

US-Pakistan Relations in the post-Cold War Era: Implications for World Peace

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(Received Feb. 2015 & Published online April. 2015 issue)

Abstract: *There is no denying to the fact that relations among nations are governed by their national interests and not by emotions. Similarly, it is also an established fact that there are no permanent foes or friends in international relations but only interests are permanent. Every nation enters into a close partnership to achieve certain goals and objectives. In such relationships, some compromises are also inevitable as no country can bully the other to support her unquestionably. Thus, both partners benefit from the partnership. Besides benefits, the bilateral relationships incur costs, too. But the ratio of gains and losses depends upon the tact and skills of the leadership, beside geostrategic and geopolitical factors. Sometimes a weak and small partner is more benefited than the larger and stronger one due to the higher leadership skills. All the above is true for the US-Pakistan relationship except the last one. Pakistan and the United States came closer to each other more than once and both incurred costs besides benefits from their close strategic partnerships. This paper will take into account the changing conditions of the US-Pakistan relations and the major gains and losses both for the US and Pakistan arising from this relationship in the 1990s, the decade after the collapse of Soviet Union. Employing the theory of neo-realism, data has been collected for this study both from primary and secondary sources.*

Keywords: US; Pakistan; nuclear; sanctions

Introduction

No doubt, Pakistan's economic needs and security predicaments, arising from her neighborhood, forced her to the doorstep of the United States in late 1940s but the latter did not respond positively at that time. It was after the Indian blunt refusal to join the US camp that the US approached Pakistan to forge anti-communist and anti-Soviet strategic alliances. Hence, the strategic significance of Pakistan made her important to the US policymakers. Taking benefit of the US strategic compulsions, Pakistan eagerly accepted the offer to become a frontline state in the containment of the Soviet-led communist advance into the South Asia and the Middle East. Pakistani leadership expressed concern over the spread of communism and Soviet expansionist designs but this country had no immediate threat from the communist Soviet Union.¹ Contrary to the international interests of the United States, Pakistan's strategic interests were regional in nature. Pakistan wanted to get a major power involved in the South Asian affairs to check the hegemonic Indian tendencies in the region. History reveals that by joining the US-backed pacts like SEATO and CENTO, Pakistan won a psychological support against India but our security did not boost against Indian incursions.² Moreover, Pakistan membership in these pacts infuriated the former Soviet Union to the extent that she made a common cause with both India and Afghanistan against Pakistan and extended support to the separatist movements in Pakistan both in men and material. This was the first great loss for Pakistan that

arose from her close strategic partnership with the United States. Pakistan's main objective of alliances was the safeguard of national security and territorial integrity against Indian aggression but none of them were achieved. The breakout of three wars between India and Pakistan (1948, 1965 and 1971) and the US role in these wars was a clear evidence of the failure of Pakistan's policy of alignment with the United States. During all these India-Pakistan wars, the United States not only declined to support Pakistan but also imposed sanctions against Pakistan during the second India-Pakistan war of 1965. In 1971, Pakistan lost her eastern wing when Indian forces encroached upon her territory and the US did not come to rescue her from the shameful defeat. On the other hand, Soviet Union actively supported India in 1971 and on the Kashmir issue in the UN Security Council. No one can deny the significance of the US-Pakistan relations that have played a vital role in the regional and international politics but Pakistan suffered much due to these ties. Owing to the clash of interests in certain areas, these relations could not get firm and durable. In fact, Pakistan and the US had divergent interests and incompatible objectives. Each of them was exploiting the compulsions of the other. This sharp contrast of perceptions gave rise to mistrust and, therefore, all the warmth of the US-Pakistan partnership evaporated as soon as the US objective fulfilled or the threat to the US interests changed or perished. In November 1979, the US-Pakistan relations were touching the lowest ebbs. But when the Soviet forces rolled into Afghanistan, the US policymaker took a U-turn and Pakistan became the focus of US attention to thwart out the Soviet forces from the Afghan territory and to retaliate the Soviet intervention in Vietnam against the United States. Eager for seeking military and economic aid, Pakistan was ready to

¹ Shahid M. Amin, 2004, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy: A Reappraisal*. Karachi: Oxford University Press. p. 44.

² Press interview of Shamshad Ahmad Khan, former Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, published in *Jang Sunday*, Karachi (Pakistan), (22-28 February 2009). pp. 2-4.

become a 'frontline state' against the spillover of communism into her neighborhood. Consequently, in 1980s, Pakistan put her national security at risk when she actively involved herself in the anti-Soviet struggle in Afghanistan. Until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Pakistan got much from her relationship with the United States but the list of losses was much longer than benefits. Despite the asymmetry in the cost and benefit ratio, Pakistan succeeded in augmenting her defense capabilities vis-à-vis her strong-headed neighbor, India, especially in the field of nuclear technology. Taking advantage of her close relationship with the United States, Pakistan developed her much-criticized nuclear program at a very high pace. The US had a close eye over this ugly development but did not take any strict action against it.

However, in the decade after the collapse of Soviet Union, the US foreign policy regarding South Asia in general, and towards Pakistan in particular, underwent major shifts. Pakistan lost her geostrategic significance for the US and, therefore, was no longer in the focus of US State Department's global strategy.³ After the rollback of Soviet Red army from Afghanistan, Pakistan was left to bear the costs of Afghan conflict alone while the US carried the day by reaping most of the benefits. Of course, Pakistan also got some benefits besides incurring costs but loss of the US strategic partnership marred all the gains. Just after the rollback of Soviet forces, the earlier US apprehensions about Pakistan's nuclear program resurfaced. In the words of a former Pakistani ambassador to the United States:

If one was to sum up the recent phase of relations [in the decade after the collapse of Soviet Union] between Pakistan and the United States in one phrase it would be: confronting an old problem in a new setting. The old problem is, of course, the nuclear issue, while the new setting is provided by the end of the cold war, the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the emergence, for the time being, of a unipolar world with all that this implies.⁴

The collapse of Soviet Union withered the links between Pakistan and the United States. This disintegration was the greatest victory for the US-led capitalist world but it unfolded a number of miseries for Pakistan, the then 'frontline state'. It changed the entire spectrum of the world politics. In the changing geostrategic scenario, Pakistan was no longer considered by the US to be a strategic partner that can be preferred over India which has been Pakistan's bitter foe and hostile neighbor. Far from giving preference, Pakistan was not even treated on equal footings with India. The strategic worth of Pakistan was still acknowledged by the US Pentagon but now it was not taken as important for the US interests as India. To contain China, yet another powerful communist state and the potent economic rival of the US, Clinton administration chose India as a close strategic and economically. The

³ Gohar Ayub Khan, 2009, *Testing Time As Foreign Minister*. Islamabad: Dost Publications. p. 69.

⁴ Maleeha Lodhi, 'The Recent Past', in M. Raziullah Azmi (ed.), 1994, *Pakistan American Relations: The Recent Past*. Karachi: Royal Book Company. pp. 132-138.

development of US-India close relationship not only alarmed Pakistan but also widened the gulf created in the trust between the US and Pakistan. The nuclear Pakistan was considered a threat to the US interests in the region. Without taking into account Pakistan's strategic needs, the US administration was much skeptical about Pakistan's nuclear program. Taking cognizance of eroded strategic relevance of Pakistan, the US President refused to certify that Pakistan had no nuclear devices or going to prepare them. Hence, the notorious Pressler amendment was invoked in October 1990 that choked all the military aid and halted the supply of F-16 fighter planes that Pakistan had already paid for. Not only that the delivery of aircrafts was halted but the money paid for these planes was also withheld. Disregarding Pakistan's concerns, the release of F-16 fighter jets was conditioned with 'capping' of Pakistan's controversial nuclear program. This was the first 'gift' of US-Pakistan estrangement after the end of Cold War. The victor of the Cold War did not bother to take into account the defense needs of his ally whose invaluable sacrifices had reposed her victorious in her long drawn war against communist Soviet Union that had inflicted heavy losses to the US army during the Vietnam War in 1950s. This US act not only tarnished the image of Pakistan at the international level but also sharpened the criticism of the Western countries against Pakistan's nuclear capability that had been resorted to as a defensive against India. The imposition of sanctions under Pressler amendment was an act to throw Pakistan into international isolation. It caused political, economic and military setback to Pakistan. It also shocked Pakistan diplomatically and psychologically. Basically, the Pressler amendment was aimed at deterring Pakistan from becoming a nuclear state but it proved counterproductive. Instead of

checking Pakistan's nuclear development, the sanctions imposed under this amendment pushed Pakistan to pursue the nuclear option more vigorously. To keep the Indian forces away from destabilizing Pakistan, the role of nuclear deterrence became more important to compensate the asymmetry between India and Pakistan in conventional warfare. Due to the broken defense ties with the US, Pakistan failed to keep abreast with India in the conventional arms. This disparity in conventional arms affected Pakistan's defense capability vis-à-vis India. Looking at the Indian nuclear ambitions and her past and present hostile attitude towards Pakistan, the acquisition of nuclear deterrence had become topmost priority for the latter as it had become very difficult to check Indian designs with conventional military might of Pakistan armed forces. Obviously Pakistan's defense budget got adversely affected by the US sanctions after October 1990 but this deficiency was made up from other sources. The nuclear program that was started after the US embargo in 1965 was accelerated after Indian nuclear explosion in 1974 and further augmented after the US sanctions in 1990. This fact was told by Gohar Ayub Khan, Pakistan's foreign minister to the US delegation that came to Islamabad to dissuade Pakistan from testing her nuclear devices in response to Indian nuclear explosions on 11 May 1998. Recalling his discussion with the US delegation, Gohar Ayub Khan writes:

I told them that it was precisely the US sanctions imposed on us in 1965 that had encouraged Pakistan to acquire long-range missiles and nuclear weapons. India's supplies had continued to come in from Russia which had put us in a position in which it

*was necessary for us to turn to missiles and nuclear weapons to ensure our national security.*⁵

After the pullback of US military aid in 1990, Pakistan's nuclear program got new impetus. Resulting from the US sanctions, economic compulsion had plagued Pakistan's meager economy. But it is a fact that despite all economic compulsions, no government in Pakistan could dare to abandon the nuclear option. Therefore, the severe US reaction towards Pakistan speeded up the flow of nuclear technology into the Middle East and Korean Peninsula to keep Pakistan's own program intact. Halting the delivery of F-16 bomber aircrafts under Pressler amendment, the US greatly affected Pakistan's defense capability. But deprivation from the American F-16 fighter aircrafts left no room for Pakistan except embarking upon a vigorous missile race that could provide delivery system to the nuclear devices of Pakistan. Pakistan imported M-11 missiles from China and missile technology from North Korea. For the exchange of missile technology, Pakistan extended nuclear technology to North Korea.⁶ Thus, the US goal of nuclear non-proliferation was badly checkmated due to the sanctions imposed against Pakistan and the stopping of the delivery of F-16 fighter aircrafts to Pakistan. The US policies regarding South Asia enhanced the already strong Pakistan-China defense cooperation that posed a great threat to India and also hampered the US efforts to contain China. Hence, despite the fact that Pakistan suffered much from the US sanctions, the cost arising out of

these sanctions was much greater for the US than for Pakistan. Not only North Korea but certain countries of the Middle East also got nuclear know-how through Pakistan. The US policymakers failed to understand that the rollback of nuclear capability was not possible for Pakistan while the containment of this program was possible through certain US measures. They failed to comprehend that peaceful and persuasive instruments of foreign policy could prove more productive than coercive instrument in achieving the US goal of nuclear non-proliferation. Refusing to provide any security guarantee to Pakistan vis-à-vis India, President Clinton did not help Pakistan in refraining from nuclear tests on 28 May 1998. Pakistan was not given with any security umbrella against her hostile nuclear neighbor by any other criticizer of her nuclear program. Therefore, under security compulsions Pakistan decided to go nuclear when India exploded five nuclear devices on 11 and 13 May 1998.⁷ This was a great setback for the US nonproliferation efforts but it was a huge gain for Pakistan. Pakistan paid a heavy economic price for her nuclear detonations conducted in response to India but succeeded in calming down the Indian belligerence towards Pakistan. In 1990, the threat of Indian adventurism against Pakistani-held Kashmir was halted due to the nuclear deterrence.⁸ To deter India from escalating the limited Kargil war, Pakistan's nuclear capability played a vital role. Similarly, during the ten months long military standoff between Indian and Pakistan in 2001-2002, India could not dare to encroach upon Pakistani territory due to

⁵ Gohar Ayub Khan, *Testing Times...*, pp. 37-38.

⁶ Adrian Levy and Catherine Scott-Clark, 2007, *Deception: Pakistan, the United States, and the Secret Trade in Nuclear Weapons*. New York: Walker & Company. pp.238-285.

⁷ Gohar Ayub Khan, *Testing Times...*, pp. 36-39.

⁸ Abdul Sattar, 'Foreign Policy: Relations with the West, China and the Middle East', in Hafeez Malik, 2003, *Pakistan: Founders' Aspirations and Today's Realities*. Karachi: Oxford University Press. p. 405

the fear of the use of nuclear arsenals by the latter. Consequently, the gathering of one million troops on both sides melted away without any crossover of international border. In future, neither India nor any other adventurous nation can have the courage to attack Pakistan due to the fear of nuclear retaliation. Skirmishes and limited wars cannot be ruled out but full-scale war cannot be afforded by anyone of them. In fact, this is the most important Pakistani achievement that resulted from the US non-cooperation in 1990s. With the acquisition of nuclear devices and their detonation in 1998, Pakistan's security became invincible that was the cornerstone of the US-Pakistan relations in the past. The US government officials and various US nuclear firms also economically benefited from Pakistan's nuclear program by the sale of nuclear material and nuclear deals.⁹ American conventional war industry suffered much from the sanctions imposed against Pakistan as it lost an earnest client. The nuclear related US sanctions against Pakistan and India after their nuclear detonations in May 1998 did not affect these overtly declared South Asia nuclear powers as much as they adversely affected the US interests by undermining the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) and Fissile Materials Control Treaty (FMCT). Above all these sanctions, adversely affected the US wheat growers who lost one of their earnest buyers. Eager to contain the rising China, President Clinton waved all the nuclear sanctions soon to engage India. But Clinton's discriminatory treatment to Pakistan during his visit to South Asia in the spring 2000 added more to the trust deficit between Pakistan and the United States. The real reason behind this trust crisis was the difference in their strategic perceptions. In

⁹ Levy and Scott-Clark, *Deception...*, p. 5.

1980s, their respective strategic interests had brought both Pakistan and the US closer towards each other but in 1990s the US had no strategic interests in the former and, therefore, an estrangement prevailed between them throughout 1990s.¹⁰ It was a great loss for Pakistan but, in the long-run, the US also suffered from that estrangement. The horrific incidence of 9/11 is the most catastrophic outcome of this estrangement.

During this period of acute estrangement, Pakistan was forced by the US to choose either the continued US military assistance and economic aid or an uninterrupted nuclear program of her own. Despite isolation at international level and economic plight at the domestic level, Pakistani leadership refused to yield before the US pressure. Doubtless Pakistan nuclear technology boosted morale of the Pakistani nation and gave them self-confidence but the economic cost of this luxury hampered the economic and social development of the country. It is a non-refutable fact that Pakistan cannot rely only on the nuclear devices to ensure national security and national integrity at home. In the long run, nuclear arsenal cannot ensure a nation her security, as mere possession of lethal weapons cannot make a nation strong enough to overcome the other problems. Without economic well-being, mere nuclear deterrence cannot help in resolving the bilateral issue as was seen in the case of Kargil conflict in 1999. These arsenals even could not help the defunct Soviet Union in the face of economic crisis. Certainly, Pakistan's hard-won nuclear arms were valuable assets but her economic loss because of US sanctions prior to the nuclear explosion, affected the entire fabric

¹⁰ Tom Rogers, 'A Study in Reverse Influence'. In M. Raziullah Azmi (ed.), 1994, *Pakistan American Relations*. Karachi: Royal Book Company. pp. 98-131.

of Pakistani society. With the imposition of US sanctions in October 1990, Pakistan immediately lost \$564 million US assistance lined up for the fiscal year of 1991¹¹ and so were her losses for the subsequent years till the US aid completely dried up by 1993. Military assistance was completely restricted throughout 1990s. However, keeping the Narcotics assistance aloof from the sanctions, an anti-narcotics aid worth \$3-5 million annually, administered by the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics Matters, was kept extended to Pakistan.¹² However, despite taking drastic measures against Pakistan, the US did not obstruct the way of other bilateral donors and the international lending organizations like IMF or the World Bank to Pakistan.¹³ This was not out of benevolence on the part of United States, but the fear of nuclear proliferation by Pakistan (in case of total economic collapse) urged the US administration to allow other donors to do their business with Pakistan. After the passage of Brown Amendment (1995), the economic assistance was exempted from the Pressler Amendment. But the sanctions imposed by US and other countries after the nuclear tests on 28 May 1998 affected Pakistan's economy though for a short time. The economic deficiency due to these sanctions was \$5 billion annually. But Pakistan's decision to freeze the foreign currency accounts pushed the economy from bad to worse. This decision deprived Pakistan from the inflow of \$1.5 billion per annum in new foreign currency deposits

and from a similar amount in foreign exchange remittances sent by Pakistani expatriates.¹⁴ This decision even discouraged private foreign investment. Partly owing to the economic sanctions but mainly due to other economic predicament, Pakistan's debt burden mounted to \$38 billion. All these indicators pushed Pakistan to the verge of economic bankruptcy. However, lending from the IMF and economic support by the oil-rich countries like Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates and neighboring China bailed out Pakistan's economy. The coup-related sanctions imposed by the US against the rollback of democracy in Pakistan in October 1999 further affected Pakistan and was pushed to economic bankruptcy but the IMF came to rescue her after the US green signal.

On political front, Pakistan's losses were greater than gains. The arrest of Mir Aimal Kansi, a Pakistani national, and an illegal US operation to arrest Yousaf Ramzi, a non-US foreign citizen, were most disregarding steps taken by Pakistani officials to get US back on their side. Similarly, the release of Ayaz Baloch was also an act of shameful subservience to the US administration. Several other Pakistani nationals and people belonging to other nationalities, wanted by the American CIA and the FBI, were allowed to be caught by the US law enforcing agencies inside Pakistan. Even they were handed over to the US intelligence agencies without fulfilling the legal requirements of the national law of the land. The US agencies were allowed by Pakistani governments to conduct operations against Pakistanis on their own territory. This violation of rules was allowed for the sake of resumption of the US aid but this was a very high price. By taking such measures, the national

¹¹ Kux, 'A Ride on the Roller Coaster', in Hafeez Malik (ed.), 2003, *Pakistan: Founders' Aspirations and Today's Realities*. Karachi: Oxford University Press. p. 304.

¹² CRS Issue Brief for Congress IB 94041, Peter R. Blood. *Pakistan-U.S. Relations*. (Foreign Affairs Press and Trade Division, 10 March 2002), p. 6.

¹³ Rashmi Jain, *The United States and Pakistan...*, p. 247.

¹⁴ Amin, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy...*, pp. 226-227.

sovereignty of Pakistan was mortgaged with the US that, in turn, lowered the national morale and heightened the vulnerability concerns among Pakistani masses. These abominable acts tarnished the national sovereignty of Pakistan to such an extent that this loss cannot be recovered over years. Ironically, these loathsome steps failed in changing the US policy of sanctions. In fact, they did nothing more than disgracing Pakistan both at home and abroad. Pakistan even failed in bringing back the Pakistani pilots arrested by the US authorities on charges of involvement in drug trafficking. The democratic governments in Pakistan could not win respect from the democratically elected bodies of the United States.

Despite having the so-called democratic ideals, the US government did nothing to help the nascent democratic process in Pakistan. Throughout the last decade of the twentieth century, Pakistan had duly elected democratic governments. All these governments in Pakistan lacked political stability due to economic disorder arising from the economic sanctions and problems of governance. But the US did not bother to save these governments from early collapse on ground of economic shortcomings. In 1995, the Brown Amendment was passed by the US senate to bail out Pakistan but it was not followed in letter and spirit. After the passage of Brownback-II amendment, all the nuclear related sanctions were lifted from India but the same treatment was refused to Pakistan. This was another great blow for Pakistan. To win the US support and to ward off the economic pressure, these elected governments could not win a soft corner in the US administration. But a military dictator like General Pervez Musharraf could find favor with the US administration and of the CIA after 9/11 due to strategic needs of the United States. This shows the degree of commitment towards democracy

on the part of US power-holders. However, owing to the efforts of democratically elected governments, Pakistan escaped twice from being declared to be the state sponsoring terrorism. India worked tooth and nail to further widen the gulf of trust between Pakistan and the US but the latter did not give ear to the Indian advocacy to bracket Pakistan with Iraq, Iran, North Korea, Syria and Libya. Fretted by the possibility of turning Pakistan into another Taliban state, the US administration turned down the idea of declaring Pakistan as a rogue and terrorist state. However, the democratic government of Pakistan (1997-1999) got a setback when the US Tom Hawk cruise missiles were flown over Pakistan to hit bin Laden and his terrorist camps in Afghanistan. Violating Pakistan's air space, the US authorities did not bother even to inform Pakistani authorities before this missile attack. The missile attack took eleven Pakistani lives within her territory when one of the missiles missed the target. This missile attack intensified the anti-American sentiments and sowed seeds of discontent between Pakistani and American nations. Public diplomacy between Pakistan and the US reached the lowest ebb. Thus, the crisis of trust aggravated the already deteriorating relations and adversely affected both the nations. The meeting of a US General with Pakistan's army chief, on the eve of the missile flight, disregarding an elected Prime minister shows the US affinity for the men in uniform as compared to a democratically elected ruler.

In the past, the Pakistan army had been and is still, after 9/11, the greatest beneficiary of US-Pakistan relations. The interests of military as an institution and those of individual officers had cared better during the close strategic collaboration between the two countries. Therefore, military as an institution has always been in favor of close strategic ties with the United

States. Even the genesis of these relations show that due to the military inclination and under compulsion from military leadership of that time, the US was preferred over the Soviet Union as a strategic ally of Pakistan at the very outset of Pakistan's history.¹⁵ The US had often patronized the military regimes, in frontline states, with an objective to achieve her geopolitical objectives in return for political and economic support to military regimes in those countries. This encouragement has increased the military's lust for power.¹⁶ Due to the US support to military regimes in Pakistan, military emerged as the strongest institution and power broker in Pakistan. Military in Pakistan has always ruled the country either directly or behind the scene. Resultantly, the democratic institutions have not hold roots and the democratic culture has suffered due to frequent military takeovers. In the period between 1989 and 1999, military was playing from behind the curtain but they had made politicians hostage.¹⁷ Captivated by the military's role in the polity, the leaders from opposition in Pakistan's legislature had knocked at the door of GHQ for gaining power. On the other hand, the successive elected governments used the economic reward for the military to buy time to govern. Referring to the civil-military relationship during 1990s, the former Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan said, "The military is so powerful an agency and we [the politicians] will get stuck [if we press the issue]."¹⁸

¹⁵ Hasan Askari Rizvi, 2000, *The Military and Politics in Pakistan 1947-1997*. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications. p. 77.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 11- 16.

¹⁷ Ayesha Siddiqi, 2007, *Military incorporated: Inside Pakistan's Military Economy*. Karachi: Oxford University Press. pp. 151-166.

¹⁸ Ibid.

The military leadership had relinquished power in 1988, after the death of General Ziaul Haq due to the fact that international environment was not favorable to keep the army rule intact but elected governments were not empowered in the real sense. Elected governments were kept under pressure through various tactics. The first (1988-1990) and second (1993-1996) government of Benazir Bhutto was toppled with military support when the military leadership became sure that she was unable to get continued US support.¹⁹ Nawaz Sharif, another elected Prime Minister, met the same fate when he lost the confidence of the military after losing the US support. In this way, military in Pakistan had become a perpetual stakeholder in power due to the strength it got from close ties with the United States. Pakistan army had been emboldened so much that her chief took the policy contrary to the elected government in 1999 and conducted the military operation in Kargil while elected government was making truce deals. This ill-fated operation brought a bad name to the country. Sensing that military's economic and institutional interests were at stake, the top military leadership decided to oust the elected government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. The US State Department was fully aware of the military preparedness for a military coup in Pakistan before 12 October but no US diplomatic channel was used to deter the army from seizing power even when contacted by the Foreign Secretary of Pakistan Shamshad Ahmad Khan. In fact, the military coup was much suitable for the interests of the US and, therefore, no eyebrow was raised by Washington over the planned military adventurism.

Probing into the failure of democracy in Pakistan, it can be inferred that the US support to military dictators in

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 95.

Pakistan has always derailed the democratic process. In 1958, the military takeover in Pakistan was the result of growing strength of Pakistan's armed forces that it had from the US sources.²⁰ The 1965's adventurism against India was the option adopted by the then military ruler General Ayub Khan, was the result of overconfidence provided by the US-backed alliances and the US military aid to Pakistan army. In fact, the US also had a role in toppling Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's elected government in July 1977.²¹

Owing to the strong support extended to the military by the US, democracy could not flourish in Pakistan. Army and army generals have strengthened from time to time but democratic institutions have been undermined and democratic culture has been suppressed. The ongoing extremism in Pakistan (2001 onwards) is also the result of US support to the military dictators in Pakistan. The US support to the military rulers in Pakistan and negligence to the democratic governments has given rise to a number of social rifts, too.

Looking at the social effects of the US neglect to Pakistan in 1990s it becomes clear that it created apathy among Pakistani masses. Pakistani masses felt the unjust US approach and this perception fanned the anti-Americanism and intolerance in Pakistani society. Already disgruntled over Pakistan's unqualified support to the US, the people took the US sanctions under the Pressler Amendment as a betrayal to Pakistan.²² Any further cooperation

between the US and Pakistan was resented to by the people of Pakistan due to the highest anti-US sentiments created by repeated withdrawal of US support from Pakistan in times of need. This was a loss not only for Pakistan but also for the United States.

On the other hand, in early 1990s Pakistan's image remained positive among the US public. But after the rise of extremism in Afghanistan, the American citizens developed a very negative perception about Pakistan and her people. This was all due to the US media cult created by the Indian and Jewish lobby in the United States. The social unrest in Pakistan has roots in pro-US Afghan policy adopted by Pakistan in 1980s but these sentiments found no bound when the US abandoned Pakistan after the end of Cold War. Another catastrophic repercussion of social unrest in Pakistan was the gradual ineptitude of the law-enforcing structure in Pakistan that gave rise to internal insecurity and instability.²³ The rise of the *jihadi* culture in Pakistan in 1990s was the outcome of US policies in Afghanistan in 1980s and the approval provided to it by the military dictator in Pakistan under his own power-compulsions. The uninterrupted flow of arms and Afghan people into Pakistan contributed much to the deterioration of law and order situation. The perverted law and order situation blocked the way of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) as well as the investment by the native people. FDI was diminishing day by day but black money was injected into the society at an alarming speed. Narco-money (money earned from the trade of narcotics) was corrupting the social, political and institutional systems of Pakistan. The ever-increasing economic deprivation in Pakistan was inviting the jobless Pakistani youth to take up arms to

²⁰ Kux, *The United States and Pakistan...*, p. 363.

²¹ Shamshad Ahmad Khan, pp. 2-4.

²² General Mirza Aslam Beg, 'Pakistan's Nuclear Programme: A National Security Perspective'. *National Development and Security*. Vol. 2, August 1993, Serial No. 5. pp. 1-25.; and also available at: <http://www.friends.org.pk/Beg/>

²³ Ibid.

fulfill their economic needs. The US sanctions had barred Pakistani governments from undertaking developmental projects that could generate economic activity to provide jobs. The industrial sector of Pakistan was also suffering from the US sanctions. Already existing domestic resources of Pakistan were unable to cope with the economic need of nearly 150 million people. The debt burden of Pakistan was increasing day by day and it reached \$38 billion within ten years (1989-1999). The government was running on the Special Drawing Rights (SDR) from the IMF. The IMF conditionalities were exhausting the purchasing power of the people of Pakistan. The defense budget was engulfing more than half of the national budget. The democratic governments opened the economy but this effort was also nullified due to the international image problem of Pakistan that had been tarnished due to the US sanctions and the deteriorating law and order situation. The spread of heroin resulted from the uninterrupted flow of Afghan people and Afghan guerrilla leaders affected each and every stratum of Pakistan. Easy money from opium cultivation lured the rural farmers. Transferring the entire burden of more than three million Afghan refugees also crippled Pakistan's meager economy and this gave rise to economic disorder beside social instability. These social and economic problems contributed much to the ongoing and cureless menace of extremism which might engulf not only Pakistan but also the entire South Asian region. These extremist trends reached even to the US in the form of 9/11. These threats are still endangering stability of South Asia. If the South Asian region destabilizes then even the US cannot insulate herself from the future extremists' assaults. The chief cause of such devastating activities would surely be the economically deprived and socially

crumpled areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Presently, Afghanistan and Pakistan are the countries that face terrorism. As the Soviet Red army withdrew from Afghanistan, the US left Pakistan and Afghanistan unattended. The CIA washed hand of her Afghan policy and the US administration shut down the US embassy in Kabul. The war-ravaged Afghanistan was left at the disposal of Pakistan. This turning back on the part of US administration paved way for intervention of other regional players in Afghanistan. This fact has been acknowledged by the US Secretary of State, Ms. Hillary Diane Rodham Clinton, recently.²⁴ Thus, another 'great game' started due to the US benign neglect in this region. In this newly evolved strategic arena, all the neighboring states of Afghanistan involved actively. Each and everyone wanted to have a government of her own choice in Kabul. This gave rise to another phase of endless civil war among warring Afghan factions. The victory of fundamentalists in Afghanistan and a constant civil war gave rise to militancy in the region and abroad. Russian Federation, India, Iran and Central Asian states were equally afraid of the spillover of this growing militancy, emanating from Kabul. They were also resenting to any Pakistani role in Afghan politics in the future while Pakistan had no other option except safeguarding her own interests through supporting the dominant Afghan clique, the Taliban. Consequently, a race for winning Afghanistan took place in the region. This tug-of-war helped no one in establishing control over Afghan affairs. Resultantly, the civil war in Afghanistan dashed all hopes of the foreign stakeholders. Turning the upside down, the increasing wave of

²⁴ Nargis Zahra. 'US Realism towards Pakistan?', *Pakistan Times* (28 May 2009).

militancy from Afghanistan took the whole region into its folds. The US tried to get a loin share in the hydrocarbons reserves of Central Asia without getting physically involved in Afghanistan. But the Taliban were not ready to cater to the US interests in Afghanistan. Similarly, *Al-Qaeda* took advantage of the anti-US Taliban stand and joined hands with the Taliban leadership. Hence, another phase of rivalry started between the US and all the other foreign and domestic stakeholders of Afghanistan. Plunging of Afghanistan into a protracted civil war, rise of the Taliban and refuge of bin Laden in Afghanistan were the direct outcomes of the US policy of walk away from Afghanistan and Pakistan after the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan.²⁵ Now the cost of US benign neglect towards Afghanistan became more and more high for the United States. Looking at the past of Afghan wars against foreign powers, it seems that in the future the US will have to pay unbearable cost for her military intervention in Afghanistan not only in economic terms but also militarily. Pakistan would also suffer from her close strategic partnership with the US in her 'War on Terror', not only economically but also politically, militarily and strategically. Pakistan has lost nearly all the benefits reaped from her Afghan policy in 1980s as well as 1990s, especially from the pro-Taliban policy. Drugs, lawlessness, Kalashnikov culture, social unrest and political instability are some of the gifts of the previous pro-US Afghan policy under General Ziaul Haq (1977-1988) Pakistan's former military ruler and the continuation of pro-Taliban policy by the successive elected governments. The Taliban who were considered a matchless asset by Pakistan turned into a dangerous liability.²⁶

²⁵ Kux, *The United States and Pakistan*....pp. 364-365.

²⁶ Ibid.

Thus, the costs surpassed the benefits not only for Pakistan but also for the United States. The post-9/11 Pakistan's Afghan policy presents even the grimmer picture. It appears that the future cost of the post 9/11 US-Pakistan engagement would not be affordable for Pakistan both at home and abroad. This time, not only the national security but also the territorial integrity and even the very existence of Pakistan is called in question. In early 1990s, Pakistan was content with the role played by the Afghan warring factions against the defunct Soviet Union but in late 1990s these groups became an ugly burden for their host. Pleased with the strategic depth that she got, Pakistan was harboring these groups on the Pakistani soil and the ISI was proud of them but, later on, the Taliban movement distanced the then *Mujahideen* from their former patrons in Pakistan. Ironically, the Taliban also multiplied Pakistan's problem and contributed much to the tarnished image of Pakistan abroad. Irritating the US-Pakistan relations in 1990s, the Taliban leaders turned a deaf ear to every US demand regarding their policies.

There is no denying the fact that the Taliban gave a strategic respite to Pakistan but they were not supportive of establishing a broad-based government in Kabul and thus impeded the way of Pakistan's economic ties with the Central Asian republics. The continuous arms conflict in Afghanistan not only obstructed Pakistan's way to the oil and gas resources of the Caspian Basin but also did not allow any US oil company to exploit the oil and gas resources of the region. This act annoyed the US authorities and they started exerting pressure on Pakistan to make the Taliban leaders to comply with the US demands. Refusal of the Taliban to yield before these demands pushed Pakistan and the US further apart from each other. The landlocked Central Asian republics also

distanced themselves from Pakistan. Alarmed by the terrorist menace emanating from Afghanistan, these did not show much enthusiasm in establishing close economic ties with Pakistan. Accordingly, Pakistan could not translate her geographical proximity, strategic worth and religious links with the Muslim republics of Central Asia into economic gains. On the contrary, these republics fully backed the Russian effort to root out the Taliban who were considered the exporter of militancy. The Taliban policies spilled over into Pakistan and launched the *Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan* (TTP), the Taliban movement inside Pakistan and also instigated the militants to intensify the Kashmiri insurgent movement.

Emboldened by the militants' victory against the Soviet forces in Afghanistan, the Kashmiri people took up arms against India and thus an insurgent movement was launched in late 1980s. Kashmiri insurgent movement led to the Kargil conflict that was defused after loud promises made by President Clinton, after his summit with Pakistan's Prime Minister, amid the Kargil war, to take personal interest in the Kashmir issue were not materialized. After the climb down of infiltrators from the Kargil heights, no effort was made by President Clinton to settle the Kashmir dispute or to bring the warring factions to the talks-table. Even amid the Kargil episode, when Pakistani and Indian prime ministers were about to meet in New Delhi, the US sabotaged the proposed summit. This move highlights the American approach to this serious South Asian conflict. However, to deescalate the tension and to press both countries not to resort to the use of nuclear devices, the US played a very constructive role. It was the US intervention that prevented any full-fledged conflict between the two powers of South Asia. The US used her back-channel diplomacy to urge India and Pakistan to

resolve their differences amicably. But it is also an undeniable fact that resolution of disputes between India-Pakistan had never been a US priority. The peace process that culminated at the 'Lahore Declaration' was also due to the US backchannel diplomacy but these bilateral talks bore no fruit. No doubt, the role played by the US administration to prevent war was a great gain though her shy role in taking initiative to resolve the Kashmir dispute through mediation was a great loss for Pakistan.

Conclusion

The decade after the collapse of Soviet Union was a crisis-ridden era for the US-Pakistan relations. In fact, only the strategic factor had always forged an alliance between these two unequal partners but their interests had always been divergent. Therefore, relations between them lacked durability. With the accomplishment of the US strategic goals, Pakistan has not only been discarded like a used Kleenex but has also been charged with a number of sanctions. Same was the case after the withdrawal of Soviet forces and the subsequent collapse of Soviet Union. Thus, in the post-Cold War decade, relations between them were far from good. Misperceptions about each other's needs, domestic and strategic compulsions and diversification of interests between these strategic partners alienated them. During this era, the US-Pakistan relations faced a severe type of estrangement that posed problems for both. However, both Pakistan and the US reaped benefits besides incurring cost from their strained relations. But, looking at the ratio of losses and gains arising from this phase of relationship, it can be said with a higher degree of authenticity that costs had surpassed the benefits for Pakistan. Even the benefits gained by Pakistan, during engagements with the US, had been mostly rolled back due to the various layers of the US

sanctions applied against Pakistan. The most draconian of these sanctions were the ones imposed under the Pressler amendment in October 1990. These sanctions were 'Pakistan specific' and greatly affected defense, economy and society of Pakistan. Discriminatory US sanctions imposed since October 1990 until May 1998 were on the top of Pakistan's losses in her history of relations with the United States. If the acquisition of nuclear know-how was the greatest achievement of Pakistan in 1980s, the continuation of this program throughout 1990s was another success. Despite severe US pressure, Pakistan's nuclear tests against Indian nuclear explosions were the greatest achievement in the field of defense that was the primary concern of all governments in Pakistan. This nuclear technology successfully deterred India for nearly four decades since 1971 from invading Pakistan directly. Compensation of the F-16 aircrafts nuclear delivery system with the missile system was another outcome of the strained US-Pakistan relations in 1990s that lessened Pakistan's reliance for defense on the United States. To keep the IMF aid flow intact through the US support, Pakistan gained a respite to save her from bankruptcy. But at the same time it was a triumph of US endeavors that Pakistan did not slip into the waves of extremism in those days. If it had happened then the nuclear arsenal would have become more vulnerable to use. But the greatest loss for Pakistan, that had marred all the gains, was the loss of the US military and economic aid. However, today (January 2010), the ruptured sovereignty and the shattered internal security of Pakistan have surpassed all the earlier losses.

On the US card, if the defeat of Soviet forces in Afghanistan was the greatest gain, the rise of extremism and its outflow from Afghanistan and Pakistan to the rest of world was the most abominable

loss. The US turned a deaf ear to Pakistani calls for the resolution of Kashmir dispute and confined her role to the diffusion of tension between India and Pakistan. Accordingly, threats of attack on Pakistan were nullified which was a plus point for Pakistan. But the US negligence to mediate in Kashmir dispute gave high impetus to extremism in the region.

No doubt, Pakistan's nuclear program was slowed down with the imposition of US sanctions but these sanctions proved more counterproductive than productive. The nuclear non-proliferation policy of the US got a setback that, in turn, affected the US interests. The obstruction of the delivery of F-16 fighter planes and military hardware could not obstruct Pakistan's way to nuclearization. On the other hand, it opened this technology to spread into the Middle East and over Korean peninsula.

The US could not honor democracy in Pakistan that contributed to the problems on both sides. Despite the democratic setups in Pakistan, the US took marginal initiatives to support the meager economy of the former that was the major cause of political instability. Four elected governments were ousted upon charges of economic mismanagement. Hence, political instability resulted in more economic disorder in the country. This economic disorder gave rise to social unrest that heightened extremism and intolerance. Thus, *Talibanization*²⁷ in the region came out as the ultimate result of perpetual political instability, lack of good governance and economic chaos. Now not only Pakistan but also the US and the entire world suffer from this menace.

Initially, the Afghan crisis was left unattended and Pakistan alone was unable

²⁷ *Talibanization* refers to the imposition of strict Islamic rules in the society as was seen in Afghanistan under Taliban (1994 – 2001).

to cope with this problem. However, the horrific incident of 9/11 pushed American administration to get involve in Afghanistan. To achieve this end, Pakistan's logistic and intelligence support was unavoidable. The then military ruler in Pakistan extended unflinching support to the US-led ISAF forces that enabled the latter to oust Taliban and conduct military operations against militant outfits in Afghanistan. Even a large number of top leaders of *Al-Qaeda* were arrested and handed over to the United States. The number of Pakistani military and paramilitary troops that lost their live, while fighting against militants inside

Pakistan, is much greater that the collective number casualties inflicted up on the US-led ISAF forces. It incurred cost several times greater than the economic support given by the American and her western allies. Although Pakistan was given with the status of Non-NATO ally but all the perpetual-mistrust inherent in the US-Pakistan relationship did not convert into trust among these decades-old allies. Clouds of mistrust are still hovering over close post 9/11 engagement and as soon as the American interests are accomplished a new wave of estrangement and US-sanction will take its place.

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