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Changing Priorities and Perceptions: Pakistan-US Relations in Post-Cold War Period

Abstract

The study is aimed to view the priorities and preferences of Pak-US relations during the post-cold war period through their policy choices towards each other. From the initial alliances of the fifties to the strain relations of the nineties, Pak-US relations involved many dilemmas and differences. Pakistan was the second choice of the US when the later designed its containment policy against Soviet communism in South Asia. Indian refusal turned the US towards Pakistan, having already inclination towards the US and its evidence was the visit of the first prime minister, who preferred American visit over Soviet invitation. The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan led Pakistan to become frontline state and the latter received huge American military and economic assistance. The withdrawal of the troops and fall of the Soviet Union ended the cold war, changing the US priorities. It also ended wishful thinking about Pakistan's geo-strategic location that was no more an asset, but put reverse influence and the crisis episodes became dusky. Deeply seated mistrust regarding the nuclear programme dropped Pakistan from partnership to punishment. The study has adopted the qualitative method to elucidate patterns of behavior of both states and the way they defined the foreign policy to deal with the situation, choosing a specific role and making decisions accordingly. It is assumed that Pak-US relations remained victim to the situation in the post-cold war era as Pakistan's hopes were dashed for disputes with India and the US was resentful on proliferation and later terrorism. The findings proved that interests remained dominant and the betrayal was felt by the two sides, moving to those options and decisions, which generated bitterness and mistrust, creating tension in post-cold war period.

Key Words: Non-proliferation, Pressler Amendment, F-16s, M-II Missile, Terrorism.

Introduction

After the four decades of competition and containment, no rival was there to challenge the American hegemony, which was further strengthened by the fall of the Berlin wall and the replacement of communist regimes with the democratic governments in Eastern Europe. George Herbert Walker Bush became the 41st president of the United States of America in January 1989. After taking over the presidential office, he declared that the Soviet military might was no more to back communism. The end of bipolarity was the inauguration of the American supremacy and hailing the falling-off 'Iron Curtain.' Hence the foreign policy of this era was

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taken by the critics as a fruitless quest of grand strategy, narrating the cold war as purposeful and predictable even dangerous.¹ The environment of the White House was familiar with Bush Sr. who served for eight years as vice president in the Reagan administration. Simultaneously, Russian President Mikhail Gorbachev was also engaged in domestic reforms and was desirous of better relations with the US. Taking unilateral steps, Gorbachev offered massive concessions to Western Europe in anticipation of reciprocal support for his newly-introduced policies of 'perestroika and 'glasnost.'² The end of the superpowers' rivalry reduced the strategic significance of South Asia for the US. The security alliances and military collaboration became irrelevant, letting to focus on economic development, free flow of trade and growth of liberal values. However, national security became centric to policies, taking military power and economic stability as essential components to a country's political stability.

The study has examined the causes that created distance between the two allies, disenchanting them and negating mutual cooperation. The study is divided into specific headings to explain the different policies in the post-cold war era. The first part is about research methodology and theoretical framework. The second is regarding the American policy and Pakistan's position in this period. The third part explains American reaction to the nuclear programme of Pakistan and sanctions. Fourth heading is about M-II Missile, MTCR and China while the fifth is about nuclear tests of 1998 in South Asia and the US response. The sixth heading is delivery of F-16 fighter jets and refund of amount under Brown Amendment. The seventh part narrates the Kargil Conflict of 1999 and Clinton's visit to Pakistan 2000, while the last is the findings of the study. However, details on the Kashmir dispute are excluded and have mainly focused on the US response.

Research Methodology and Theoretical Framework

The study is based qualitative analysis; while taking into account a literature review of published contents. The primary sources include foreign policy documents like joint communiqués, official interviews, policy statements and declassified documents. The secondary sources include books, scholarly journals, magazines, newspapers and online material. To address significant research questions, relevant literature was reviewed to observe the pattern of behaviours, affecting Pak-US relations. The literature covering various aspects is referred to narrate the different episodes and aspects of Pak-US relation.

Theories of International Relations are significant to offer a theoretical framework for state behavior to carry out an inquiry. Moreover, a cognitive map or intellectual framework has been developed on basis of these theories, which illuminate significant fields of study and contribute to classifying the phenomena. Theories of realism/neo-realism have been applied to erect a boundary or framework, which has helped to analyze the two states' behaviour during this era. The relations are viewed by the realist theorists as a struggle for power and survival. The underlying assumption is a perpetual struggle for power, which is the ultimate goal of politics to manage security that is result of anarchy.³ The states rely on balancing the power of other states and deterrence to keep the system intact. This has made power the basic end of political action at domestic and international levels.⁴ To analyze a change in a state's behavior under different situations, these theories help in

explaining the predicted phenomena of consensus, conflict, cooperation and peace. A shared belief about states is their motivated desire to gain economic and military might for a higher degree of security and survival, rather than ethics or ideals as the states exist in an anarchic structure and pursue their self-interest on basis of self-help. In case of failure, no other state or authority is there to protect them.⁵ The states are self-centered and preoccupied with their interest in defining relations with other states. Discussing the Pak-US relations, the following assumptions are viewed by the study;

- The overriding 'national interest' of each state is its national security and survival. In pursuit of national security, states strive to amass resources.
- Relations between states are determined by their comparative level of power derived primarily from their military and economic capabilities.⁶

The study has also analyzed the US claim of pursuing ethics and ideals at the dawn of new era after the end of the cold war, whereas in practice, the realist approach was dominant as the different events of the post-cold period revealed. Both Pakistan and the US had more conflict and less cooperation in this period. Nuclear proliferation and terrorism remained the major irritants to sour their relations. Security alliances and strategic location of Pakistan were no more significant for the American interests. All these factors directly or indirectly overshadowed the post-cold war relationship (1990-2000). Activation of Pressler Amendment, imposition of sanctions, halting the delivery of F-16 fighter jets, M-II Missiles and nuclear tests of 1998 are looked through the context of nuclear proliferation whereas Kargil conflict and insurgency in Kashmir are viewed through the prism of terrorism. President Clinton's short visit was also out of terrorists' threat. Pakistan faced hard choices during this decade as the end of the Afghan war ceased the US military and economic aid. These patterns of behaviour of the two states d have been explained in this study.

American Policy and Pakistan's Position in Post-Cold War Years

The fall of communism in Eastern Europe (1989-90) and the breakup of the Soviet Union (1991) transformed the global balance of power, strengthening the American position. The American obliviousness to buttress economic development and modernization of Pakistan's military forces were the result of changed circumstances, which reduced the importance of ally. American insistence on its non-proliferation policy distanced the two allies. Furthermore, India gained a bargaining position after ending hostility of superpowers and certain factors like huge consumers market, hub of information technology and trade volume became more attractive for the US. Above it, Indian status as the largest democracy, demographic size and strategic location were sufficient to enchant the American policy-makers. Even in the cold war years, the US was inclined to India, ignoring its bond with the Soviet Union and non-alignment policy. However, for Pakistan, India remained a threat as the latter never accepted the partition of the subcontinent and creation of Pakistan. This factor pushed Pakistan to secure its defence position.

In the cold war era, both superpowers were expanding their influence and offering alliances to counter and contain each other. Pakistan preferred the US, which was already searching for allies in South Asia to deter the expansion of communism.

Pakistan joined US-led military alliances SEATO and CENTO to strengthen its defence whereas India opted for non-alignment and exploited the superpowers' rivalry, amassing huge economic and military assistance from both blocs, particularly in its border with China in 1962.⁷

Pakistan became a frontline state during the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. Like many Cold War allies, Pakistan dealt with the situation successfully and bargain for a proxy war and funneled weapons and economic aid to the Islamic fighters (Mujahiddins) in Afghanistan. Pakistan was taken by the US as a tactical ally and Washington never showed its inclination for a long-term alignment of interests. American attention was evaporated after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and a new twist came, having resistance and confrontation over the nuclear issue.

This policy shift was further confirmed as the US charged Pakistan of using suspicious sources to access nuclear technology. The US warned Pakistan to stop its nuclear programme, which was previously ignored due to cold war interests. Under the international treaty of NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty), the acquirement and spread of nuclear weapons and technology are prohibited. The treaty is aimed to stimulate cooperation for peaceful use of nuclear energy only.⁸ Moreover, its goal is to promote nuclear disarmament as well. Pakistan's denial of having nuclear weapons capability and refusal to cease it, led to the activation of Pressler Amendment in 1990. The amendments were adopted by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in August 1985 on the suggestion of Senator Larry Pressler, conditioning the economic and military aid with the presidential annual certificate, explaining that Pakistan did not possess a nuclear capability. In the years of 1986 and 1987, President Reagan provided the certificates without much hesitation as the Afghan war was continued, but Bush Sr. declined to provide the required certificate.⁹

General Zia-ul-Haq's accidental death further determined the US in its non-proliferation policy. If Zia would be alive, it might be embarrassing for the US to have a "volte-face" of this shape as it was indebted to him for defeating the Soviets.¹⁰ This gesture led Pakistanis to view the US as an unreliable ally, which changed its direction with the fading days of cooperation in Afghanistan. On the regional level, insurgency in Kashmir strained the Indo-Pak relations and internal fighting among Afghan factions worsened the security situation.

Nuclear Programme of Pakistan and American Reaction

After the change in policy dynamics, the viewpoint about nuclear proliferation was changed altogether. American Congress built stress, forcing the president to impose the sanctions. For halting the nuclear proliferation, a direct warning was given by Robert B. Oakley, the US ambassador to Pakistan. He ignored the reports of the US intelligence agencies, having information that Pakistan had stopped enrichment of weapons-grade uranium as other sources claimed that nuclear capability had already been attained by Pakistan.¹¹ The last certificate was issued by Reagan, while President Bush refused and Congress cut-off the aid in 1990. Previously, Congress consented to a thirty months extension in December 1987. In 1989, President Bush pushed Pakistan to the brink of sanctions. He intimated Benazir Bhutto, prime minister of Pakistan, to review her country's nuclear policy in an informal meeting in Japan during the funeral ceremony of Emperor Hirohito in February 1989. He

signaled her to freeze the nuclear programme to secure mutual defence relations.¹² In January of the same year, during the visit of General Aslam Baig, military chief of Pakistan, Colin Powell, National Security Advisor, warned him of forfeiting the economic and military aid along with closing political and defence relations, if the nuclear programme would be continued.¹³

In June 1989, Benazir Bhutto paid a visit to the US and the nuclear issue was confronting her. She tried to convey the message that Pakistan had no intentions of misusing nuclear technology. Asserting the sovereign status of Pakistan, she talked about the right to pursue its nuclear program for security purposes.¹⁴ American officials were doubtful of her position in nuclear decision-making. This suspicion was in the background of those circumstances, which brought her to office. Despite winning the elections, the session of assembly for the prime minister's oath was delayed to get assurance from her for non-interference in foreign and defence policies e.g. Afghan policy, armed forces' budget and the nuclear programme. Continuation of General Aslam Beg as chief of the army staff and retaining Sahibzada Yaqoob Ali Khan as the foreign minister were also under military pressure.¹⁵

According to some reliable sources, she was not allowed to visit Kahuta research laboratories, where uranium was being enriched for nuclear use. In her visit, she carefully talked to the Americans and generated goodwill, which led President Bush Sr. to confirm the deal of F-16s, promising to provide 60 more such jets along with military hardware. The president issued the required certificate and promised more military and economic aid. Despite this courtesy, the administration was cautious and curious about nuclear programme and any violation could invoke sanctions as Robert Oakley warned Bhutto, "(if) go past that line ... He [Bush] will blow the whistle and invoke Pressler."¹⁶ Bhutto's visit was successful, but the domestic situation was alarming. Her relations with President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and Army Chief General Aslam Baig were strained. Apart from nuclear issue, Baig and Khan were allies of the late president Zia-ul-Haq, who executed her father Z.A. Bhutto, a former prime minister and founder of the Pakistan Peoples' Party.¹⁷

In summer 1989, a tussle surfaced on the removal of Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (JCSC) Admiral Iftikhar Ahmed Sirohey. Bhutto could not remove him due to the backing of military and president. The military disliked this adventure and took it interference in institutional domain, ignoring the constitutional authority of Bhutto, which permitted this removal.¹⁸ Ambassador Oakley was already advising her for a cautious behavior as the military was resentful. Meanwhile, Claiborne Pell, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, came to Pakistan to support Benazir Bhutto, but the situation embarrassed him. He warned Bhutto about the circumstances and asked her to compromise, otherwise her decline was fated.¹⁹ His words proved prophecy and she was removed from office in August 1990 on charges of corruption and mismanagement. Oakley attempted to settle the differences of the big three, but not succeeded. Benazir's removal shocked the US and its policy context was changed. The Bush administration withheld the certification, required for the Pressler Amendment, which led Congress to enact the sanctions in October 1990, at the beginning of US fiscal year. Pakistan was dropped from partnership to penalization.

Until 1990, Pakistan was the third-largest recipient of having the huge amount of American aid trailing Israel and Egypt. The sanctions ceased \$564 million economic and military aid in the fiscal year 1990 as it was conditioned with roll-back of the nuclear programme to the previous position of April 1990.²⁰ The military supplies, aid package and delivery of 28 F-16s were stopped as well. India was never treated in this way even it overtly exploded nuclear test in 1974.

Issue of M-II Missile, MTCR and China

Indian growing capability of missiles slanted the regional balance of power, pushing Pakistan to get Chinese help for missile technology as indigenous sources were insufficient to compete. Pakistan's connection with China for exchange of missile technicians was spotted out by the American satellites and intelligence agencies, which reported two-way traffic between the two countries. It assured the transfer of M-II missile technology and launchers to Pakistan.²¹ There were already reports about supplying of Ghauri missiles' design, matching with M-9 Missile.²² India was ahead of Pakistan in missile technology, having two missiles in the pipeline, one medium-range named Agni (Hindu god of fire) and other short-range named Prithvi, (name of a Hindu ruler). President Jiang Zemin declared that his country would continue Pakistan's support despite American and Indian concerns.²³

Since 1991, the US had been in search of evidence of China's selling of M-II missile components to Pakistan. As per one source, launchers along with dummy missile frames were already supplied to Pakistani air force for experimental purposes. The US charged China for violation of the MTCR (Missile Technology Control Regime), but China was not party to the regime and rejected it. Pakistan had the same position. Despite it, Washington banned one Pakistani and two Chinese companies in June 1991, arguing that transaction involved blacklisted entities.²⁴ However, the penalty against China was waived within a year in March 1992 and Bush left matter to incoming President Clinton. In July 1993, once again, Christopher Columbus, American secretary of state, warned Qian Qichen, Chinese foreign minister for violation of MTCR by transferring missile components, but he denied it.²⁵

Initially, Clinton criticized the soft stance of Bush Sr. towards China, but sooner he felt his mistake and opened dialogue, pursuing his predecessor's steps. The American ban on its exports to China affected its billions' dollars trade, destroying the business.²⁶ Pakistan also faced restrictions for the import of high technology. The Clinton administration avoided blacklisting the involved entities and the Chinese assured of not selling such equipment. He also granted the status of the MFN (most favored nation) to China. Not China, but the sanctions damaged the American trading companies and farmers.²⁷ This period witnessed the anomalies of the US policies in treating China and Pakistan as the former was inevitable for agricultural products while the latter was insignificant as the cold war was over.

Nuclear Tests of 1998 in South Asia and US Response

The nuclear tests of 1998 weakened the American confidence in its strategy of non-proliferation. Indo-Pak nuclear tests not only changed the regional dynamics, but also increased instability. The nuclear competition was harmful to trade, economy and sustainable development. India was ahead of Pakistan in these areas while

Pakistan was wrestling to gain success. Moreover, the absence of cold war rivalry changed the policies of both Republican and Democrat administrations, focusing on the Middle East with new goals, including terrorism and non-proliferation.

The formation of the London Group was in the wake of the Indian nuclear tests of 1974, which held its first meeting in London in November 1975 for controlling the future misuse of nuclear technology. Later the group was renamed as Nuclear Supplier Group. However, the American non-proliferation policies were a bit relaxed after the Soviet attack on Afghanistan in December 1979, but without relinquishing its insistence of freezing, capping and rolling back of nuclear programmes of India and Pakistan. Its enacted sanctions were slowed, not halted.²⁸ American strategic interests led it to partial acceptance of nuclear programmes and it tried to contain them within acceptable parameters to stop the nuclear-testing without granting any authorized nuclear status. Both countries did not sign the CTBT or any other arms control regime. Clinton restored its country's relations with China for trade purpose, but security issues were still haunting, letting the US closer to India.²⁹

After coming into power in 1998, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had intention to develop nuclear weapons. Nawaz Sharif, the then Pakistani prime minister, abreast Clinton about BJP's designs in a letter, which he wrote on April 3, 1998, but the American official did not take notice of the letter and took it as a rival's propaganda. Clinton was trustful of India and not expected any nuclear violation.³⁰ Dashing the optimism, India overtly violated non-proliferation's regimes by detonating a series of nuclear explosions on May 3, 1998.³¹ The tests shattered the American trust and shocked its policy of "cap, rollback and eliminate" nuclear weapons. These tests weakened American measures to destroy the nuclear weapons in former Soviet states, the US-Russian treaty on disarmament, signing of NPT by Argentina and Brazil, controlling of South Africa's clandestine nuclear capability and re-opening of CTBT talks.³² Reaction to Pokhran-II was severe and elicited condemnation of the world community, even pro-Indian American Congressmen and anti-CTBT groups condemned the tests and official annotations were full of anger, delivering the message that such violation would never be ignored. Clinton declared to take stringent action on May 12, 1998:

"I want to make it very, very clear that I am deeply disturbed by the nuclear tests which India has conducted, and I do not believe it contributes to building a safer 21st century. The US strongly opposes any new nuclear testing.... I also urge India's neighbor not to follow suit, not to follow path of a dangerous arms race... Most of you know, our laws have very stringent provisions, signed into law by me in 1994 in response to nuclear tests by nonnuclear states. And I intend to implement them fully."³³

For the administration, the main issue was dissuading Pakistan from conducting the nuclear explosions. Clinton offered economic and military aid along with the release of F-16s to Pakistan as a reward for halting the nuclear tests.³⁴ Pakistan's economy had been a target of sanctions since 1990, and Sharif could not ignore Clinton's invitation to visit Washington. On the other side, waves of disgrace were coming across borders, provoking competition. The irresistible domestic pressure and unavoidable international reaction were two opposite fronts. To settle the matter

through face-to-face diplomacy, US Deputy Secretary Strobe Talbott and Commander-in-Chief General Anthony Zinni arrived in Islamabad to keep the authorities away from nuclear testing. They negotiated with civilian leaders first of all, but disappointing behavior led them to talk with General Karamat, the army chief. He was agreed with them and acknowledged their viewpoints, saying that (Pakistan) “would land itself in the doghouse alongside India.” However, Karamat showed his concerns about the Indian militant nationalists, who were in power and desirous to cut down Pakistan’s size. Zinni’s presence in the delegation was a sign of strong Pak-US military ties. Zinni argued with authorities even on moral ground and ensured the international community’s support in case of avoiding the nuclear tests.³⁵ The military left the decision to Sharif. The foreign ministry also showed its reservation to Talbott, regarding India, which was now the world’s sixth nuclear power and its next agenda was a permanent membership in the UN Security Council. In such a situation, the Pakistanis would not forgive the authorities for its wrongdoing.³⁶

Pakistan’s proven nuclear capability was not hidden from Clinton, which required no testing.³⁷ Kux wrote that it was extensively believed that a proven bomb design was provided by the Chinese in the 1980s as a senior Pakistani official shared with him, referring to Pakistan’s nuclear scientist, A. Q. Khan.³⁸ In personal contact, Clinton tried to agree Sharif for not going to the nuclear tests. The mounting domestic pressure did not allow Sharif to accept the American offers or felt a fear of international community for matching with India in nuclear tests.³⁹

The hawkish pressure was also intensified by the sarcastic remarks across the border. L. K. Advani, Indian home minister, challenged Pakistan to accept the reality of shifting strategic balance and ironically advised to roll back its anti-Indian policies, including support of insurgency in Kashmir.⁴⁰ Clinton was expecting Pakistan to discard the nuclear tests; but was not heeding Pakistan’s demand of a security guarantee against India. He just reiterated to “cut through the knot” of laws and sanctions, and promised to provide support in defending the country instead of any practical measure. The US State Department remarked, “India is foolishly and dangerously increasing tension with its neighbours.”⁴¹

Eventually, Pakistan conducted five underground nuclear tests in Chagahi (Baluchistan) on May 28 and detonated further tests after two days on May 30, 1998. It was only the Indian threat, which pushed Pakistan to nuclear option. The New York Times (1998, May 31) wrote, referring to Shamshad Ahmad Khan’s statement, foreign secretary of Pakistan, “We have proved our credibility, and today's test had concluded the series.” Pakistan was ready for peace talks with India to avoid arms race as Khan stated. Pakistan Observer (May 29, 1998) commented, “Five nuclear tests have instantly changed an extremely demoralized nation into a self-respecting, proud nation of 140 million people having full faith in their destiny.”

Disappointed Clinton commented, “By failing to exercise restraint in responding to the Indian tests, Pakistan lost a truly priceless opportunity to strengthen its own security, to improve its political standing in the eyes of the world. And although Pakistan was not the first to test, two wrongs don’t make a right.”⁴² Pakistan chose the appropriate way instead of cheating and Sharif informed Clinton before nuclear tests and apologized for disappointment and the president admired his gesture.⁴³

The UN Security Council condemned the two countries and insisted to restrain their nuclear programmes, while P-5 (declared nuclear states & permanent members of the Security Council with veto power) pressurized the two for the signing of the CTBT on June 4, 1998. China instructed P-5 to include its note that India was the first to carry out the tests, not Pakistan, but resolution 1172 did not differentiate and equally punished the two.⁴⁴

The US enforced Arms Export Control Act (Glen Amendments) to cut all types of aid and held up the loans in the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank through its negative vote. Japan also froze development funds to Pakistan, refusing to support any new loans for Pakistan in the international bodies.⁴⁵ However, agriculture products were exempted while loans of IMF and World Bank were restricted. Pakistan was a buyer of one-third of the grain and this exemption was in favour of American farmers, who were showing concerns about the falling prices of grain. In July 1998, the US amended the law for agricultural export credits to Pakistan for its winter crop. The issue was not addressed pragmatically. The sanctions imposed after Indian Pokhran-I were many folds soft than the existing one as the West acquiesced in the fait accompli, but categorized policies were adopted to prevent the two countries from obtaining nuclear technology.⁴⁶ It also strained the newly Indo-US courtship. Pressler Amendment along with other sanctions was waived off on Congress' instruction as the president was no more authority due to laws of 1994.⁴⁷ In October, 1998, a new law named 'India and Pakistan Relief Act' was introduced to relax the sanctions for one year in 2000. Later, it was extended to exports of high technology entities, foreign military sales credits and military aid. India was the beneficiary with whom the US was going to have a strategic partnership.⁴⁸ Pakistan remained ineligible due to certain reasons, including failure in debt repayments and end of the democratic regime, replacing it with military one by General Musharraf on October 12, 1999.⁴⁹ Foreign debt was \$30 billion and foreign exchange reserves were \$600 million, which were insufficient to pay the upcoming installment of debt without foreign aid or IMF's support. In a desperate attempt, foreign currency bank accounts were frozen by the regime.⁵⁰ This action embarrassed the foreign investors and companies, having business in Pakistan. It also led the US to allow the IMF for financial aid, which was ceased due to Pakistan's discrediting the IMF's previous accords.⁵¹

Refund of F-16 Fighter Air Crafts and Brown Amendment

During the Afghan war, the US consented to sell F-16s to Pakistan as the Soviets repulsion was its major concern. These jets could be an important addition in Pakistan's air force's equipment and might be a delivery vehicle of a nuclear weapon. After the enactment of the Pressler Amendment in 1990, delivery of 28 F-16s and other military equipment was suspended and payment was strangled. Pakistan paid in advance \$658 million to the Lockheed Corporation through Pentagon. Until 1993, despite sanctions, Pakistan continued its payments for reasons that had never been fully explained. To some sources, Pentagon assured Pakistani officers that ultimately aircrafts would be delivered.⁵² Congress criticized Pakistan for payment when sanctions were implemented.

Even the US charged storage expenditures of \$50,000 per month from Pakistan, despite the decision of selling the F-16s to a third party. The jets were placed in the Arizona desert.⁵³ Congressional elections of 1994 resulted in the Republicans' sweep and Senator Hank Brown became chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. During his visit to the subcontinent, he felt the draconian nature of sanctions, which were damaging the American interests in Pakistan. Even he got annoyed with Pressler's presence during his press conference in Islamabad when the latter unduly defended the sanctions and linked them with the threat of an 'Islamic Bomb.'⁵⁴

In March 1994, Clinton consented to reimburse the amount or delivery of F-16s, conditioning it with Congressional approval and Pakistan's acceptance of 'non-intrusive verification' for nuclear programme. Clinton was not in support of impractical demand of rolling back as he signaled for the freeze-one. However, the State Department was in favour of physical inspection of nuclear sites and monitoring with various devices.⁵⁵

William Perry, the defense secretary was on a tour of the subcontinent and arrived in Islamabad in January 1995. He succeeded in improving defence relations with revival of the Pak-US Consultative Group on Defense Matters, which was formed for military to military consultation during the Afghan war.⁵⁶ Perry was equally desirous of defense relations with India and had periodic discussions with senior civilian and military officers. India took it a 'turning point.'⁵⁷ Benazir wanted release of F-16s and insisted Perry release the planes or return the amount, calling it unfair.⁵⁸ Coming back to Washington, Perry was uncertain about relaxation in Pressler Amendment. He publicly called it a blunt instrument, which could not achieve any policy goal. In his view, sanctions had nothing to do in halting the nuclear arms race, which was continued in the subcontinent.⁵⁹ The administration showed stubbornness only.

On the other hand, halting the F-16s was reducing the US diplomatic leverage over Pakistan in terms of non-proliferation in South Asia. Pentagon was not happy with an unfriendly attitude towards Pakistan as it had a long-time friendship with the Pakistani military, which was helpful for the Middle East and West Asian affairs. Several other American officials were disgruntled on this matter and wanted a solution.⁶⁰

In April 1995, Benazir was once again in Washington for a solution to F-16s and relaxation in Pressler Amendment. Clinton himself admitted that the US had 'no right' to keep the money and the equipment. He promised to find a solution in some way with the resumption of military and economic cooperation.⁶¹ However, the Clinton administration was unable to settle the matter unilaterally as Congress was determined to inspect the nuclear sites of Pakistan in lieu of delivery. Benazir turned down this proposal and the statuesque remained. Adding fuel to the fire, an embargo was imposed on the equipment, lying there for repair with advance payment. In May 1995, Hank Brown moved an amendment bill in Senate to ease Pressler sanctions. The bill was opposed by Pressler and John Glenn. Indian lobbyists were already opposing the amendments, arguing that it would distract the strategic balance in South Asia.⁶² Nothing, but behavior of the powerful state, while in reality; the release of banned material was not to disturb the arms balance. Anyhow, the

amendment was approved by a near-unanimous bipartisan vote in September 1995. Congress approved a one-time modification of the Pressler amendment, permitting delivery of some military equipment worth \$368 million other than the F-16s to Pakistan.⁶³ These consignments were later adjusted for \$157 million, while reimbursing the amount of the F-16s and it reduced the total amount to \$463 million.⁶⁴

Clinton also backed Brown's proposals, which were practicable in nature. This was a victory of Pakistan over India. However, the Brown Amendment did not ease Pressler Amendment, but put a little dent, reducing the intensity. The key impact was renewal of economic aid and confession of unfairness of the Pressler Amendment. The loans for the private sources were released only. The administration showed less interest in funding for Pakistan's shaky economy and remained engaged with India. This position indicated that Pakistan succeeded in gaining a few benefits and resisted the pressure, maintain its internal security.

Despite Pressler's support, the proposals to refund the amount after selling the F-16s to the Philippines or Indonesia remained in limbo due to various reasons. Indonesia was the better option, but deal was not matured as Congress was critical to Indonesia's clampdown against political dissents.⁶⁵ The president had to suspend the deal due to his elections campaign of 1996, leaving the decision to the new Congress, which was to be convened in January 1997.⁶⁶

In the fall of 1998, Nawaz Sharif was in New York for the annual session of the UN General Assembly. He was confident of getting a relaxation in sanctions and an early and fair solution to F-16s. Clinton reaffirmed Sharif of his commitment towards reimbursement. Sharif also wanted soft conditions for IMF's loans as Pakistan had \$ 1.2 billion credit for structural adjustment.⁶⁷ However, the matter of F-16s was not resolved until the threat of a lawsuit, which provided the access to refund the amount.

Pakistan had long been reluctant to sue, owing to fear of further tension in mutual ties, but its lawyers including former White House counsel Lanny J. Davi, advised to sue by February 1, 1999, otherwise the matter would not be resolved. The statute, regarding limitations on Pakistan's claim, was to be expired on the date and legal action was required before the deadline.⁶⁸ The US Justice Department assessed that Pakistan would win the case, which led the Clinton administration to announce the reimbursement of amount of 28 air crafts on December 21, 1998. One of the most complicated and lengthy dispute in American foreign policy was resolved. The US returned \$464 million, mostly in cash, which was the remaining amount. Additionally, wheat of \$60 million was provided.⁶⁹ Clinton also agreed to send Pakistan an additional \$60 million worth of wheat. the amount of \$324.6 million in cash from special funds of the Treasury Department, while goods worth \$142.3 million, including wheat of \$60 million was to be provided. The matter of air crafts was resolved in Pakistan's favour to some extent as New Zealand consented to buy the planes.⁷⁰ This reciprocal action was due to high handedness of the US, which was exercising its force, while Pakistan had either to deter it or to be at the mercy of the powerful state. There cannot be permanent tussle or conflict among states and are resolved in one way or other.⁷¹

Kargil Conflict 1999

In May 1999, a grave crisis was witnessed in Kargil, a territory with a height of 15000 feet near the Indian-held Kashmir. The site was in the north of Kashmir, having a sole road link between Srinagar and northern areas. The Indians had complaints of intruders' crossing of Line of Control (LoC) and entrenching themselves on the hilltops. This was taken as a serious penetration as it threatened the strategic highways of Ladakh and Siachen. An expensive and hard attack was required to prevent Laddakh's cut-off from the rest of the area. The warriors in Kashmir were pursuing guerrilla tactics, while the Kargil operation required a different strategy. Responding to the situation, India employed air power in Kashmir, which was used for the first time and slowed the costly advancement in the mountainous region. Viewing the short summer in the operational area, India took stringent action immediately and brought the area under its control within two months. The conflict led India to think that Pakistan betrayed it in Lahore talks, having malicious designs in advance for the Kargil operation.⁷² Washington was afraid of Indian strikes across the LoC for cutting off the fighters that might worsen the situation, increasing the threat of a clash between the two nuclear powers.⁷³

Clinton's response to Kargil was tougher than Johnson's reaction to the Indo-Pak War of 1965, when the latter left the matter to the Soviet Union for mediation. Viewing several flaws in the venture and its vicinity to the LoC strengthened the doubts that Pakistan's army was involved in the plan. President Clinton contacted Sharif and asked him to vacate the area from the troops, rejecting Islamabad's claim of having no direct connection in the Kargil operation. He also rejected Pakistan's explanation of having no influence over the Mujahedeen as they were an autonomous group of indigenous fighters. General Zinni arrived in Islamabad, having the message from the president to halt the war, pulling back the fighters across the LoC. Due to strategic importance of the area, the Indians felt threats of 'intruders' access to Indian vital areas. India was not ready to digest this incident and even the BJP could not afford to reconcile this loss as it would be a severe setback for upcoming elections. It was also claimed that China is fully supportive of Pakistan's stance, while the former remained neutral.⁷⁴

The planning for Kargil did not encompass all appropriate aspects. Simultaneously, Pakistan had to face isolation and extreme Indians' reaction, which was not anticipated. The short-sightedness of the policy-makers was evident from their strategy as they ignored the possibility of a full-fledge war against an arch-foe. Blaming Sharif for foiling of a well-crafted plan, the military maneuvered for his removal. He was alleged of plotting for this conflict after his meeting with Clinton on July 4, 1999. The meeting was held in a disgracing manner.⁷⁵ Dragging out from Kargil, General Pervaiz Musharraf took over the country in a military coup on October 12, 1999. The removal of the elected government of Sharif, led the US to a tough reaction, invoking further sanctions and Pakistan came under four types of sanctions.⁷⁶

Clinton visit of Pakistan 2000

Planning the visit to India in March 2000, President Clinton decided to visit Pakistan after fierce discussion of the administration. Pentagon and the CIA never wanted to lose their longstanding contacts with Pakistan, while the rival group was looking at

the visit as an endorsement to the military regime. However, the US officials prepared three demands for General Musharraf; timetable for restoration of democracy, nonproliferation and measures to counterterrorism along with resolving the Kashmir dispute.⁷⁷ Previously, this visit was twice postponed due to security concerns as anti-American terrorist groups in the region posed threats to Clinton. The US was also disgruntled due to denial of the signing of CTBT under the pressure of religious groups. However, the visit was inevitable to remove the tension between the two neighbours, exerting influence to normalize the relations. Clinton decided to visit Pakistan with a short stay.⁷⁸ Clinton's visit was after three decades of Richard Nixon, who came in 1969. After spending five days in India, Clinton visited Islamabad (Pakistan) for five hours on March 25, 2000 with highly alert security arrangements. Clinton was confident to engage Musharraf personally. In his talks with President Musharraf, he talked about all issues. He did not retreat from the American demand of Osama bin Laden's trial, forcing the Taliban to hand over him.⁷⁹

Musharraf consented to de-escalate in Kashmir without making any concession but avoided the matter of Taliban or Osama bin Laden. However, on the president's insistence as the American news-papers reported, Musharraf consented to putting pressure on the Taliban.⁸⁰ He also showed his intention for elections without any precise schedule. During the visit, in an interview, Clinton enunciated US policy on Kashmir and asked the two countries for resumption of dialogue, respect for LoC, and renunciation of violence to resolve the dispute. In his view, no military solution was there and insisted the two countries to achieve the security goals, resolving their tensions as the US could do nothing without their consent. However, he refused to mediate the Kashmir dispute. The reason to shelve this offer was the inclination towards the longstanding Indian stance of calling Kashmir as an internal issue, which did not require any international mediation.⁸¹ In reality, nothing could be improved between India and Pakistan without solution to Kashmir.

The visit had mixed impressions; a few circles called it positive while others opined that India was the priority.⁸² The visit revealed the changing priorities as South Asian affairs would be no longer viewed through the cold war perspective and duration of stay delivered the message of Clinton's choice. The decade of the nineties proved a turning point in Pak-US relations, showing the supremacy of the sole superpower and former ally.

This context would not change until after 9/11 when Pakistan became once more a frontline state and a pivotal actor in George Bush's war on terror. After Clinton's visit, the major development was Musharraf's visit to India in July 2001. Both leaders talked on various issues, but no consensus was developed to resolve the matters.

Meanwhile, drastic changes occurred in world politics after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon on September 11, 2001. These attacks killed 3,000 people and material loss was more than one hundred billion dollars. The Americans were stunned and frustrated with anger and urged revenge. President George W. Bush articulated a fierce resolve to hunt down culprits responsible for planning and organizing the terrorist act. The world community became shocked and condemned the attacks, expressing condolence and unity with the American

people. The US media instantaneously pointed fingers towards Osama Bin Laden as mastermind, who was under the shelter of the Taliban in Afghanistan. Owing to geographical location and supporter of the Taliban, Pakistan was bound to face painful choices in the coming days.⁸³

Conclusion

In the post-cold war era, the Pak-US relationship remained victim to circumstances as it had never been based on ideology or shared value, but circulated around interests, desires and opportunities as per the realist approach. In earlier years, the American policy was aimed to deter communist expansionism and Pakistan was in search of security. This asymmetrical nature of relationship brought them closer. After dashing hopes and collapsing interests, suspicion, disenchantment and disappointment wrapped it. In this environment, each party looked at the other as unreliable, but inevitable. Despite a long period of alliance partnership, relations remained strained without the convergence of common interests. The fall of the Soviet Union had diverse effects on the two countries; Pakistan lost its strategic worth, while the US became the sole superpower after losing its arch-foe. On one hand, it changed the American interests towards Pakistan and on the other brought India closer to the US. This shift inflicted Pakistan in two-way, it faced sanctions, while its enemy was rewarded. India reaped benefits even in the cold war period and got more lavish arms supply than 'ally.' The US relaxed or stiffened its nuclear non-proliferation policy as per its interests. The Afghan war caused relaxation, while fall of communism tighten the bolt around the neck of Pakistan. The legacy of this relationship is not zero sum game and neither side has viewed any disadvantage in its continuation. It served less or more, interests of the two parties, if the US achieved its goals, Pakistan also skillfully handled the situation. It did not become a specific target of the Glen and Symington amendments as they were general in nature and could not be axed any violator or proliferator.

However, a well-articulated policy to secure permanent interests must be pursued by the two, particularly Pakistan that only bargains its strategic location against India or Afghanistan. On the other side, the US is never static in its worldview and it has to identify itself with policy objectives in South Asia. Finally, it is calculated that short-sighted policy-makers, overlooked the losses of proxy war, which brought drugs, weapons, terrorism and extremism that not only resulted in the tragic events of 9/11 but *threw Pakistan in an unfinished war against terrorism with huge irreparable losses.*

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