



RESEARCH PAPER**US-Pakistan Relations during 21st Century: An Expository Analysis**

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ABSTRACT

The Pakistan-US relationship has undergone significant changes over the years chiefly influenced by mutual strategic interests of both countries and global compulsions. It goes without saying that, albeit a brief interval of democratic interactions and congressional sanctions witnessed during 1990s, both partners jointly remained involved in sensitive operations and activities right from the start of the Cold War which later expanded to War against Terrorism of 21st century. Afterwards, the Indian penetration into Afghan soil under the US patronage established that the US-Pakistan alliance had been eclipsed by a lack of trust sometimes even leading to the US accusation of following double standards by the decision-makers in Pakistan. Accordingly, scholars believe that the US-Pakistan collaboration primarily in the aftermath of 9/11 incident has been a topic of great concern to dig out and understand the actual course of contemporary geostrategic developments taking place in this highly volatile region. With this background, the instant study examines the US-Pakistan relations in the backdrop of War against Terrorism while particularly focusing upon some critical developments of the second decade of 21st century including Abbottabad Operation of 2011, Raymond Davis Case, Salala Incident and the matter of Drone strikes within the territorial limits of the sovereign state of Pakistan. It finds that despite investing huge sums, the long-term regional stability could not be materialized by the US administration because of ignoring the need for taking some deep-rooted nation-building measures in Afghanistan whereas the hasty US withdrawal from Afghanistan highlighted the need for Pakistan to reevaluate its strategy as political instability, economic challenges, and terrorism still continue to hit Pakistan harder than any of the other regional country.

KEYWORDS US-Pakistan Relations, Abbottabad Operation, Raymond Davis, Trust-deficit

Introduction

Viewed in the Cold War perspective, Pakistan lost some of its strategic significance to the United States after the withdrawal of Soviet Union from Afghanistan in 1989. Since the dynamics of the Cold War were primarily eclipsed by worries and concerns about nuclear non-proliferation, it was quite natural that, under the Pressler Amendment passed by the US Congress in 1985, the US President had to certify every year that Pakistan did not possess any nuclear explosive device in order to continue providing military and economic assistance to Pakistan. As a consequence of the said Amendment, sanctions were imposed over Pakistan in 1990 after President George H.W. Bush was unable to certify that Pakistan was free of nuclear weapons. Pakistan was severely impacted by these sanctions, which stopped all military and most of the economic aid, particularly provided to support and strengthen the country's defense and development sectors Muzaffar & Khan, 2016). The US-Pakistan relations were strained

as a result of the sanctions because Pakistan felt that its former ally had left it after fulfilling its strategic objectives. Pakistan's defense capabilities suffered greatly from the suspension of military aid, as they were largely dependent on U.S. assistance (Muzaffar, et al., 2016; Geraint, 2008).

Afterwards, India became the first nuclear-armed state when it conducted nuclear tests in May 1998. This had a big impact on South Asia's regional security landscape. In retaliation, Pakistan tested its own nuclear weapons on May 28, 1998, in the Chagai Hills of Balochistan province with the intention of keeping India under a state of strategic equilibrium. Fearing a nuclear arms race in the region, the international community, chiefly led by the United States, denounced these tests. Consequently, Pakistan came under further U.S. sanctions owing to the Glenn Amendment, which stopped military sales, financial assistance, and loans from international organizations to Pakistan which, thus, was forced to look for new allies as a result of these sanctions since the political and economic problems of Pakistan were turning worse. In the latter part of the 1990s, the United States started to lift certain sanctions due to Pakistan's collaboration on counterterrorism and democratic governance matters. But it was only after 9/11, when the two nations' strategic partnership was reinterpreted, the relations could get fully normalized (Krepon, 2008).

Literature Review

Akhtar & Holland (2013) explored the post 9/11 Pakistan-USA relations while emphasizing how important this relationship is to both nations. The writers recognized their cooperation alongside multiple domains most notably the war on terror. The difficulties and hurdles that have hampered the relationship have also been highlighted in this study including mistrust, domestic terrorism in Pakistan, and particular events like the Raymond Davis case and Osama bin Laden's killing (Nawab, et al., 2021).

Fair (2016) reviewed the complicated and frequently turbulent nature of relationship that developed between Pakistan and the United States after ten years of the War on Terror. The impact of drone strikes, the Abbottabad raid that resulted in Osama bin Laden's death, and changes in US foreign policy priorities were a few of the significant occasions and turning points that the author examined during that time span. The author also examined the problems with development and governance, the emergence of extremist organizations, and the role of the military establishment with respect to the political landscape of Pakistan. He enlisted the challenges pertaining to managing the US geopolitical interests in South Asia by placing US-Pakistan relations within the larger regional and global framework.

Khan (2017) thoroughly analyzed the historical background and current dynamics of the US-Pakistan relationship, especially during the first presidential term of Trump. His study explored the divergent interests and viewpoints of the two nations regarding geopolitics of South Asian region, emphasizing Pakistan's worries about Indian sway in Afghanistan, its security concerns over US actions, and its desire for regional strategic parity. On the other hand, the study also presented the American perspective, highlighting the key features of US strategic partnership with India and US expectations for Pakistan's involvement in the fight against terrorism.

Rabbi (2018) discussed the events of 9/11 and found that the US-Pakistan relationship flourished in the fight against terrorism particularly in the first decade of the twenty-first century. In 2011 and 2012, there was a crisis in the relations between these

two countries due to various bilateral issues. When Nawaz Sharif formed his government, relations were at their lowest point. Both sides put forth less effort to restore their relationships to normalcy. He believed that the withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan, the resurgence of Pakistan-China relations, an increase in US tilt policy, the establishment of a strategic alliance with India, etc. were the primary concerns that molded Pakistan-US relations under Nawaz Sharif's leadership.

Pakistan-US Relations in the Aftermath of 9/11

The Americans launched attacks over Afghanistan in response to the 9/11 attacks in several states, hoping to end violence and militancy. The US and Pakistan have become important strategic allies in the fight against terrorism. In an effort to hand over Osama bin Laden to US authorities, Pakistan first tried to negotiate with top-level Taliban and Al-Qaeda figures in Afghanistan. However, after the failure of negotiations, it allowed the US military to use its armed bases to attack Taliban and Al Qaeda members in Afghanistan. Musharraf claimed that if Pakistan did not join the US fight against the Taliban and Al Qaeda, then the US would become hostile to Pakistan as well.

In 2001, the U.S. Government lifted all the sanctions that had previously been placed on Pakistan under the Glenn and Pressler amendments. The US needed Pakistan's help because of its geostrategic location and its connections to important regional players like Afghanistan, China, Iran and India. Pakistan provided the US information regarding Taliban and Al Qaeda leadership's air travel to the United States, information inputs to regulate and improve NATO measures in addition to logistic support. Furthermore, Pakistan has given the US many of the necessary forms of assistance, including airborne access to its land and naval bases and pressing local authorities to assist the Taliban and its allies in ending all political and logistical support for Al-Qaeda and the Taliban (PANDEY, 2018).

Designation of a Non-NATO Ally

In recognition of Pakistan's counterterrorism efforts, the US formally waived \$1 billion in loans to Pakistan in 2003. President George W. Bush granted Pakistan access to advances, plans, and armament facilities in 2004 when he declared Pakistan a non-NATO ally of US. But American military forces launched numerous drone attacks and strikes on Pakistan's northwest region since 2004. The targets of these attacks were al-Qaeda sympathizers and Pakistani Taliban; however, Pakistan strongly resisted and condemned the attacks because many civilians were killed in these drone strikes. Pakistan's designation as a non-NATO ally stemmed primarily from the US desire to advance its regional objectives. During that period, supply routes for equipment, food, and strategic weapons were necessary for NATO forces fighting in Afghanistan. Pakistan was granted permission to purchase strategic weaponry and equipment after the US declared it an ally outside of NATO (Javaid, 2014).

As noted earlier, in 2001, Pakistan joined the US in the War on Terror soon after the September 11 attacks. The United States lifted sanctions imposed on Pakistan due to its nuclear tests and started giving the country significant military and financial support to its counterterrorism efforts, realizing Pakistan's strategic importance in the region. An important turning point in bilateral relations was reached in 2004 when the United States named Pakistan a major non-NATO ally. With the aim of formalizing and bolstering military cooperation between the two nations, this designation reflected Pakistan's increasing significance in U.S. strategic calculations in the aftermath of 9/11. But by 2007,

tensions between the United States and Pakistan started to emerge. The United States became more and more irate with Pakistan for what it saw as inadequate efforts to counter the terrorists from the Taliban and Al-Qaeda who were operating from inside the borders of Pakistan. The effectiveness of Pakistan's counterterrorism measures was questioned, and there were claims that certain members of the country's intelligence and military services were still in contact with extremist organizations. These developments further strained ties between the two allies. Pakistan's political unrest and problems with governance made these tensions worse (Gunaratna, 2005).

US Assistance in the Event of Natural Catastrophe

A significant calamity struck the people of northern Pakistan in 2005. Numerous people lost their lives and suffered injuries in the earthquake. Furthermore, a vast majority of people lost their homes, and the area's infrastructure has been completely devastated. At that time, the United Nations and the US provided the necessary support to deal with the emergency. Pakistanis applauded American efforts in the country's north. In an effort to aid Pakistan during this terrible time, the US sent Chinook helicopters to the country to rescue those in need. In order to comply with the requirements and reform Pakistan's northern regions, the US contributed \$500 million (Andrabi, 2010).

Distrust and the American Bias towards India

When a report was published in 2007 claiming that Pakistan was using US assistance funds for its war preparation to strengthen its defense capabilities against India, relations between US and Pakistan deteriorated once again. Since the US officials had started accusing Pakistan of providing the Afghan Taliban the place to hide in Pakistan, there emerged misplaced confidence across both sides. However, Pakistani officials accused America of not taking sufficient steps to maintain security in East Afghanistan. Eleven Pakistani soldiers and eight Taliban members were slain in an airstrike by US forces in June 2008. High-ranking Pakistani officials reacted forcefully to the shocking death of eleven troops, shattering the foundation of popular belief and support. Furthermore, President Pervaiz Musharraf stated in 2009 that the defense mechanism against their adversary, India, was strengthened and improved with the help of US aid totaling billions of dollars during the war on terror.

Kerry Lugar Bill

The US lawmakers passed the well-known Kerry Lugar bill in October 2009. The acceptance of the bill, which would have to provide \$7.5 billion in non-military aid, was contingent upon certain factors including improvement of mistrust by the Pakistani army and government. America claimed that Pakistan's government had improved its defense capabilities against India with the help of funds provided in the name of assistance. Consequently, the 2010 operation was carried out by the US and Pakistani armies to arrest Mullah Abdul Ghani, a well-known Taliban leader from Pakistan's tribal region. The US praised Pakistan after success of the operation (Bakht, 2023).

Oscillating Relations and Strategic Divergence (2011-2012)

In 2011, Osama bin Laden was killed by U.S. Navy SEALs during a raid in Abbottabad, Pakistan. The event caused a significant diplomatic crisis and raised concerns about Pakistan's possible role in providing shelter to terrorists (Peter, 2014). Furthermore, in 2012, because of continuous disagreements over drone strikes, the

blocking of NATO supply routes into Afghanistan, and instances of cross-border conflicts, relations turned more tense.

The Raymond Davis Case

The US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) agent Raymond Davis killed two Pakistani nationals in Lahore at the start of 2011. He accused the two of coming to rob him. He was in police custody because of the said killings. The United States government continued to insist that Raymond be released right away, however, he was later transferred to the United States after the settlement with the complainants and a state-to-state agreement between the United States and Pakistan. Raymond Davis was set free, but society generally disapproved of the decisions made by the government (Strasser, 2014).

Operation Abbottabad and the Death of Osama Bin Laden

As mentioned above, Osama Bin Laden was killed in Abbottabad, Pakistan, in May 2011 by US Navy SEALs, specifically U.S. Navy Seal Team Six. According to US President Barack Obama, Pakistan's military and civil authorities were not informed about the Abbottabad operation, nevertheless, some quarters believed that it was a cooperative effort supported by the Pakistani Intelligence Agency (ISI). The Shakeel Afridi case held importance for shaping Pakistan's diplomatic ties with the United States. He was a physician who, by means of a fictitious and fraudulent hepatitis vaccination program, aided and abetted the CIA of United States to locate Osama. Dr. Shakeel Afridi was conducting his phony and counterfeit hepatitis vaccination program in Abbottabad, Pakistan. He had been employed by the CIA as a spy in Pakistan. He was helpful and had a major part in the Abbottabad raid. He fled to the Torkham border from where he was captured by Pakistani troops and sentenced to 33 years in prison for his crimes. The CIA, too, confirmed Afridi's involvement in the Osama episode of May 2011. However, Senator Henry Clinton stated that Pakistan had no grounds for detaining Shakil Afridi. The American Senator withdrew Pakistan's \$33 million in aid as a result. However, despite America's probable agreement Pakistan refused to exchange Aafia Siddiqui, a detainee in America, with Shakeel Afridi.

Pakistan-US Relations (2013-2017)

Pakistan-US relations saw both collaboration and conflict between 2013 and 2017. Although there was an attempt to strengthen relations following Nawaz Sharif's election as Prime Minister of Pakistan in 2013, tensions remained as a result of ongoing US drone strikes in Pakistan's tribal areas. Significant regional ramifications resulted from Pakistan's military operation Zarb-e-Azb against militants and the partial withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan in 2014. In 2015, high-level strategic talks were held with the goal of improving collaboration but the bilateral dynamics were again adversely affected by the opening of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) (Muzaffar, et. al., 2018). Tensions increased in 2016 after an American drone strike killed Afghan Taliban leader Mullah Mansour, even though the US continued to provide military and financial support to Pakistan. Their relationship was so toxic and complicated at the time that it inspired Trump's 2017 South Asia strategy, a hardline approach to Pakistan accusing them of aiding terrorism. As a result of this, the US temporarily withheld \$255 million in military assistance. From 2013 to 2017 the Pakistan-US relations had become very complicated due to various important events. While Washington's frequent drone

strikes caused civilian deaths inside Pakistan, for example in the tribal areas, which had added to mutual tensions.

Several claims emerged following his capture and killing in Abbottabad, that Osama bin Laden was protected by Pakistan. Critics cited Pakistan's double standards in relation to the 2008 Mumbai attacks and the close proximity of his compound to the Pakistan Military Academy. Nonetheless, as of 2019, suspicions were raised by the location of bin Laden's compound even though there was no concrete proof showing Pakistanis were aware of his presence in Abbottabad. According to documents taken from the compound, bin Laden stayed away from Pakistani authorities out of concern that they would insist him for assisting in the capture of other terrorists. Some speculated that corrupt Pakistani officials might have been enticed by the \$25 million reward for bin Laden. In 2012, Dr. Shakil Afridi received a 33-year prison sentence for treason after aiding the United States by organizing a fictitious vaccination campaign to find bin Laden. As a result, the US Congress decided to stop providing \$33 million in aid to Pakistan, which negatively impacted mutual confidence and collaboration (Reuters, 2012).

The US Visit of Nawaz Sharif (October 2013)

The raid in 2011 that resulted in Osama bin Laden's death in Abbottabad, continuous drone strikes by the United States in Pakistan's tribal areas, and mistrust between the two countries regarding counterterrorism initiatives were among the factors that had soured relations between Pakistan and the United States (Rabbi, 2019). Following the victory of his party, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), in the general elections, Nawaz Sharif was appointed prime minister in June 2013. His administration prioritized resolving Pakistan's security issues, energy shortages, and economic difficulties. A major development in Pakistan-U.S. relations was Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's October 2013 visit to Washington, D.C., which was intended to resolve a number of issues and reestablish the bilateral relationship amid underlying tensions (Rabbi, 2018).

In the face of mutual mistrust and intricate geopolitical challenges, Pakistan and the United States sought to mend their strained bilateral relations during Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's October 2013 visit to Washington, D.C. In order to continue receiving military and economic support that was essential to its development and counterterrorism efforts, Pakistan tried to rebuild trust. Conversely, the United States underscored the significance of Pakistan's steadfast collaboration in counterterrorism, specifically in terms of targeting factions such as the Haqqani network, and its endorsement of the Afghan peace initiative. By securing US investment in Pakistan's energy projects and infrastructure to address its energy crisis, Sharif sought to deepen mutual economic ties. Key topics of discussion included the effects of the anticipated withdrawal of American forces from Afghanistan and Pakistan's critical role in mediating a peaceful transition and peace negotiations with the Taliban. The purpose of the visit was to avoid stepping on any landmines and strategically deal with strong controversial issues such as US drone strikes; eliminating terrorist safe heavens thus laying the solid base for future positive & cooperative bi-lateral relations (Umar, 2017).

Zarb-E-Azb Operation (June 2014)

The Pakistani military launched 'Operation Zarb-e-Azb' - its largest, most comprehensive campaign against militant strongholds in North Waziristan- in June 2014.

The region had turned into a safe haven for many terror groups before, such as al-Qaeda, the Haqqani network and Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). The United States and other International Partners helped to conduct the operation which happened to be a big step by Pakistan towards War Against Terror (Naveed, 2019).

The purpose of Operation Zarb-e-Azb was to destroy the infrastructure of militant groups, stop their activity and root out their presence from North Waziristan. This entailed identifying Syrian hideouts, weapons depots and training camps. It was expected that this mission would consist of intelligence-based operations followed by airstrikes and ground assaults. For this purpose, a massive number of troops were sent by the Pakistani military including special forces soldiers to launch crackdowns on militants and secure key locations (Naveed, 2019).

The Operation Zarb-e-Azb received US support as a vital step in the fight against terrorism in the area. Targeting militant sanctuaries that threatened Afghanistan, Pakistan, and international security as a whole was important, as acknowledged by the US. It is worth-noting that although the US applauded the operation but continued to express concerns regarding limited reach of Pakistan's counterterrorism efforts. With regard to the Haqqani network, which was considered to pose a serious threat to American and NATO forces in Afghanistan, the U.S. specifically urged Pakistan to broaden its military operations to include all terrorist organizations without exception (Gunaratna, 2005).

A Time for Reconciliation

The two nations started working together more closely after years of tense relations between the governments. This was especially true after US drones struck Mullah Fazlullah, the most wanted militant in Pakistan, on November 24, 2014. Later, in November 2014, the US used drones to eliminate a number of Pakistan's most wanted militants who were holed up in a remote area near the Afghan border. According to Lt. Gen. Joseph Anderson, the Zarb-e-Azb operation in Pakistan against militants in North Waziristan also "fractured" the Haqqani Network, which the US had long accused of having a safe harbor in Pakistan. Subsequently, a senior Taliban commander named Latif Mehsud was apprehended by the United States and sent to Pakistan, where his arrest was being sought. Pakistan also eliminated Adnan el Shukrijumah, a senior Al-Qaeda figure who the US had been pursuing for a long time. The United States, which had long sought to improve ties between the two nations, welcomed the improvement in ties as well as the increased security cooperation between Afghanistan and Pakistan (Yousaf, 2017).

As per the Congressional Research Service's internal report dated May 7, 2015, Pakistan had fully funded the acquisition of 18 F-16C/D Fighting Falcon Block 52 combat aircraft valued at US\$1.43 billion, using domestic funds. 500 AMRAAM air-to-air missiles, 1,450 2,000-pound bombs, 500 JDAM Tail Kits for gravity bombs, and 1,600 Enhanced Paveway laser-guided kits were among the additional F-16 armaments. Pakistan had paid US\$629 million for all of this. Additionally, Pakistan had paid US\$298 million for 500 sidewinder air-to-air missiles (US\$95 million), seven Phalanx Close-In Weapons System naval guns (US\$80 million), and 100 harpoon anti-ship missiles. Pakistan received 26 Bell 412EP utility helicopters, along with associated parts and maintenance, valued at US\$235 million, under Coalition Support Funds (in the Pentagon budget) (Ahmad, 2017).

On February 11, 2016, the US government announced a proposal for US\$860 million in aid for Pakistan in the 2016–17 fiscal year. This amount included funds for counterinsurgency and \$265 million for military hardware.

Aid and Assistance (2015)

In 2015, the United States persisted in giving Pakistan substantial financial and military support in order to bolster its efforts to combat terrorism and advance its development agenda. The United States' larger strategy to improve regional security and stability, especially in South Asia, included this assistance. But the availability and distribution of this assistance were directly correlated with Pakistan's effectiveness in counterterrorism and wider strategic collaboration (Morgenstern, 2019).

Financial Support

The US cooperated in terms of funding Pakistan for various projects such as energy, roads building, trainings etc. The major objective behind these initiatives was to improve the economy of Pakistan and ultimately to make life better for people in this country.

Much of the financial assistance was implemented through USAID (The United States Agency for International Development) by investing in programs that focused on boosting agricultural productivity, expanding education opportunities and developing institutional capacity and governance (Tarnoff & Lawson, 2019).

Military Support

Over the years, Pakistan was given a substantial amount of military help for its counter-terrorism work. This involved funding for military equipment, training and more routine costs associated with the war against militant groups. Moreover, Pakistan was paid back by US under the head Coalition Support Funds (CSF) for the operational and logistics support provided to American/NATO forces in Afghanistan. These funds were the life line of Pakistan's cooperation in region (Mushtaq, 2014).

Performance-Based Assistance

American aid to Pakistan was often conditional, with funds flowing only if the choice of instruments were proving effective. The United States had welcomed Pakistan's efforts against some of the terrorist groups and judged that it became willing to act decisively over all forms of terrorism (Mushtaq, 2014).

U.S. aid to Pakistan was sometimes withheld or delayed, depending on assessments of counterterrorism progress that was being made in the country. Apprehensions regarding Pakistan's dedication to confronting factions such as the Haqqani network and the Afghan Taliban resulted in recurrent assessments and modifications of assistance plans (Javaid, 2014).

Congressional Supervision

The US Congress actively participated in the examination of aid to Pakistan. The success of the aid and Pakistan's contribution to regional security were frequently discussed in congressional hearings and reports. Legislators wanted guarantees that

funds provided by the United States were being used efficiently to fight terrorism and weren't being misappropriated.

The Assassination of Mullah Mansour (May 2016)

The Taliban was led by Mullah Akhtar Mansour, who took over after Mullah Omar, the group's founder, passed away in 2015. This was made public in 2015. Mansour was viewed as a major impediment to peace talks in Afghanistan because the Taliban persisted in carrying out aggressive insurgent operations against Afghan and NATO forces while he was in charge (Byrne, 2015). Mullah Akhtar Mansour was killed in Balochistan, Pakistan, on May 21, 2016, as a result of an American drone strike. As one of the rare occasions when an American drone strike targeted a senior militant outside of Pakistan's tribal areas, this represented a significant escalation.

Citing Mansour as a high-value target whose elimination was essential to undermining the Taliban's command and control, the U.S. justified the strike. The United States contended that Mansour's passing would impair the Taliban's capacity for operations and present a chance for fresh attempts at peace in Afghanistan. According to President Barack Obama, Mansour had been actively plotting attacks against coalition and American forces, and he continued to pose a serious threat to American personnel stationed in Afghanistan.

The Taliban suffered a great loss with Mansour's passing. It caused a void in leadership, which in turn caused internal conflict as the group tried to choose a new leader. Finally, Mansour's successor was declared to be Haibatullah Akhundzada. (Krzyzaniak, 2015) .

Pakistan denounced the drone strike as an infringement on its territory. Pakistani officials contended that such unilateral actions were detrimental to the common objective of peace and stability in the region and that the strike damaged mutual trust and cooperation between the two nations.

The incident made Pakistan and the United States' already-existing tensions worse. The U.S. accusations that Pakistan was not doing enough to combat all militant groups, especially those that some in the Pakistani establishment saw as strategic assets, had already strained relations (Khan & Krzyzaniak, 2016).

Greater Consequences

The strike brought attention to how complicated and frequently tense relations were between the two countries. Pakistan saw such actions as an infringement on its sovereignty and a hindrance to cooperative counterterrorism efforts, while the United States saw them as necessary to safeguard its interests and advance regional stability (Kaura, 2017).

Also, Mansour's death was meant to demoralize the Taliban and force them into talks. But in the shorter term, it also carried the risk of intensifying violence as the Taliban attempted to reorganize and show their tenacity. The incident brought to light the difficulties in establishing a long-term, stable peace in Afghanistan and the surrounding area (Khan, 2017).

A Higher Tension and Realignment

During the second term of President Barack Obama (2013–2017), Pakistan's strategy for countering militancy inside its borders was a source of constant concern for the United States. The United States accused Pakistan of picking and choosing which militant groups to target, concentrating on those that directly threatened its security and ignoring or even secretly aiding those that posed a threat to Afghanistan and India. These worries affected US aid and policy decisions and were a major source of friction in the bilateral relationship (Muhammad, 2014).

The United States noted that Pakistan's counterterrorism efforts frequently targeted militant organizations like Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) that posed a direct threat to Pakistan's internal security. There was a recurring worry that Pakistan was not doing enough to combat groups that mainly targeted India and Afghanistan. These comprised Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), and the Haqqani network (Fair, 2011).

Haqqani Network

The Haqqani network, which has its headquarters in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), was in charge of a number of well publicized assaults in Afghanistan, including attacks on NATO and American forces. Pakistan was charged by the United States for permitting the Haqqani network to function largely unhindered. Some segments in the Pakistani military and intelligence community believed that the network could be used to counter Indian influence and influence events in Afghanistan (Peter, 2014).

Jaish-E-Mohammed (Jem) and Lashkar-E-Taiba (Let)

India was the main target of these groups; Let was accountable for the 2008 Mumbai attacks, while JeM carried out multiple attacks on Indian territory, including the 2016 Pathankot attack. Pakistan's actions against these groups, according to the United States, were motivated by its rivalry with India and were therefore insufficient (Rassler, 2022).

Effect on Aid and Assistance in US-Pakistan Relations

Pakistan's ability to combat terrorism was frequently a prerequisite for receiving financial and military support from the United States. Based on U.S. assessments of Pakistan's actions against all militant groups, not just those posing a threat to its own security, aid was examined and occasionally withheld or lowered.

Pakistan was encouraged to expand its counterterrorism operations by the United States through CSF reimbursements. When the U.S. judged Pakistan's efforts insufficient, there were frequently delays and reductions in CSF payment (MARKEY, 2013).

Diplomatic Coercion

American representatives have expressed these worries on numerous occasions in both public and private fora. Pakistan was pressured by the United States to destroy all terrorist networks and to stop making distinctions between "good" and "bad" militants.

In order to address these issues, the US Congress was also involved. Legislators expressed dissatisfaction with Pakistan's counterterrorism tactics across party lines by debating and occasionally placing restrictions on aid to Pakistan (Muhammad, 2014).

Changes in Strategy

The United States' strategic turn toward closer relations with India was prompted by dissatisfaction with Pakistan's counterterrorism measures. Enhanced defense sales, military cooperation, and diplomatic backing for India's regional security concerns were among the measures taken in this regard.

Towards the end of the Obama administration and entering into the reign of Trump administration, U.S. policy placed a greater emphasis on improving its relationship with India and holding Pakistan accountable for the failure of American operations in the region (Markey, 2013).

Conclusion

After analyzing the Pakistan-US relations between 2013 and 2023, it can be concluded that given the shifting regional dynamics, it is important for Pakistan and the US to adhere well-defined objectives in their relationship. It is in the interest of both countries to hold constructive discussions on regional issues including stability in Afghanistan, Indo-Pacific strategy and dealing with China and India alongside shared interests where mutual goals can be set. Trust has been the base fabric of any bilateral relations that need to survive through ages hence both countries need to concentrate on confidence building measures by transparent communication and continuity in diplomatic engagements. It is necessary to have regular high-level dialogues in order to understand each other's concerns and clear misapprehensions. Furthermore, instead of conventional aid and trade practices, Pakistan-US economic relations need diversification for improvement which can be realized through the active promotion of bilateral investment, joint venture creation and cooperation in fields such as technology exchange, renewable energy ventures and infrastructural development that pave a more sustainable future. In addition, promoting the private sector partnerships and supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are vital to provide catalyst for economic growth. Similarly, strengthening connections between individuals through educational and cultural exchanges is crucial to fostering goodwill and mutual understanding. By expanding scholarship programs, student exchanges, and professional training opportunities, lasting bonds between citizens of both countries can be forged, ultimately contributing to a more positive bilateral relationship.

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