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## UNITED STATES-PAKISTAN RELATIONS FROM 9/11-to PRESENT: AN ANALYSIS

Amit Kumar Mohanty



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### ABSTRACT :

**T**he United States and Pakistan have had an unsteady and more often than not, difficult relationship. It writes that since Pakistan gained independence in 1947. Its relationship with the United States "careened intimate partnership and enormous friction reflecting the ups and downs of global and geopolitics and disparate national interest" (Cox 2001: 11).

**KEYWORDS :** United States and Pakistan , downs of global and geopolitics .

### INTRODUCTION:

The rollercoaster relationship between the United States and Pakistan have been strongly influenced by the geopolitical environment (Wright 2011). The two became allies in 1954. After India chose a neutralist path, Pakistan became an attractive partner to the United States in its quest to contain Soviet expansionism in the Middle East. In May 1954, Pakistan and the United States signed a mutual defence assistance treaty, the first bilateral security pact between the two countries. In the mid-1950s, Pakistan leaned on the United States for greater assistance given their close relationship. Although U.S. economic and military assistance was slow to arrive, by 1957 Pakistan was receiving significant amounts of military equipment and training and substantial aid (Cox 2001). The Eisenhower administration succeeded in achieving closer ties in Pakistan, in part due to this provision of substantial aid. However, this unraveled in the years to follow.

Relations between the two countries first fractured during the Kennedy and Johnson presidencies. The U.S. sided (diplomatically) with India during the Sino-Indian border war of 1962, and Pakistan, an enemy of India and a friend of China, was sidelined. Pakistan was deeply against the U.S. provision of military aid to India. In a letter to President Johnson, Pakistan military president General Ayub Khan, argued "Aid [to India] imperils the security of Pakistan, your ally. This is no way of preventing the inroads of communism into the subcontinent if this is the United States' objective on the contrary, it would facilitate them" (Haqqani 2013; 108). In 1965, the Indo-Pakistan war broke out and Johnson largely gave up on Pakistan. The United States inability to pressure Pakistan and India not to go to war (in Kashmir in 1965) coincided with the peak of the Vietnam War. Its preoccupation in Vietnam saw the U.S. lose interest in the subcontinent. Cox argues that by the time Johnson left office, the alliance was over in all but name. Washington continued to provide substantial economic assistance, but because of its diminished interest in the subcontinent, it severely curtailed military aid.

The United States' rapprochement with China opened the door for a closer relationship with Pakistan, but had little real impact. Nixon remarks to military President, General Yahya Khan, in October 1970 highlight the improvement in the rhetoric around the relationship between the two countries: "Nobody has occupied the White

House who is friendlier to Pakistan than me". Nonetheless, Nixon continued the previous administration's policy on foreign assistance: the United States remained Pakistan's largest source of economic aid, but provided no security assistance. During this period, the United States' key focus in Asia was "disentangling itself from Vietnam without appearing to lose the war"

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 was a turning point in the U.S.-Pakistan relationship. Suddenly, the U.S. needed Pakistan in a January 1980 speech on Afghanistan; President Carter said "We will provide military equipment, food, and other assistance to help Pakistan defend its independence and national security against the seriously increased from the north". Pakistan's President General Zia ul-Haq, who took power in a 1977 military coup, rejected the United States' initial assistance offer of \$400 million in aid as "peanuts" and said "Pakistan will not buy its security for \$400 million. This will buy greater animosity from the Soviet Union which is now more influential in this region than the United States". Carter's successor, Ronald Reagan, upped the aid package to around U.S.\$300 billion "to give Pakistan confidence in our commitment to its security and provide us reciprocal benefits in terms of our regional interest" describes this as "Washington trading military and economic aid for Pakistan's cooperation in opposing the Soviet presence in Afghanistan" and notes that negotiations were protracted and difficult, but landed on a U.S.\$3.2 billion multi-year commitment equally divided between economic and military assistance. Separately, the Reagan administration also provided U.S.\$3 billion to Afghan jihadist. Wright (2011) points out these funds to the Afghan jihadist went through the sticky hands of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Directorate; the spy branch of the Pakistani army... the ISI became so glutted with power and money that it formed a state within a state.

In February 1989, the Soviet withdrew from Afghanistan, and by November 1989 the Berlin Wall had fallen. Meanwhile, there was growing concern about Pakistan's development of a nuclear weapon. The Presser amendment, passed in 1985, than U.S. economic and military assistance unless the U.S. president certify on an annual basis that Pakistan did not possess a nuclear device. In 1990, Once Pakistan was no longer needed in relation in Afghanistan, the Bush administration cut off military aid on the grounds that Pakistan had begun to pursue a nuclear weapons program. U.S. \$563 million in economic and military assistance allocated for 1991 was frozen. Aid fell further in 1998 following Pakistan's testing of a nuclear weapon. Pakistan was judged to have become not only a nuclear power but also a source of regional instability. Under the Clinton administration, relations remained cool given Pakistan's refusal to dismantle its nuclear weapons program. Though President Clinton visited Pakistan during his presidency, his visit was short only five hours. Many Pakistanis were bitter that President Clinton spent five days in India during this visit to South Asia. Even today this is a sore point some of the Pakistani elite raising Clinton's short visit to Pakistan and long visit to India.

9/11 was even more of a game-changer for U.S.-Pakistan relations than the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan had been Pakistan-U.S. transformed, almost overnight President Pervez Musharraf recounts in his 2008 memoir *In the Line of Fire*, and his engagement with the United States in the aftermath of 9/11. In his "candid" phone call with Secretary of State Colin Powell, Musharraf was told: "You are either with us or against us". Musharraf also relates a discussion with his ISI Director General who was in Washington at time of the 9/11 attacks: He told me over the phone about his meeting with the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage in what has to be the most undiplomatic statement ever made, Armitage added to what Colin Powell had said to me and told the Director General not only that we had to decide whether we were with America or with the terrorists, that if we chose the terrorists, then we should be prepared to be bombed back to Stone Age. This was a shockingly barefaced threat, but it was obvious that the United States had decided to hit back, and hit back hard.

In what was a difficult strategic decision, Pakistan chose to side with the United States former Pakistani Ambassador to the United States, Hussain Haqqani provides an overview of the considerable debate within the Pakistani military about the extent to which Pakistan should support U.S. Haqqani outlines Musharraf's key reasons for working with the American: "He alluded to the U.S. threat and suggested India would benefit if Pakistan did not cooperate with the Americans and also implied that he would make a sacrifice on the Afghan front to ensure the Kashmir front could remain alive".

However, while Pakistan moved to side with the United States, it was a decision made, and implemented, reluctantly. Haqqani recounts that Inter-Services agency was not willing to give up on its "decades-long investment in Afghanistan" whatever Musharraf had agreed to. Moreover, while the U.S. wanted to move against al-Qaeda

and the Taliban, and had sided with the Taliban's opponents, the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan, and Pakistan believed that America's strategic objectives would "best be accomplished by coercing the Taliban to do it [go after al-Qaeda] themselves. If the Taliban are eliminated [Pakistan believed], Afghanistan will revert warlordism". Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, Pakistan was not prepared to abandon the Taliban, its traditional ally, in Afghanistan. Pakistan worried that without the Taliban, Afghanistan would fall under Indian influence. Accordingly, Pakistan continued to pursue its policy of "strategic depth" in Afghanistan. Thus Pakistan began a game of mixed support for U.S. objectives in Afghanistan, something the U.S. came to find very frustrating. For example, Haqqani explains that not long after 9/11: Musharraf replaced Lieutenant General Mamud Ahmed [ISI chief at the time of the 9/11 attacks] with Lieutenant General Ehsan-ul-Haq so as to convince Americans that the ISI would not impede their operations in Afghanistan." Yet, Haqqani continues, "As the United States commenced bombing Afghanistan, hundreds of Pakistani military adviser 'soperatives assisting the Taliban's were evacuated."

While George W. Bush increasingly embraced nation-building in relation to Iraq and Afghanistan, Rashid (2008) argues this change of heart never really applied to the United States' engagement with Pakistan, despite the significant uptick in foreign aid.

When President Obama came to power, was reluctant to use nation-building rhetoric. This was for political reasons, particularly given waning public support for the war in Afghanistan and the mounting cost of U.S. aid being provided to rebuild it. However, it would be a mistake to read into this deliberate choice of language a lack of enthusiasm for nation-building as an activity.

To the contrary, President Obama sought to rebalance the relationship with Pakistan away from one focused on security to one that included a greater focus on the economy, trade and enhancing people-to-people links. In 2009, President Obama started increasing economic aid and also appointed a Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, a strong supporter of nation-building to broker smoother trilateral relations. Holbrooke's appointment kicked off a raft of other countries following suit in appointing a Special Representative, including the European Union, Japan and Australia. Like Obama, Holbrooke also saw the benefit in normalizing relations with Pakistan through greater economic engagement.

Obama also made several statements that made clear his commitment to nation-building even without using the term. In his 2009 speech on Afghanistan and Pakistan, Obama stated that to avoid the mistakes of the past, we must clear that our relationship with Pakistan is grounded in support for Pakistan's democratic institutions and the Pakistani people. And to demonstrate through deeds as well as words a commitment that is enduring, we must stand for lasting opportunity. A campaign against extremism will not succeed with bullets and bombs alone. Al-Qaeda offers the people of Pakistan nothing but destruction. We stand for something different. So today I am calling upon Congress bipartisan bill co-sponsored by John Kerry and Richard Lugar that authorizes \$1.5 billion in direct support to the Pakistani people every year over the next five years resources that will build schools and roads and hospitals, and strengthen Pakistan's democracy.

President Obama also cognizant of the risk of Afghanistan or Pakistan becoming a failed state. In the same speech quoted above Obama talked about the importance of capacity building and bolstering Pakistan's democracy key tenets of any nation building policy: "We are committed to a partnership with Pakistan that is built on a foundation of mutual interest, mutual respect, and mutual trust. We will strengthen Pakistan's capacity to target those groups that threaten our countries and provide substantial resources to support Pakistan's democracy and development. We are the largest international supporter for those Pakistanis displaced by the fighting... The Pakistani people must know America will remain a strong supporter of Pakistan's security and prosperity long after the guns have fallen silent."

At the same time, there were still clear realist objectives. This is from Obama's same speech on Obama's Afghanistan and Pakistan: The American people must understand that this is a down payment of our own future because the security of America and Pakistan is shared. Pakistan's government must be a stronger partner in destroying these safe havens, and we must isolate al-Qaeda from the Pakistani people. And these steps in Pakistan are also indispensable to our efforts in Afghanistan, which will see no end to violence if insurgents move freely back and forth across the border."

Other senior officials have also articulated the mix of objectives the U.S. had in relation in Pakistan. In her memoir covering her time as Secretary of State, Hillary expresses clearly the mix of nation-building and realist the

objectives the U.S. pursued in Pakistan over this period, as well as the difficulties faced as their country's problems worsened, Many Pakistani directed their anger at the United States, fueled by rambunctious media that trafficked in wild conspiracy theories. They blamed us for stirring up trouble with the Taliban, exploiting Pakistan for our own strategic ends, and showing favoritism towards their traditional rival, India. And those were the most rational claims. In some polls, approval of America fell below 10 percent, despite the billions of dollars in aid that we had contributed over the years. In fact, a massive new assistance package passed by Congress [the KLB aid package, discussed in the next section] became a lightning rod for criticism in Pakistan because it was seen as having too many strings attached. It was maddening all the public anger made it harder for the Pakistani government to cooperate with us in counter-terrorism operations and easier for the extremists to find shelter and recruits. I saw my job as pushing Pakistan to be more committed and cooperative in the fight against terrorists and helping its government to strengthen democracy and deliver economic and social reforms that offered citizens a viable alternative to radicalism. I had to pressure and criticize without losing Pakistan's help in the struggle that was critical to both of our futures.

Overall, it is clear that the United States especially under the Obama administration. Both wanted Pakistani cooperation in relation to Afghanistan and to countering global terrorism (realist objective) and wanted to strengthen Pakistan economy and democracy (nation-building objectives). How the U.S. government in practice balanced these two goals is a key focus of this paper.

## CONCLUSION

In the decade post 9/11, the U.S.-Pakistan relationship had its tensions and ups and downs, but remained relatively stable. However, in 2011, a large increase in aid in preceding years notwithstanding ruptured between the two sides as a result of a number of events including the U.S. raid that killed Osama bin Laden and the NATO airstrike that accidentally killed 24 Pakistani soldiers. In retaliation for the latter, Pakistan closed NATO supply routes for months. In response, the U.S. withheld aid until the supply lines were eventually reopened. Parallel Gallup poles in the United States and Pakistan following the operation that killed bin Laden demonstrated a wide gap in public opinion between the U.S. and Pakistan on the operation. Two-thirds of Pakistanis condemned the United States' military action, while in the United States there was near universal approval.

It is difficult to predict if the roller –coaster of U.S.-Pakistan relations will continue in Trump administration, but history suggests that it will.

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