

Pak-US relations post 9/11: Impact of aid, irritants and regimes in Pakistan (2001-2013)

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ABSTRACT

Pak-US relation is a frictional course ever since and a foreign policy challenge for both states. Pakistan's major dependence on United States had been due to its needs for aid. After the independence Pakistan could play a considerable role in region as far as United States' cold war interests were concerned. The nature of relationship, however, remained very difficult. Trust deficit is a major factor on both sides to determine any future engagement. 9/11 was an event which entirely changed the progression of relationship and level of engagement. This event was the tipping point of rejuvenated bilateral relationship in renewed circumstances. Since then, there have been various factors which affected the bilateral commitment. The aid is the major signal of engagement. The level of and kind of aid determines the propensity of engagement. During War on Terror military aid extended to Pakistan determined US interest with Pakistan and made it frontline ally. Irritants also have their role in eroding the level of cooperation. United States weighed its own foreign policy benefit while engaging with governments in Pakistan. This paper analyses the nature of relationship post 9/11 and impact of few factors. The research is aimed at finding answers to few questions. 9/11 was the event, which brought about a considerable change in relations. US interests dragged it back to the region. Highs and lows of this reinvigorated companionship is determined by aid to fight War on Terror. Differences of interpretation based on varied interests of various events become irritants in conducting smooth diplomacy. Also, it is analyzed that US engagement has been deep rooted with military regime of Musharraf than democratically elected government in 2008.

Keywords: *Focusing Event, Coalition Support Fund, Irritants, Pakistan-US engagement, Regime type*

Introduction

The course of relations between Pakistan and United States has always been rocky and frictional. The element of mistrust dominated the relations, overshadowing the level of engagement. There are various factors which have been affecting the relations and determining the policy discourse on both sides. The history of this engagement dates back to 1951, with Liaquat Ali Khan paying first visit to United States and showing preference over USSR. This was the event which started the relationship by declaration of Pakistan's tilt towards United States. The engagements and disengagements during different phases according to US' will created trust vacuum. 9/11 turned the tide and Pakistan became crucially important for Operation Freedom. At that time Pakistan was under strict sanctions due to

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nuclear explosions and military coup of General Musharraf. After this the level of engagement was decided by Global War on Terror. Pakistan had an important role in this war being an important factor in Afghanistan and strategically important to provide land route and logistic support. But the relations remained fraught due to so many troubling factors.

This paper tries to analyze the impact of aid given to Pakistan, irritants and civil and military regimes in Pakistan. The study endeavors to search answers to few questions.

1. How was 9/11 a tipping point in Pakistan-US engagement?
2. How does aid determine the level of cooperation between these two states?
3. How do irritants affect and shape the foreign policy decision making on both sides?
4. Why and how does regime type in Pakistan affect bilateral relationship?

Literature review:

There are certain events which assume a central position in politics of a state or relations of states. Robert S. Wood in his research paper "Tobacco's Tipping Point: The Master Settlement Agreement as a Focusing event" establishes this relationship. The events which occur suddenly or coincidentally are actually in obscurity. Just one instance makes them prominent. These events are not completely out of control of humans rather they are somehow being crooked by human intervention. Any event becomes very projecting and attracts great focus. This is declared as the tipping point of that long process which is suddenly escalated by that single event. Sometimes that single event completely changes the course of all succeeding events and assumes an historical position (S.Wood, 2006) Shehnaz Akhtar in her research paper "Dynamics of USA-Pakistan relation in post 9/11 period: Hurdles and Future Prospects" analyzes the nature of frictional relationship between USA and Pakistan and the various causes determining such relationship. The period after 9/11 is of considerable importance till date. This era is marked with better engagement between two states owing to cooperation in GWOT. This re-energization of relations is determined by high aid. Enhanced Partnership Act, 2008 is of particular importance providing aid for five years. But there are other factors which hinder this process of agreement. There are various events which dented the relationship. The increased extremism and militancy in Pakistan, killing of Osama Bin Laden, attack on Salala check post, arrest of CIA operative Raymond Davis are plausible irritants in this bilateral relationship (Akhtar, 2012).

The research paper "Re-defining US-Pakistan Relations" by Naeem Ahmad examines the impact of 9/11 in triggering reinvigoration in Pak-US relations. The succeeding War on Terror continued this engagement. The researcher scrutinizes this decade's engagement from three aspects; aid funneled into Pakistan, cooperation between Bush administration and Musharraf government despite American rhetoric in support of democracy in Pakistan, and upheavals in relationship due to various focusing events. USA had been insisting upon Pakistan to take action against various Taliban factions and deny them safe havens within Pakistani territory. This constant demand became the cause of annoyance in Pakistan. Drone strikes in particular added to anger in general public in Pakistan (Ahmad, 2011)

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Murad Ali in his article "US foreign aid to Pakistan and democracy: An Overview" analyzes the relationship of aid given to Pakistan and support for military dictatorships and civilian governments. This paper covers era from 1947 to 2006. The quantitative analysis of the data of aid gives a clear picture far higher aid to military dictatorships than civilian governments. The American support for military dictatorships is vested in its interests in the region. The military dictatorship of Gen. Ayub Khan was important in Cold War. The Zia regime had its importance in Afghan war and Musharraf was key ally in GWOT. The aid is always given with conditionality i-e, benchmark on the part of recipient. The effectiveness of aid can be assured in democracies not autocracies (Ali, 2009). The trust deficit in Pakistan-US relationship was major cause of rocky course. Bruce Riedel takes a strong tone in describing Pakistan-US relations in "Deadly Embrace" in which he asserts that relation with Pakistan is integral but highly harmful. Taking note of all irritants he describes that friction in the relations increases due to Pakistan's double games and not by varied interpretations of mutual interests. As Director Central Intelligence Agency, he had been close to Pakistan's intelligence agencies and he avers the mess in Afghanistan and tribal belt of Pakistan as brewed by Pakistan itself. He takes a biased stance by putting whole blame on Pakistan of security concerns in Pakistan, Afghanistan and South Asia. This piece of writing entirely focuses on loopholes in Pakistan's security system and declares it intentional double game (Riedel, 2011)

Background:

United States considered Pakistan as ill-conceived state immediately after its creation. The American emphasis was on India in the region as they had been supporting Indian National Congress as an important ally before partition. They did not have any sympathy for Muslim League. After partition there was no such consideration for Pakistan as it was for India. The initiative was taken by Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan by visiting United States in May, 1951 and giving a clear message to the world that the Pakistani foreign policy preference had in no case Communist preference. Korean War gave a wonderful opportunity to Pakistan to win an important position. Later, Pakistan was engaged in alliances aimed at security against communist regime of USSR. But after this when Pakistan tried to diversify the policy the relations lost warmth (Burke & Ziring, 1990, pp. 109-111) The Soviet invasion in Afghanistan was a triggering factor which dragged Pakistan into lime light again. Owing to its geostrategic significance the war in Afghanistan depended on Pakistan. United States needed Pakistan to fight a proxy war in Afghanistan. The Muslim Mujahideen from all over the world needed a place to get recruited and trained, which was Pakistan. In 1981, Congress authorized an aid package of \$3 billion for Pakistan and forty F-16 fighter jets. Another aid package of \$4 billion was authorized for period of five years (Akhtar, 2012, p. 206). AS soon as USSR withdrew from Afghanistan United States left the region without considering the aftermath for Pakistan. Pakistan was alone to take care of Afghan refugees and face Afghan civil war. This created a trust deficit again in Pakistan that United States again left Pakistan when it needed.

The era of 1990s do not mark any significance in relations. Although United States had been supporting rhetorically democracy in Pakistan yet the practical engagement is seen with military regimes. The core reason remains the Strategic interests of United States. At the time of 9/11, Pakistan was under sanctions due to nuclear explosions and military coup by General Pervaiz Musharraf. Immediately

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after 9/11 when Pakistan decided to participate in Global War on Terror the relations between USA and Pakistan experienced warmth in relations. USA needed Pakistan for air blanket, logistic support and four air bases (Ahmad, 2011, p. 214). The decade of partnership and cooperation initiated at the cost of democracy in Pakistan.

9/11: A Focusing Event:

The morning of September 11, 2001, changed the face of world. It was such an event with far reaching and huge impacts. Until September 10th, the relations between Pakistan and United States were at lowest ebb. Pakistan was sanctioned for nuclear explosions and also democracy sanctions were imposed due to military takeover of Gen. Musharraf. This event triggered a wave of change worldwide. It was clear that Pakistan has to play its part in succeeding events. US accords and details of consultation which became public later confirmed that it was decided on 11th September that Pakistan, Afghanistan and Arab World would be delivered clear message to take action (Sattar, 2010). Al- Qaeda had been declared the responsible for attacks on US soil.

Pakistan was to decide to take part in American war on Afghanistan as the rationality was thin. This one event made Pakistan frontline ally in War on Terror. The world was moved by this act. UN Security Council passed three resolutions in three days i -e, 1368, 1373 and 1377 (Sohrab & Chaudhary, 2012, p. 4). The world was urged to take action and it was decided to freeze assets of terrorists (Rizvi, 2005, p. 5). The long era of cordial relations between United States and Taliban had ended after their refusal to handover Osama Bin Laden. Pakistan was forced to exert its influence on Taliban. Later, Pakistan had to make choice either to sever relations with Taliban or face the consequences.

The benefits of this new engagement with United States were soon shown to Pakistan. Waiver of sanctions and aid was the first step which ensured the new partnership;

- Brownback-II Amendment authorized US President to waive 'democracy sanctions'
- In 2004, Ackerman amendment waived nuclear sanctions for five years
- US president issued a waiver to allow resumption of assistance and military sales
- US agreed to immediately write off a part of Pakistan's debt and provided \$600 million as economic aid and \$177 million as military and security assistance for 2002
- In 2003, Bush administration decided to give \$ 3 Billion in economic and military assistance (Sattar, 2010)

Pakistan was awarded the status of 'non-NATO ally'. This event suddenly wiped the rift between US and military regime of Pakistan. Bush administration did all which it could to strengthen Musharraf's government in Pakistan. Pakistan was promised that it could buy F-16 fighter jets once in Zia era and now it was being sold after becoming part of War on Terror. Other military equipment was also being sold to Pakistan and it was extended loans on soft terms.

The change of stance was clearly based on emergence of US interests in the region with another decade of engagement in Afghanistan. Pakistan had this grievance that after disintegration of Soviet Union, US immediately left the region without considering implications for Pakistan and regional security. Certainly Pakistan

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faced the blow of unstable political and economic conditions in Afghanistan and its own tribal belt. 9/11 was the event which ushered a new era and determined US immediate engagement in Afghanistan. The only country which could be an ultimate security support and logistical help was Pakistan. This was the focusing event which became catalyst of foreign policy decision making and Pakistan had to decide its status within hours and it did.

Aid: Impact on Pak-US relations:

The relationship and level of engagement between United States and Pakistan have always been assessed by the amount of aid extended to Pakistan. Immediately after 9/11, aid increased many folds and sanctions were raised. United States has been providing aid to Pakistan for boosting economic and military capabilities to fight this war since joining War on Terror. Along with demanding to 'do more' United States provided this support to capacitate Pakistan to fight and diminish terrorist safe havens within Pakistani territory. The 'Strategic interests' were aligned after 9/11. When there was divergence aid was reduced or declined.

The major areas for US assistance were military and economic aid.

Military aid: There are three kinds of military aid received by Pakistan:

- **CoalitionSupportFund:** This is the fund received by 27 nations taking part in War on Terror as reimbursement. Pakistan is among them. This support provides for maintaining forces in tribal areas of Pakistan.
- **Pakistan'sCounterinsurgencyCapabilityFunds:** This fund is dedicated to Pakistan for carrying out activities in counterinsurgency in Pakistan. It was established under Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2009 for the fiscal year 2010.
- **ForeignMilitaryFinancing:** This fund comprises of grants and loans to acquire military hardware. This is dedicated to those states which are important for United States' regional goals. Pakistan acquires obsolete US military hardware through this fund. (SASSI, 2011, pp. 2-3)

Civilian aid: The civilian aid is extended to various sectors including health, education, disaster management, refugees and development of FATA.

- **Economic Support Funds:** Of all the civilian aid given to Pakistan, 80% comprises of ESF. It varies for all years. It was high in 2010 due to floods.
- **International Disaster Assistance and Migration and Refugees Assistance:** It is provided to the effectives of disasters and refugees. This was given to Pakistan for disaster effectives of 2005, 2010 and for displaced people due to War on Terror. It is mostly diverted from ESF.
- **FATA development Plan:** It was initiated in 2003 to help the under privileged people of FATA and carry out development projects there.
- **Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act, 2009 OR Kerry Lugar Bill:** This act was passed in 2009 to triple the civilian aid to Pakistan. It was undertaken to extend \$ 1.5 billion every year from 2010 to 2014.
- **Friends of Democratic Pakistan:** This was held in 2009 in Tokyo to extend \$ 5.28 Billion in next five years (SASSI, 2011, pp. 3-4).

At the time of 9/11 the level of aid was lowest rather Pakistan was under sanctions. The immediate impact was extension of \$ 500 million to Pakistan after it decided to enter into war on terror (Sattar, 2010). Later the level of aid kept on increasing throughout the decade. The loan of \$ 2 billion was waived off (Cohen, 2007).

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Pakistan did not have a well deliberated plan while entering into War on Terror. But it was mindful of benefits it would get in form of aid.

Some of the aid facts are;

- Pakistan was extended \$ 600 million emergency cash transfer in September, 2001
- US assistance to Pakistan was \$ 36.76 million in FY 2000
- During FY 2001 it increased fivefold to \$ 187.7 million
- During FY 2002 the aid increased by eleven fold to \$ 2000 million.
- During 2003 Bush administration promised to \$ 3 billion five year aid package which initiated in 2005
- The aid surged during 2006 to 2010.
- In 2007, first development plan was given for tribal areas.
- In 2010, Pakistan was second among aid recipients from US after Afghanistan. That the aid was \$ 4.3 billion
- In 2012, Pakistan received \$ 2.1 billion in aid and ranked third among aid recipients.
- From 2002 to 2012, about two-third of the aid went to security sector amounting at \$ 15.8 billion
- During 2013, National Defense Authorization Act, 2013, limited the reimbursement to \$ 1.2 billion. The reduction is owing to closure of Ground Lines of Communication from November, 2011 to July 2012. The reimbursement was also stopped for the period of seven months (Epstein & Kronstadt, 2013, pp. 10-11).

Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act, 2009:

EPPA or Kerry Lugar bill was an effort to increase economic assistance to Pakistan reaching out to all sectors. It was strongly supported by Obama administration to enhance partnership with Pakistan in all sectors. It authorized to outspread \$ 1.5 billion in US economic assistance but after the certification of Secretary that Pakistan was taking appropriate measures to curb militancy and terrorism. This aid package could be extended from 2015 to 2019 if Pakistan is advancing towards democracy and stability (Epstein & Kronstadt, 2013, p. 13). The attachment of aid, to certain conditions or 'benchmarks', make it dependent on those events. This reduces the efficiency of the aid and the role played by it in determining the level of relationship.

Irritants in PAK-US relations:

Pak-US relations have been affected by various events hindering the process of cooperation. The impact of these irritants is assessed immediately on aid. In 2011, United States withheld the reimbursement of \$800 million to Pakistan. It was due to so many events becoming the root cause of mutual disagreement and acrimony. The cooperation is dependent upon United States' regional interests. Until the interests are met and United States is able to achieve the goals smoothly through cooperation the relations remain smooth. Diverging interests cause considerable problems in relations.

The perception in US about Pakistan's role in War on Terror is somehow doubtful due to Pakistan army's dominant role over policy. The view is that Pakistan army is not ready to take action against certain militant groups due to their proximity and interests with them. Pakistan has vested interests in supporting and controlling

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such groups (Temothy, September 23rd, 2011). The perception is developed due to Pakistan's lethargy in taking action against certain groups. The main problem arises at Haqqani group. Similarly, United States had been urging to take action in North Waziristan which Pakistan is reluctant to take. The friction is now also on Pakistani inclination to talk to some militant factions. United States has clearly stated that if Pakistan is hesitant to take any action against such sanctuaries US will do itself which exacerbated the rhetoric in Pakistan against US (Rafique, 2012, p. 129).

President Obama's 'pro-India' policy is a perplexing issue for Pakistan. President did not make a stopover in Pakistan in October 2010, while visited India. This issue added to bitterness and trust deficit in Pakistan. Pakistan has always weighed India-US closeness as a threat to its security. The Afghan decision to make overt close links with India is making the minds in Pakistan that it is being encircled by external threat (Kronstadt, 2012, p. 4). The civil nuclear deal between India and US is also a source of disturbance for Pakistan. At the time of signing the deal on October 8th, 2008, President Bush called India and US as 'natural partner'. This has added much to dent the relations (Ahmad, 2011, p. 223) Pakistan has also asked for similar deal so many times but it was refused by making the argument that Pakistan was not that much responsible state and capable of that technology.

United States is particularly concerned about the state of extremism in Pakistani society. The assassination of Governor of Punjab, Salman Taseer, due to his certain remarks on Blasphemy Law in Pakistan was provoking for US. His killing by his own guard on January 4th, 2011 and later mass appreciation of his killer was seen in United States as haunting event. The same year on March, 2nd Federal Minister for Minorities was killed. He was Christian and only non-Muslim minister in federal cabinet. This event was particularly seen as violation of minorities' rights in Pakistan. These proved to be irritants in Pak-US relations. United States urged Pakistan time and again to take care of continuous violation of rights in Pakistan (Kronstadt, 2012, p. 7).

In January, 2011, killing of two Pakistanis in accident caused by an American official of Consulate in Lahore was a much impulsive event. This issue lingered on for long despite of frantic US efforts to seek his freedom by Diplomatic Immunity. But this issue enhanced anti-US sentiment in Pakistan and the release of Raymond Davis by paying blood money further intensified this criticism (Akhtar, 2012, p. 211). The killing of Saleem Shehzad, a journalist, in 2011, again raised hue and cry in USA over deteriorated human rights conditions in Pakistan and insecurity of journalists in particular. This murder was blamed on Pakistan. In a rare statement made by Pakistan's intelligence agency, ISI, declared that it did not have any role in his killing. Admiral Mike Mullen even went public in attributing this killing to Pakistan (Times, July 8th, 2011)

On May, 2nd 2011, killing of Osama Bin Laden in Abbottabad, city of Pakistan near to Federal Capital, was a major blow to Pakistani relations with United States. The highest value target was found residing in Pakistan in vicinity of Federal Capital was enough to bring international criticism to Pakistan and deterioration of its image. It was not clear whether Pakistani security agencies were aware of his presence there. But in both cases it was indicating to the doubtful role of Pakistan. If his presence was not known that it was a question mark on the competency of agencies or either the close collaboration with enemy of United States (Kronstadt, 2012, pp. 8-9).

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Pakistan's anger reached its culmination by the event of Salalaattack. ISAF declared it as the unintentional incident. But Pakistan deemed that it may be intentional act by NATO forces. This was the event which invoked practical action from Pakistan. Pakistan reacted by blocking Ground Lines of Communication, the way for logistic supplies to NATO forces inside Pakistan (Nawaz, 2011, p. 297).

The anger in Pakistan reached the level that apology from United States was urged. This matter lingered on till July, 2012, when Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton said 'sorry'. The irritants affect the relations and project downturn trajectory in bilateral engagements. The series of events occurred in 2011, negatively affected the relations. In case of Pak-US relations the impact is felt by strong rhetoric in United States and resultant reduction in aid. In July 2011, according to Congressional and State Department sources, \$440-\$500 million counterinsurgency reimbursements were withheld due to visa issues with Pakistan for American operatives. It was declared that Pakistan was deliberately impeding the visa process. Pakistan declared that these matters did not have any impact on bilateral relations and Pakistan was able to carry out operations (Kronstadt, 2012, p. 11).

USA's support for military dictators in Pakistan:

Post 9/11 preferences in Pakistan were weighed according to United States' interests in Pakistan and the region. During 1990s, United States did not support democracies in Pakistan when it left the region after Soviet evacuation from Afghanistan. The efforts after 9/11 to reinvigorate the relations with Pakistan were vested in long term US' regional interests in the region despite the fact that Pakistan had military dictator. At that time Pakistan was under 'democracy sanctions' (Sattar, 2010). The later decade was marked by remarkable cooperation.

The energy of the relations could be assessed from the aid given to military governments in Pakistan. During the military rules the aid extended to Pakistan stands at \$ 382.9 million. But the aid given to civilian governments since independence is \$ 178.9 million (Ali, 2009, p. 252). This figure plausibly shows the tilt of United States in Pakistan towards military governments. This partnership is clearly based on goods this engagement brought to United States. The bilateral engagement between Bush administration and Musharraf government had gains for both. Musharraf government needed the support to establish his government. Immediately after 9/11 the support in Pakistan was not for internal stability in Pakistan but for counterterrorism and counterinsurgency goals. Sanctions were waived and Pakistan was promised \$ 2 billion debt relief (Cohen, 2007, p. 44)

Later, the civilian government was assured similar support through aid extension in form of Kerry Lugar Bill. But this era of partnership faced serious differences due to many irritants. These events spoiled the relationship and level of trust reduced. These factors added to create 'trust deficit'. Now when United States is planning to withdraw from Afghanistan again, the preferences are changing again. Before leaving, United States has concluded that now it is not threatened by Al-Qaeda anymore from Afghanistan. The upcoming era may be of divergence of interests again and may add to 'trust deficit'.

The level of bilateral understanding seems to be higher with Musharraf regime. The irritants were managed somehow smoothly during his rule. History shows that

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military regimes were more favored by US governments in Pakistan. Coincidentally, the US interests tipped to very high point in the region with takeover of military regimes in Pakistan. The blowback of decision to join US alliance to fight War on Terror could be better absorbed by military regime in absence of parliament instead of democratically elected government. And it actually did. Democracy had been weak in Pakistan and the lack of political consensus on foreign policy decisions regarding US in Pakistan hinders the way to smooth engagement with it during democratically elected governments in Pakistan.

Conclusion:

Pak-US relations are affected by aid, irritants and the forms of government in Pakistan. The priority on part of United States is its regional interests. Pakistan remained flawed in advocating its national interests while bargaining with United States. During every phase of high ebb of engagement Pakistan failed to tout its long term interests. The engagement remained confined to phased and low level of cooperation marked by blame game from US. The aid played a weighty role in determining relationship. But still Pakistan believed the aid extended to it did not match the level of economic loss it bore due to War on Terror. Additionally there is huge deficiency of recognition of role it played to make world a safer place. Pakistan's dependence on aid was the key factor behind this commitment. The aid was the major attraction for Pakistan owing to its dependency. The trust deficit between both states decreased due to many events which created gulf between both states. The events derailing bilateral engagement always emerged out of inconsistency of interpretations due to varied national interests. US declined to acknowledge Pakistan's compulsions and blamed it for playing double games. At some instances, Pakistan's national integrity was hurt but US refused to take note of it. US military establishment deliberates over Pakistan from its Central Command and entirely eyes it from its own prism reflecting its own interests. This prism breaks the regional security complex of which Pakistan is most important actor. Indo-US proximity plausibly disturbs the regional balance of power as Pakistan's foreign policy is determined majorly by Indian threat. US negation of giving Pakistan equal status as to India and declining it complete right to maintain its security on equal footings to balance regional security matrix becomes a thorn in relations.

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