

## **An Analytical Study of Pak-US Relations: Post Osama (2011-2012)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

America takes the death of Osama Bin Laden as an important milestone in the war against terror. May 2, 2011 was the day when the sole Superpower found and killed the “Most Wanted Man” in Operation Geronimo, in Abbottabad. Many questions remained unanswered which emerged as a result of this operation. The most imperative was, if Osama was found alive, why he had not been arrested? As much has been written about how this operation happened and how America fabricated the whole episode; this paper is an attempt to analyze Pak-US ties in post-Osama period. It will also explore the hard fact that Abbottabad Operation is a significant twist of American Global War’s Design which in the times to come, will help US to intervene Pakistan, whenever, wherever and however, it would like. The study will look at the situation whether really the death of Osama has achieved the target of a decade long war or not, whose cost of sending troops in Afghanistan is more than 400 billion dollars. The paper will conclude with the theory that since Osama has been found, the United States should carefully start the withdrawal of its forces from Afghanistan, in order to ensure peace in this region. Though America called the death of Bin Laden a “Great Success” of its “Counter-terrorism” Policy, yet nothing concrete has come out in one year from his death till date, except the souring relations between Pakistan and the United States.

**KEY WORDS:** Operation Geronimo, Most-Wanted Man, Terrorism, GWOT, Geo-Strategic Marriage, Cold War, Do More, Front Line Ally, NATO Supply Route

### **Introduction**

The official announcement for arresting Osama, dead or alive was made in 1992 by the then US president Bill Clinton. He said that, “It has been American history that they never forgive their enemies. Osama bin Laden is an enemy of America and American people. We will either kill or arrest him, no matter how many years

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may pass; and for that purpose, we have specified an amount of 250 million dollars for different operations (Shahid, 2011, May 3). Thus after 19 years, it was practically implemented by Obama. May 02, 2011 was a hey-day for America because it observed the “Death of Osama Bin Laden”, who, after 9/11, had been declared by the sole Superpower as the “World’s Most Wanted Man”. This operation was titled, “Operation Geronimo”, under which American Navy SEALs entered Abbottabad (Pakistan) through Helicopters and killed Bin Laden. As reported, the whole operation was watched live by the US President and his staff, who advocate “Justice and human rights’ around the globe. The history of Imperialism shows that either it manages the so-called courts or “resolve” the issue before bringing it to court. Therefore, the “fairy-tale” of this operation is so ridiculous and unbelievable that “A person, who had been leading Al Qaeda Organization from many years, was living a routine family life in Abbottabad”. After Osama’s death, it was argued that the story that began with 9/11 must be ended; but it was not an end, rather “Beginning of a New Turn”.

## Historical Background

The sole Superpower on one hand and the developing nation on the other hand, i.e; US and Pakistan are an exceptional illustration of an “Opportunistic Relationship”, based on the inequality of powers and self-interests, rather than having reciprocally the harmonious objectives (Hilali, 2009). Through out the history, different phases of apathy, confidence and antagonism have occurred between both countries. Khan (1985) writes that, “Nonetheless, the “Geo-Political Realities” and “Strategic Compulsions” fetch both countries together but the difference of views and strategies lean to drag them at a distance” (Khan, 1985: 1). Pakistan’s geographical linkage with the Persian Gulf is the core factor for American interest in Pakistan. It is due to this fact that though the relations have had a chequered history yet the relationship has survived times of stress and strain. As American policies towards Pakistan have never remained consistent, Palmer (1981) calls it a “Tortured Relationship” (Palmer, 1981: 1-9).

Pakistan and US have a “Troubled Geo-Strategic Marriage” Bilateral relations have never been easy. Since the 1950s the relationship has been characterized by on-off partnership, each of which has caught up both sides neglecting the degree to which their strategic objectives actually deviate. During each period of cooperation, the relationship has been able to resist enormity for a time. But sooner or later the laws of physics have re-asserted themselves and the relationship has come crashing to earth (<http://www.iiss.org/publications/strategic-comments/past-issues/volume-18-2012/january/us-and-pakistan-a-troubled-relationship/>). During Soviet invasion, Pakistan had been the “Most Allied Ally’ of the United States, as both had mutual interests. But by the end of Cold War and the disintegration of USSR , the difference of opinion over “interests” emerged

between both countries and thus affected the ongoing relations. As a result, the US became more prone to India, another threat to Pakistan's security. But the incident of September 11 became a defining moment in world politics and Pakistan ascended to centre stage of American policy agenda as a "Frontline State". Though being an ally in the Global war on Terror, yet the distrust and suspicion between both countries sustained. A new twist emerged in the relations, last year on May 2, 2011, the day when America found and killed the person, whom it had been chasing for ten years and had been fighting a useless war in the name of "Global War on Terror" (GWOT). Ever since America entered Afghanistan, the United States and Pakistan have had edgy relations as a repercussion of 9/11. But the year 2011 witnessed many Incidents which aggravated the already deteriorating relations between Pakistan and the US; and henceforth twisted a noxious tone. As in;

- The "Raid and Killing" of Al Qaeda Leader
- The episode of the CIA Contractor in Pakistan, Raymond Davis (Who killed two people in Lahore on February 5, 2011 and was set free on March 16, 2011, after giving compensations to those families)
- The issue of Haqqani Network
- The controversial drone strikes against terror groups based in Pakistan's tribal areas (Radin, 2011, December 4).
- Attack of November 26, 2011 on Salala (Border Post in Mohmand Agency) by NATO helicopters that killed 24 Pakistani soldiers (Firdous, 2011, November 26).
- Burning of Holy Quran by NATO soldiers in Afghanistan

Pakistan is at its weaker ebb today than it was in the Post-USSR disintegration. The circumstances which floated up with the "Raymond Davis" added difficulties with the truth that Osama was "harbored" right under the nose of the Pakistan authorities (D'Souza, 2011, May 9).

## **Post Osama**

According to Michael Rogers, a Republican from Michigan, "Liaison Partnerships are always-they're never all-in propositions", you have to take the service as you find it in the country of which you find it" (Iqbal, 2011, May 4). Though much has been questioned about Osama's death, that national security of the country and sovereignty has been at stake, yet not adequate details are presented which may crack where the veracity lies? The unilateral act taken by American forces, without informing Pakistan security agencies further created gulf between both countries' relations and broadened the trust-deficit as well. While Obama says that the protection of the US interest warrants such intervention in exercise of the country's right of self-defence, it on the other hand is considered to be the extra-

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judicial killing, while the intervention of this nature becomes legitimate only if it is authorized by the UN and (Soofi, 2011, May 8).

Today the main issue that has a great impact on Pak-US relations is 'Strategic'. This "strategic contradiction" has become more visible, owing to the incidents that took place in 2011. It is therefore, that currently America is seeking a "Strategic Alliance" with India, particularly for two reasons;

1. To contain China's rise as a power in Asia
2. American endorsement for India's ambition for Great Power Status and regional hegemony

Pakistan US relations got strained in the post Osama period though they had never been smooth and permanent. And the by finding Osama in the territory of Pakistan, the situation even became more doubtful between both countries as far as Pakistan's status as an "Ally" was concerned. But it is very important to note that if the US at this critical moment takes Pakistan as its foe at the same time, it would shatter the ongoing relations. American administration in the post-Osama period has decided to wage a war once again from the beginning with a new policy and strategy, keeping in view the "terrorism". Before its exit from Afghanistan in 2014, the US desires to devise a strategy, where it gets the regional control in its hands. Obama administration is putting more pressure on Pakistan because Osama was found on the territory of this country. While Pakistan felt annoyed over US "Unilateral" action which gave rise to more mistrust. Pakistan has become a sandwich between Taliban, drone attacks and American demands of "Do More". Irrespective of the fact that the identities of the people or establishments harboring Bin Laden may never be established, Pakistan has emerged as a weaker and more vulnerable state than it was when the hunt for bin Laden began (Rashid, 2011, May 3).

It has been argued that Osama's death has led to the desired political and strategic conditions for the drawdown of US forces from Afghanistan. Pressures have started mounting for the Obama administration to declare victory, much as it did in Iraq, and ensure that the US troops in Afghanistan are brought home. It has also lead to a renewed debate in America on the US role and objectives in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Whether the US pursues these terrorist leaders, with the same seriousness as it inked Operation Geronimo remains yet to be seen. Beyond the "use of force" to eliminate the Al-Qaeda leadership, it is critical to address these conditions and break the nexus that bred and nurtured such groups, if the objective of stabilization in South Asia is to be realized (D'Souza, 2011, May 9).

Pak-US relations are extremely at odds as far as the war on terrorism is concerned, as US Congress members have been harping to stop military and economic assistance to Pakistan. Henceforth, the relations in Post-Osama period have spiraled down to their lowest point; and emerged as a "Bad Marriage" but "Divorce is impossible". (*The Express Tribune*, 2011, November 15) The grounds of this decline are multifaceted, bound up thoroughly with contrary approach towards the future of Afghanistan as the exit of Western combat forces

draw near and towards the extremist groups which are supposed to play a part in that future.

## **Growing Divergence in the Interests**

The bargaining position of Pakistan has greatly effected. America wants an exit from Afghanistan and it can not do without the help of Pakistan. “Do More” is still there, unless a day comes when America gives the message for “Tell More” and finally “Tell All” and “Do All”.

American claims of unilateral action, no doubt demoralized Pakistani institutions. Pakistan once again became under the US demands of providing information about “Haqqani Network” which was alleged to manage the bombing and belligerent acts in Afghanistan through Pakistani territory. Therefore, as a consequence Islamabad decided to close the NATO supply route which was a channel for 40% fuel and 80% material for NATO/ISAF Mission.

## **Importance of NATO Supply Route**

### **American Dependence on Pakistan for Supply Routes to Afghanistan**

It is a hard fact for the US that it has to depend on Pakistan for the NATO supply route to Afghanistan for its troops, who are fighting war in Afghanistan (Radin, 2011, December 4).

The other possible routes are very much expensive for the US. It is being difficult because on one hand, lies Iran in the West (having hostile relations with US over nuclear issue), and on the other hand, in North the underdeveloped infrastructure of Central Asia exist. Despite these geographical realities, America has developed the Northern Distribution Network (NDN). The main purpose of this network is to transport supplies, not from the south through Pakistan (As shown with light blue paths on map), but from the north through Central Asia, Russia, and the Caucasus region (As shown with dark blue paths on map). This is somewhat that puts forward Pakistan with a key lever over US policy. But this network is not going to be the panacea of American dilemma. It remains an intricate supply route, with each part of the route having advantages and disadvantages. For example:

- **Expensive and Vulnerability to Russian Demands**

The Northern Spur brings supplies by ship to a Baltic port, then by rail through Russia, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan. While this route passes up Pakistan, it is more costly. In addition, it goes through Russia, which has its own national interests. This makes the US vulnerable to Russian policy demands.

• **Narrow Facility**

The Southern Spur brings supplies by ship or rail to a Georgian port on the Black Sea, then by rail through Georgia and Azerbaijan, by ferry across the Caspian Sea, and by rail again through Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. This route stays away both from Pakistan and Russia. But it is multifaceted, transiting a number of countries, and involves offloading to quite a few different transportation methods along the way. Accordingly, it is the priciest route and has narrow facility.

■ Northern Distribution Network   ■ Northern Distribution Network-Eastern   ■ Pakistan Overland Routes



**Alternative Supply Routes:** the Northern Distribution Network (NDN)  
([http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2011/12/us\\_pakistani\\_relatio.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2011/12/us_pakistani_relatio.php))

Pakistan also demanded simultaneously to vacate Shamsi air base (Balochistan) and that was implemented by US in December 2011. Pakistan had boycotted Bonn Conference that was held in Germany on December 15, 2011. As America did not show any apology on the incident rather pressurized Pakistan to open the supply routes. Pakistan at that critical stage made clear to the US administration that the future cooperation between US and Pakistan would be based on "written undertakings", with following points:

1. To stop drone attacks
  2. Easing American existence and military presence
- At the core of US–Pakistani tensions is the issue of "Post-Twenty-Fourteen" Afghanistan, when all the foreign troops in Afghanistan are planned to leave. For Pakistan's military this schedule is a evidence of its long-held conviction that sooner or later the US and its allies would abandon Afghanistan, leaving Pakistan to tackle a situation contrary to its strategic interests. There could be two situations:

1. It would either leave India in a strategically prevailing position
2. Pakistan may become defenseless and at risk to strategic clinch
3. Result in a lapse back into an anarchy that had existed between the fall of the Najibullah regime (1992) and Taliban coming into power (1996), which would have a major destabilize effect on Pakistan.

Therefore American and Pakistani interest are different as 2014 approaches. Despite the fact, that both Pakistan and US are essential for each other, yet, relations between two keeps on bad terms. The fifth largest nuclear power, Pakistan can not be simply negated by US, as critically it is too vital for US in Afghanistan.

## **Lessons to Learn**

From Heroshima and Nagasaki's bombing to Operation Desert Storm and Operation Geronimo, America has been and would continue to "Act Unilaterally". America since history has done all these works which are practically essential to prove it a Superpower. It demoralizes other nations economically, politically, socially and militarily in order to maintain its supremacy. It is yet to be seen how Pakistan will react to the disputes in the days to come, and how US policy will transform due to this new calculus. Afghan war was started on October 7, 2001. Taliban government was overthrown within weeks but the war goes on even to this date, despite killing the person who was alleged to be responsible for the terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers. It has been a year now since "the Most Wanted Man" is no more in this world; whose existence was a threat to American security and the world was "unsafe and insecure". Despite all the narrations that American administration have made about 9/11, that it was mastermind of Al Qaeda; it has been proved now that it was not organized by Al Qaeda. Osama bin Laden or any organization like AL Qaeda can not mangle an operation like "9/11", unless America does it itself. (<http://avalon.law.yale.edu/sept11/911Report.pdf>)

Bin Laden has taken with him to his watery grave the West's reasons deter for its imperial project in the Muslim world. (Syed, 2011, May 8). Al Qaeda has emerged more vindictive because its members are now thinking that they have been deceived as earlier used as "Hero" in Soviet-Afghan war and now declared as "Terrorists". Those countries and region which are scarred of American evil designs, they in one way or the other are supporting Al Qaeda. Therefore, America is infact increasing its enemies in the entire world. Regardless of its genesis, the war on terror is very much related to Pakistan now, simply because this society bears the brunt-physically, psychologically and economically. Women are being rendered widows and children turned orphans. Indian pressure has increased to handover Hafiz Saeed, leader of Lashkar-e-Tayyba (LT); and has warned for the surgical strikes.

The roots of terrorism undeniably go back to Pakistan's alliance with the US not in the post 9/11 period but in the years when the country agreed to fight

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Washington's proxy war in the wake of 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (Zaidi, 2011, May 9). It is real time that Pakistan must learn lesson that America is chasing its strategic goals in South Asian region and the wars in Afghanistan are a "source of income" for her. For that very reason, America has devised strategies for long-term stay in South and Central Asia where it will be able to achieve its political, economic and regional interests. As China is going to be the next Superpower which is not acceptable to America and India in any case. Under the curtains of this futile "Ally Relationship", America is struggling hard because it desires:

- To make obey Pakistani politics and its institutions
- To weaken Pakistan' army, especially ISI
- To roll back Pakistan's nuclear programme
- To maintain military and economic supremacy of India in South Asia, in order to curtail Chinese influence in this region
- To have an access to the oil and gas of Central Asia, by putting up a pipeline in Afghanistan through Gwadar Port and Karachi Port
- To abandon Iran from its Nuclear Programme
- To maintain Indian influence in Afghanistan in the post withdrawal period beyond 2014
- To separate Balochistan from Pakistan in order to get hold over wealth of Gold and Silver
- To get hold over the minerals of Afghanistan through American and European companies
- To disintegrate Pakistan on ethnic and linguistic bases

This is the reason that US administration has appointed General David H. Petraeus, as a new CIA Chief because it has been stated about him that "After Iraq and Afghanistan, he will fight his third war on the Pakistani grounds" (Qasim, 2011, May 7). American intelligence centers have already been established in Pakistan and Raymond Davis was an important member of that network. Americans will continue drone attacks in search of Aimen Alzawahari and Mulla Omar, and God forbids they can any time ask Pakistan to roll back its nuclear programme, and for that very reason, they can make any operation. Whatever America gives aid, it sends its spies along with aid; and whenever that spy is arrested, Pakistan becomes direct under the threat of "Uncle SAM". Osama's death is not the victory of America; rather it has become a laughing stock for the world community as after his death Americans are fighting with his ghost. The food for thought is though the operation was covert; but the objective was not covert.

## Conclusion

The death of Bin Laden brought Pakistan into limelight with a situation of crisis. It has been policy of America that it "Acts" and the "Reacts" itself; and for that very purpose, it first "Uses" people and nations and then "Misuses" them. It is the rule



of nature that there are always two powers to confront each other. When only one power exists in the world system, it creates anarchy; as the emergence of Hitler in Europe and Al Qaeda in face of America after the disintegration of USSR, took place.

During ten years of war on terror, Pak-US relations passed through many phases. Many times America has shown hypocrisy wrapped in the curtains of diplomacy. It is time to make clear overtly that Pakistan's legitimate security concerns are connected to the future of Afghanistan and a regional consensus must be built up for that, instead of striving for the entire control. Tough Osama has died yet his cause is alive, as he has many successors to follow. If the world is to prevent the rise of more Osama's, it must take its scalpel to the festering cancer of injustice and oppression in the Middle East. Now the so-called architect of 9/11 is gone and therefore, the US has no business in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and elsewhere.

In the present scenario, American priority falls within "Securing and Re-Opening" NATO supply route. While Pakistan's priorities will be emerged from the "Guidelines for Revised Terms of Engagement", that will be held on April 12, 2012. In this "Resumed Dialogue", Pakistan and the US will have to face the following main issues;

1. **Salala Attacks-** American administration must excuse for killing people.
2. **Closing Down the Drone Attacks-** Both Pakistan and US should be more lucid on the issue of drones. The parameters for drone attacks should be specified with the consent of Parliament, and only against "mutually agreed targets".
3. **Re-Opening the Supply Routes-** Pakistan must assure America that if NATO supply route is opened, it will solely be used for carrying "Non-Lethal" goods, and if necessary, it should be checked by Pakistani authorities
4. **Restraining the Intelligence Cooperation-** Pakistan must maintain the precision, reciprocity, and lay down the margins of "Intelligence Cooperation" between both countries.

A structural revamp in the relations is required. The strategic Depth today has proved the "Strategic Death", it was an American trick in order to mislead Pakistani. The covert actions play as an important instrument in US history. The wars and economic stability and elongated conflicts and human development can not go side by side. On one hand, it could prove positive for US elections upcoming in 2012, while on the other hand, the relations between US and its front line ally have turned turbulent. The current situation demands that Both Pakistan and the US are in need of having a stable, transparent and consistent equation, so that "divorce" may be avoided. The killing of Bin Laden does not mean that America has accomplished its decade long mission in Afghanistan or the security challenges to Pakistan are reduced than ever before. It has not made any far-reaching impact on the ongoing pointless war against terrorism. The drones are at same pace on Pakistani territory, killing "identified and unidentified" people. Lack

of coherence exists between both US and Pakistan as far as the “Counter-Terrorism’ policy is concerned. America is making war under a global agenda. The covert actions play as an instrument in American history. Afghanistan has become an American Colony while Pakistan as a “Frontline Ally” has been pushed too. With Osama’s death, Obama declared that, “world has been saved’ but he was wrong in his thinking, because “Pakistan became more insecure’. Therefore, those who think that Pakistan’s significance have been elevated, they are perhaps wrong, because America has defamed Pakistan in this so-called “operation”. If it was not a planned drama, and carries any truth, America and NATO forces must leave Afghanistan and Pakistan as they have achieved for whom they were fighting a decade long senseless war.

Unless, Pakistan avows its own objectives and preferences, it will be prone to more “Strategic Reversals”. Pakistan’s government must craft a comprehensive external policy that may counter the strategic priorities and interests of Pakistan along with a diversified diplomacy.

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