Russia in order to rebalance its broken and stressful relationship?

## **Mutual Concerns: Pakistan's Perspective**

There are four major dynamics that define contemporary Pakistan-US relations where disjuncture and divergences of interest and policy manifest themselves.

The first area of mutual concern remains Afghanistan. Despite the fact that Pakistan insists on not viewing Pakistan-US ties from this perspective (The Express Tribune 2018b), Pakistan's western neighbour remains the pivotal hurdle in the normalisation of bilateral relations. From the US side, there have been persistent accusations of Pakistan aiding and abetting the Taliban and frustrating the former's efforts to defeat the non-state actor [NSA] (Lawrence 2018). In September 2009, Anne Patterson, the US Ambassador to Pakistan expressed reservations on Taliban bases in Quetta and that the 'Quetta Shura is high on Washington's list' (Iqbal 2009). As the US expressed its resentment, Pakistan responded by acknowledging the presence of the Quetta Shura but that it had been downgraded effectively, hence, posing little threat to either Pakistan or Afghanistan (Dawn 2009). While the Quetta Shura has seemingly fallen off the American radar following swift actions on the part of the Pakistani state, the Haqqani network and Pakistan's alleged support to it has been the bane of Pakistan-US conflicting ties. General John Nicholson, former commander of US troops and NATO's Resolute Support Afghan mission, had reiterated that while 'tactical-level' leadership of the Taliban is in the field in Afghanistan,



‘senior leadership’ of the insurgency still resides in Pakistan (Gul 2017).

From a Pakistan perspective, the major grievance resides in the lack of acknowledgement of its efforts in rooting out terrorism and NSAs from both within its own state and the region (Xinhuanet 2017). The War on Terror has cost Pakistan both material and human losses in addition to the Army fighting a civil war with its own population. During the last 17 years, the direct and indirect cost incurred by Pakistan due to incidents of terrorism amount to USD 126.79 billion (MoF GoP 2018).

*While this war against terrorists ensues, Pakistan has demonstrated effectively that it is not Syria, Libya or Iraq which collapsed under their own weight as popular revolution combined with the infiltration of NSAs – ISIS in the main – to produce conditions of anarchy.*

In Pakistan’s case, this has not transpired despite the human and material losses attesting to the resilience of both the Pakistani state and society. In fact, the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) shows improvement as far as terrorism and terrorist incidents are concerned. In its most recent ranking, Pakistan was positioned at fifth which is the country’s best result in a decade, having been fourth since 2007 and ranked second on six occasions (Sohail 2017). Moreover, despite being named alongside Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Nigeria, Pakistan does not approximate decadent institutions and civil war conditions as prevalent in the rest. Despite the War on Terror, Pakistan’s socioeconomic development has continued to touch GDP growth

rate of 5.8 per cent in 2017 (Rana 2017) and its urban space has continued to expand with a rising, educated and consumerist middle class. Furthermore, unlike Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Nigeria, Pakistan has continued to move towards democratic consolidation in times where academics argue over democratic deconsolidation and the lessening of democracy not only in the developing but most crucially the developed world as well (Foa and Mounk 2016). In fact, Pakistan along with Singapore was singled out as being modestly freer in 2015 compared to 27 other states in the developing world experiencing a return or failing to hold on to democratic freedoms (Diamond 2015: 150-151). Democratisation in Pakistan has progressed during these years resulting in three peaceful exchanges of power from one elected government to another in 2008, 2013 and 2018.

Three key features of democratisation in Pakistan are in order: first, the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment has moved the orbit of a centralised political system to a more federal power-sharing formula with 17 ministries now devolved to the provinces (Adeney 2012). In line with this, the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award now guarantees 57.5 per cent share to the provinces based on a four point weightage formula (Sabir 2010). This is an unprecedented achievement in Pakistan's polity outlining the relative strengthening of the provinces vis-à-vis the Centre.

A second feature of Pakistan's political space is judicialization (Husain 2018). Pakistan's Supreme Court has played a phenomenal role in brining down a military dictator, General Pervez Musharraf, as well as dismissing from office two elected Prime Ministers, Yusuf Raza Gilani in 2012 and Nawaz Sharif in 2017. All three instances

point to a check and balance mechanism developing in Pakistan's political system and the judiciary, in contrast to its historical role as legitimator of military coups, to now as the upholder of democracy and key values such as accountability.

A third major feature is the mobilisation of Pakistan's middle class in electoral politics. This middle class activism cognizant of change and a better future is a major element in politicians' drive to elicit support, especially from urban areas. Moreover, the middle class is a primary factor in fueling economic growth and bolstering Pakistan's fragile democracy (Shah 2017).

From a Pakistani perspective, Pakistan's progress both on the democratic and anti-terror fronts is perceptibly less recognised and given less attention in Washington. In the US, especially in Congress and now also in the White House, the terrorist supporting lens dominates our image (Dawn 2016). In August 2017, President Trump announced his South Asia policy making clear that:

*In the past, Pakistan has been a valued partner. Our militaries have worked together against common enemies. The Pakistani people have suffered greatly from terrorism and extremism. We recognize those contributions and those sacrifices. But Pakistan has also sheltered the same organizations that try every single day to kill our people. We have been paying Pakistan billions and billions of dollars at the same time they are housing the very terrorists that we are fighting. But that will have to change, and that will change immediately....It is time for Pakistan to demonstrate its commitment to civilization, order, and to peace (White House 2017).*

This was followed by the President Trump's New Year tweet again castigating Pakistan for providing safe haven to terrorists and undermining Washington's efforts in Afghanistan. A more hardened approach is at play with USD 300 million cancelled as part of the Coalition Support Fund (CSF) in 2018 (Dawn 2018). As this dynamic plays out, relations between the two now teeter on the success of US peace efforts and direct negotiations with the Taliban.

A second major irritant between Pakistan-US relations relates to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). James Mattis, the American Secretary of Defence expressed reservations that the route passed through disputed territory (Dawn 2017). Not only CPEC, but Secretary of State Mike Pompeo put added pressure by linking the International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout for Pakistan with Chinese loans (Reuters 2018). Islamabad, on the other hand, sees the Corridor as an opportunity for trade, business and development, not only with China but also involving its neighbours, India and Afghanistan, and the wider Central Asian region. In this context, the government's recent overture towards India with respect to the Kartarpur border crossing provides cause for optimism (Hashim and Saberin 2018).

A third major irritant in Pakistan-US relations is the latter's support to Indian role in Afghanistan. New Delhi has sustained historical ties with the Afghan government and President Trump's Afghanistan and South Asian strategy argued that, 'we [US] want them [India] to help us more with Afghanistan, especially in the area of economic assistance and development' (White House 2017). This raised security concerns as Pakistan alleges the presence of Indian intelligence in Afghanistan as pivotal in sustaining aid and supplies to

Baloch separatists in Balochistan, including the arrest of Indian spy, Kulbushan Yadav (The Nation 2016).

A fourth irritant is Iran. While Pakistan was forthcoming in the building of the Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) gas pipeline, the US support for the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India Pipeline (TAPI) frustrated its efforts to obtain gas from Iran (Pakistan Today 2013). A temporary hiatus was provided after the great powers signed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran in July 2015, however, President Trump's negation of the nuclear agreement (Lander 2018) has once again strained the dynamic of Iranian and Pakistani overtures towards each other. While the US attempts to contain Iran and sees it as a major regional rival, Pakistan stands to gain more with regional agreements engaging Tehran.

## **How to Accommodate Mutual Concerns?**

What does Pakistan need to do in order to lay the basis for sustained engagement with the US? How can Pakistan move beyond an intermediary interest-based relationship to a more comprehensive, long-term engagement. What can and should be the basis of this long-term engagement?

Being seen as the aggressor does not pay, whatever the international context, Cold War or otherwise. This is a tag that we need to do without.

Mutual accommodation entails Pakistan's consolidation of its democratic processes.

Why?

This is imperative because it projects an image of the country where a liberal, middle class leads political processes and the 'Homeland' image of Pakistan as a preserve of Islamist radicals and extremist groups is de-emphasised (Schram 2014). Our democratic development and consolidation equates with the Western model of political development based on democracy, human rights and federal power-sharing agreements. While world politics is often looked at from the perspective of material interests and exigencies, ideational notions between states is just as pivotal in the sustenance and growth of bilateral relations.

*To being with, what needs to be attended to is image-building that attests to Pakistan as a growing economy interested in regional engagements and agreement and is open to attracting investments from other countries.*

*For Pakistan, continued progress on the democratic pathway provides a firmer foundation for a positive and attractive international image building that is in consonance with Western models of political and economic development.*

A second area where mutual concerns can be accommodated amicably, but with some difficulty, is the continuation and consolidation of the peace process in Afghanistan. Here, Pakistan's stance that the Taliban should be negotiated with and a political formula of reconciliation be put in place is formally underway

(Siddiqui and Nelson 2013). Pakistan aided the Doha Peace Process and is appreciative of recent diplomatic overtures between the US and Taliban.

The commendable bit, at the time of present writing, is that diplomacy between the Taliban and the US continues (Gannon 2018).

Pakistan's best bet in the present circumstances is to oversee that the present process not only continues but reaches fulfillment and is successful. The US expects Pakistan to aid in the process of negotiations. The key bottleneck is their perception of Pakistan's leverage over the

*If a political settlement is to be reached, significant compromises would have to be made. The Taliban would have to let go of their country-wide ambitions of control and governance, accept the Afghan constitution and play politics while renouncing militancy as a tool of gaining political objectives.*

Taliban. Though Pakistan, along with Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates (UAE), recognised the Taliban regime, its leverage remains limited. The question of how and if Pakistan can be successful in mediating negotiations between US and the Taliban is questionable. The success of talks can bridge differences between Pakistan and the US and offers optimism in the future direction of relations between the two states.

## **Conclusion**

While prospects of Pakistan's strategic autonomy as expressed in growing military and economic ties with China and Russia (Yousaf 2017) remain, Pakistan's foreign policy choices are best served if engagement with the US perseveres over the longer term. The country's strategic autonomy does not entail breaking ties with the US, and pursuing diplomatic, economic and military engagements with China and Russia instead. As in the Cold War when both the US and China were prioritised by Pakistan's ruling elites as major planks of foreign policy, so is the case in contemporary times.

*The relationship has been rocky but the US is needed since the leverage it exercises over International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and the recent Financial Action Task Force (FATF) grey listing (Rana 2018) warrants Pakistan's continued diplomacy and engagement with the US from a pragmatic perspective.*

In its most recent meeting, the FATF expressed reservations over Pakistan's efforts in curbing terror financing (Times of Islamabad 2018). If not leveraged properly, Pakistan faces the risk of being black-listed and its already perilous economy is bound to suffer further if external borrowing is not had from the IMF and other multinational sources.

It is imperative also that Pakistan continues to engage substantively in the peace process with the Taliban and emerge from it as a key facilitator in bringing peace to Afghanistan. From a Pakistani perspective, a successful peace deal with the Taliban allows



the country to win trust from the US and the wider international community in its efforts to see a peaceful end to the protracted and intractable conflict in Afghanistan.

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# Nudging Pak-US Relations in the Right Direction: *A Pragmatic Blueprint*

## *Epilogue\**

*compiled by Sarah Siddiq Aneel*

*A World is not an ideology nor a scientific institution,  
nor is it even a system of ideologies;  
rather, it is a structure of unconscious relations and symbiotic processes.*

*-William Irwin Thompson*

Pakistan and the United States (US) have a very symbiotic relationship. While there may be shared differences, there are more shared interests and for this reason despite the historical baggage, blame games, trust and mistrust, the two countries cannot allow the bilateral relationship to descend into complete disengagement. However, while Pakistan is committed to a good relationship and explore areas that will entrench bilateral ties, it needs to be done on the basis of sovereign equality and state-to-state mutual interests. The fundamental recalibration of this relationship lies in Pakistan's hands since it needs to bring down its expectations from the US and work hard to improve ties with its neighbours as well.

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\* The following is based on the recommendations that have been proposed in the deliberations by the various scholars and diplomats in this volume.

## **Thinking beyond the US**

Pakistan needs to work on a reorientation of its foreign policy practices, and formulate a doctrine which clearly pursues its national interests without compromising to other states and their self-interest driven agenda. In order to secure its national interests, it is important to diversify options for support and alliances in the international political system. Given the US' years of diplomatic manipulation and neglect at crucial times, Islamabad should form alliances and engagements with other states, such as China and Russia.

The US and China are established powers and one should not be preferred over the other. As well as being a non-NATO ally, Islamabad places great value on its relationship with Beijing, this means taking a more cautious and calculated approach in its foreign policy stratagem.

## **On the Issue of Afghanistan**

Afghanistan remains a critical factor in Pakistan-US bilateral relations. Both countries need to adopt 'a regional approach' to find a solution under which a group of Afghanistan's near and far neighbours, including Russia, China, Central Asian States, Pakistan and Iran is constituted. Through shared dialogue, these stakeholders can work towards understanding each other's interests associated with long-term stability of the region and outline mechanisms not only to ensure their materialisation, but also revival of peace in Afghanistan.

It is a positive sign that the US is negotiating with the Afghan Taliban directly for the first time, but it also makes Pakistan an important actor which must revitalise its people-to-people relations,



*Nudging Pak-US Relations in the Right Direction:  
A Pragmatic Blueprint*

exchange programmes, economic activities and security assistance to the country. Besides regulation and monitoring of the western border, Pakistan must issue proper permits to Afghan citizens who wish to enter Pakistan for work/study purposes.

Afghanistan, today, presents the best opportunity to recalibrate Pakistan-US relations and accommodate mutual concerns. Pakistan's traditional stance has been to negotiate with the Taliban as the most viable strategy. However, military strategy needs to be parallel with the political reconciliation process. In this regard, radical compromises will need to be made and trade-offs negotiated - the Afghan Taliban would have to let go of their countrywide governance ambitions; accept the Afghan constitution in its entirety; and renounce militancy to gain political objectives.

## **Activating the Pakistani Diaspora**

Governments worldwide are increasingly conscious that their Diaspora is a powerful asset in the pursuit of their diplomatic and strategic objectives. The Government of Pakistan (GoP) needs to motivate and inspire its Diaspora in the US since they can foster a strong sense of togetherness between the two countries. This will contribute towards establishing Pakistan's presence in the US and increase the scope of the country's soft power by showcasing Pakistani culture and social values on and through various platforms and at difference forums.

## **Strengthening Pakistan's Embassy & Consulates at USA**

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is tied with the reputation of a country. Embassies, which are in many ways 'public service overseas outposts' of a country, add to this since they are the first external point of contact. Rather than hiring lobbyists, the GoP should strengthen its embassy and send the very best young people who can take the country's message to the US officials and business community with greater faith and conviction.

A good system encourages and rewards proactive actions – the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) should not only enhance the negotiation and even marketing skills of staff through training and sound mentoring, but should devise incentive schemes for those whose ideas and work have led to positive image-building.

## **Towards Self-awareness and Bold National Decisions**

There needs to be a complete crackdown on extremism and terrorism, whether emanating from Pakistan's eastern or the western border. The emotive narrative of the past needs to be replaced, by a pragmatic and fresh approach that understands that doing so is ultimately beneficial for the country, especially given changing global realities.

Unless, Pakistan offers a strong and sustainable economic profile, it would receive very little support on vital policy issues, whether it is the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), Jammu and

Kashmir or an economic bailout. With a strong economy and stable governance, Pakistan's voice and opinion would be heard and taken seriously.

## **Studying the Increasing Influence of US Think tanks and Anti-Pakistan Lobbies**

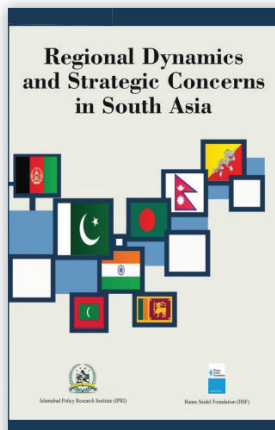
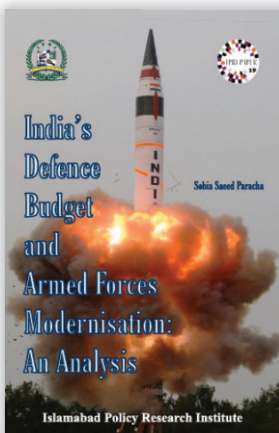
Expert knowledge, governmental linkages, and personal ties determine think tanks' influence in Washington's policy corridors. Moreover, different types of think tanks exert influence through different mechanisms. The GoP should conduct a survey of key US think tanks, identify important trends affecting them, and examine the roles and functions they play in influencing foreign policy and development aid processes, especially vis-à-vis Pakistan. The impact of Indian and Israeli lobbies has been damaging, therefore, policymakers must invest resources in this area to enhance favourable voices about the country, along with providing greater opportunities for more interaction between local think tanks and intellectuals with those in the US.

## **Rebranding Pakistan**

Pakistan needs image-building, especially with the US, that attests to it being a growing economy interested in regional engagements, open to attracting and facilitating investment. The resonances of history and other domestic and international pressures need to be surpassed. The country needs to consolidate its democratic processes because this will help project an image where a liberal, middle class leads

political processes, rather than one which is portrayed as a hub of extremism. For Pakistan, progress on the democratic path will provide a stronger foundation for positive and attractive international image-building that is in conformity with Western models of development. ■

# IPRI PUBLICATIONS





## **IPRI Journal**

The *IPRI Journal* is a biannual peer-reviewed journal enjoying wide circulation in Pakistan and abroad. It is being published since 2001 and consists of research articles that build interdisciplinary understanding of today's global complexities, interconnectedness, and events of international/regional importance by strengthening the knowledge-base primarily from Pakistan and the Global South and North on areas related to international affairs, geopolitics, diplomacy, security, political economy, conflict, defence and strategic affairs, terrorism, nuclear and governance issues. Book reviews of latest publications on similar subjects are also published.

The *IPRI Journal* is recognised by Clarivate Analytics (formerly the Intellectual Property & Science Business of Thomson Reuters) and indexed and abstracted in the Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI). It is also included in ProQuest (International Bibliography of Social Sciences Worldwide Political Science Abstracts); CrossRef; GoogleScholar; OCLC WorldCat; Heidelberg University OLC South Asia Online Contents; Ibero-American Institute, Berlin; Europa Regional Surveys of the World; Information Matrix for the Analysis of Journals; Asianet-Pakistan; and ResearchBib.

## **Journal of Current Affairs (JoCA)**

The *Journal of Current Affairs (JoCA)* is IPRI's second biannual peer-reviewed journal being published since 2016. It aims to encourage the research of young scholars and academics from Pakistan. Articles consist of contemporary subject matters providing policy-makers and other relevant stakeholders critical understanding of world politics, foreign affairs and international security vis-à-vis Pakistan.

## **IPRI Books**

The Institute organises annual national and international conferences on strategic and international relations topics. The working papers, thought pieces and essays presented by renowned scholars and subject experts from South Asia, the Asia-Pacific, North America, Europe, United Kingdom, and Central Asia (amongst others) are published in the *IPRI Books*. Over the years, the following anthologies have been published:

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8. *Policy Approaches of South Asian Countries: Impact on the Region* (2016)
9. *Building Knowledge-Based Economy in Pakistan: Learning from Best Practices* (2016)
10. *Solutions for Energy Crisis in Pakistan Volume II* (2015)
11. *Major Powers' Interests in Indian Ocean: Challenges and Options for Pakistan* (2015)
12. *Roadmap for Economic Growth of Pakistan* (2015)
13. *Pakistan's Strategic Environment Post-2014* (2014)



14. *Future of Economic Cooperation in SAARC Countries* (2014)
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16. *Potential and Prospects of Pakistani Diaspora* (2013)
17. *Rights of Religious Minorities in South Asia: Learning from Mutual Experiences* (2013)
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22. *Stabilising Afghanistan Regional Perspectives and Prospects* (2011)
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39. *The State of Migration and Multiculturalism in Pakistan* (2003)

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Through the *IPRI Paper (Monograph Series)*, Research Fellows and other experts contribute on a broad range of critical contemporary issues facing Pakistan and the international community. These monographs are self-contained single-volume works contribute to ongoing scholarship in a particular discipline by offering original insight into their subjects, explore complex foreign policy, geoeconomic and geopolitical issues, present the latest data, analysis, and propose practical policy recommendations. Some of the monographs published to date include:

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- IPRI Paper 18, *Management of Pakistan-India Relations: Resolution of Disputes* – Dr Noor ul Haq (2017)
- IPRI Paper 17, *Challenge of Identity and Governance Quaid's Vision: The Way Forward* – Dr Noor ul Haq (2013)
- IPRI Paper 16, *Bharat Mein Mazhabi Janoon Ka Zafrani Rukh* – Asghar Ali Shad (2012)
- IPRI Paper 15, *Genesis and Growth of Naxalite Movement in India* – Asghar Ali Shad [Trns/Mushir Anwar] (2011)
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Website: [www.ipripak.org](http://www.ipripak.org)

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