

## **Trends and Challenges in Pak-US Relations: Post September 11**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The global changes have occurred throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and there is no reason to believe that they will slow down their pace in this millennium. The disintegration of the Soviet Union with its defeat in the Cold War and the terrorist attacks of September 11 have changed geopolitical environment and generated new forms of instability in the world and particularly in South Asia. These events also damaged those traditional international security arrangements that were evolved after the World War II. This paper will examine the major challenges and trends in Pakistan's foreign policy after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 that caused major shift in the US policy towards the region and the issues pertaining to the US-led global war that has much significance for Pakistan.

**KEY WORDS:** War against Terrorism, Taliban, Al Qaeda, Cold War, South Asia, A.Q. Khan Network

### **Introduction**

At the ideological level, the 20<sup>th</sup> century ended with the victory of liberal democracy based on the principles of liberty and equality over totalitarian, tyranny, fascism and dictatorship of various types. In this scenario, promotion of democracy, moderation and human rights assumed high priority in international agenda. This notion was valid in the post-Cold War era for the globalization of economy, peace oriented multi-literalism, arms control and conflict resolution, which were introduced by the new world order. This was also associated with the development of political norms and legal contracts to pursue peace and security,

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rejecting the conventional view that 'you must prepare for war if peace required'. But all these views were perished by the terrorist attacks which not only made the appeal of pacifist belief that war is immoral, ineffective but made it inevitable to secure the world community and unified them to wage a war against terrorism (Kapur, 2002: 533).

## Changes in Global System

During the last fifteen years, three major turning points deserve special attention for their impacts on the geopolitical situation in South Asia (generally) and Pakistan (particularly):

- The First was the defeat and ultimately disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 which terminated the Cold War rivalry between the two superpowers, competing for influence and the US emerged as sole superpower.
- The second event stemmed from the region itself which had a special significance for the US with a host of consequences for global as well as regional security. This was overt nuclear weapons' testing and declaration of nuclear power by India and Pakistan in May 1998. These overt nuclear explosions in the Sub-Continent were the direct challenge to the capacity of major powers and the United Nations to preserve the credibility of nuclear non-proliferation regimes. The process of the deployment of nuclear weapons enhanced the risk of an outbreak of nuclear war to the fore-front in South Asia.
- The third was the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 which were so horrible and destructive that they changed the entire world drastically. These attacks transformed the debate of foreign policy on the issues which were critical to dual identity of America as an "imperial republic" (Litwak, 2007: 37). The US has the world's largest economy, overwhelming military power and dominant position in international institutions with foe-haunting cultural and ideological forces. Robert Gilpin writes that "a dominant power defines the rules of international security and makes the repercussion for small powers in redefining foreign policy" (Gilpen, 1981: 33). The war envisaged a new connection between the two extremes in the world politics, North America and South Asia. America, an international power since World War II was on the receiving end, while the power centre was an unrecognized regime harboring of an exiled Saudi dissident, Osama bin Laden and his organization Al-Qaeda (Military Base), a self declared enemy of the US and all Zionists and crusaders. Al-Qaeda had sponsors in Afghanistan and other sixty countries including Pakistan, Egypt and Sudan (op.cit, 2007: 38). It is believed about this non-state actor that apart from beliefs, possesses military might and economic resources to give a great

blow to the strongest power against which it had grievances (Kapur, 2002: 635). The weak political structure of Afghanistan was the major reason of harbouring these elements and the reason of horrible events as Bush commented while talking on the Graduation Speech in White House on June 1, 2002 that “the events of September 11, 2001, taught us that weak states, like Afghanistan, can pose as great a danger to our national interests as strong states. Poverty does not change poor people into terrorists and murderers. Yet poverty, weak institutions, and corruption can make weak states vulnerable to terrorist networks and drug cartels within their borders”.

These events realigned the nations and brought harmony among them. These nations which failed to grasp these changes were ordained to collapse. Pakistan was also at the crossroads, either to act in a pragmatic and rational manner to be a part of the international community or proceed irrationally to get isolated. Since the Cold War, Pakistan has been an important factor in American policy of South Asia due to its unique geo-strategic location. US has never ignored Pakistan while addressing the South Asian issues that usually dominate its policy process either the Cold War era or the changed geo-political equations after the terrorist attacks, Pakistan decided to join the international coalition to fight the war against terror in its best national interests (Musharraf, 2006).

These attacks were different as compared to the other terrorist organizations, which usually tie their action with negotiable demand. But Al-Qaeda wanted radical changes in American foreign policy as well as fundamental changes in internal arrangement of several West Asian countries particularly in Saudi Arabia. The proposed change was to alter the balance of power between the West and the Islamic world. The acts of these elements reject the western thinking that their grievances will go away or West Asian regimes would be persuaded to abandon Jihad that is attributed as freedom struggle to overthrow un-represented, illegitimate and corrupt regimes.

## **Pakistan: Once Again on the Path of Alliance**

US came with a set of demands for Pakistan soon after the linkages of the terrorist attacks that pointed the involvement of Al-Qaeda, based in Afghanistan. The overall response to these developments had impacts on policy-makers of Pakistan to define and defend their core interests in translating them into policies with operational features in South Asia. Pakistan, pro-Western in its international orientation was the frontline state during the Afghan War of 1980s and again was placed on the same position by the US after terrorist attacks. America wanted to know “If Pakistan was a friend or foe” and also threatened the other South Asian states with horrible consequences. Next day of the attacks, Richard Armitage, the then Deputy Secretary of State visited General Mahmood, the director general of

ISI, who was on a visit to Washington and told him that “You are either with us or 100% against us. There is no gray area” (Jones, 2002: 201). The message of Bush explained, “This is not however, just American fight and what is at stake is not just America’s freedom, this is the world fight, this is the clash of civilization.” Pakistan was the only country in South Asia, which had diplomatic relations with Taliban. So Pakistan had no option but to condemn the terrorist attack as “most brutal and horrible” and offered unconditional cooperation in war against terrorism (Woodward, 2002: 58-59). Application of this American policy meant isolating, intimidating, or invading individual states that did not come under the American umbrella. On September 13, after two days of attacks, US conveyed seven non-negotiable demands to Pakistan. President Bush’s demands included; stop Al-Qaeda operative in Pakistan-Afghanistan border; intercept arms shipment through Pakistan border and end all logistic support for Laden; blanket over-flight and landing rights, access to Pakistani naval bases, air bases and borders; immediate intelligence and immigration information; condemn the September 11 attacks and curb all domestic impression of support for terrorism against US, its friends and allies; cut off all shipment of fuel to Taliban and stop Pakistani volunteers from going into Afghanistan and the last demand, “should the evidence strongly implicate Osama bin Laden and Al-Qaeda network in Afghanistan and should Afghanistan and the Taliban continue to harbor him and his network, Pakistan will break diplomatic relations with the Taliban government, end support for Taliban and assist us in the afore-mentioned ways to destroy Osama bin Laden and his Al-Qaeda network”<sup>1</sup> (Woodward, 2002: 58-59; Litwak, 2007: 40; Hussain, 2002: 34-35).

On September 14, Musharraf received a harsh telephonic message from Secretary of State that “The American people would not understand if Pakistan was not in the fight with US.” President abruptly agreed to support and followed all the seven demands. It was surprising for Powell who shared his response gladly with members of National Security Council who were attending a meeting at the White House. Woodward wrote that the Americans were expecting that Musharraf would accept two demands and be convinced for one or two later but would never accept one or two demand. Musharraf got approval and backing from corps commanders and other politicians of different parties. But during these discussions, he suppressed the dissent voices and insisted that no alternative but to accede to the US demand (op.cit, 2002: 59). This argument was not true as demand could be delayed and meanwhile a better strategy could be adopted (Masud, 2009). On 19<sup>th</sup> September in a televised address, Musharraf explained five reasons to justify his “unstinted” cooperation which forced him to extend cooperation to US. These included:

- 1) Pakistan’s Integrity and Solidarity;
- 2) Economic Revival;
- 3) Incapability to Counter the US;

- 4) Defense of Pakistan's Strategic Nuclear and Missile Assets;
- 5) Kashmir Cause (Musharraf, 2006).

The reaction of public was skeptical. US promised to support rebuilding the nation but did not share Pakistan's goal about Kashmir. Musharraf also pointed out the Indian plan to exploit the situation and calling Pakistan as a state harboring and sponsoring terrorism. A trade off the Kashmir was top Pakistani agenda (Washington Post, 2001, September 28).

After the attack, the United Nation passed a series of resolutions that set the international communities' commitment to counter the threat. The Security Council passed the resolution 1373 (2001) on September 28, 2001 (S/Res/1373, 2001). It was decided that all the states would take steps necessary to prevent and control the funding to terrorists' act so that they would refrain from supporting "entities or persons" engaged in such activities by curtailing recruitment and eliminating the supply of weapon. The resolution also provided to establish the counter terrorism committee including all the members of Security Council (Security Council Counter Terrorism Committee, 2001). Pakistan provided logistic and military support to the US without noticing of the anti-American demonstrations through out the country by the religious parties and other groups. In a closed-door meeting, religious leaders decided that Pakistan would not allow the US to land in its soil (Dawn, 2001, September 20). Top Pakistani officials visited Taliban for delivering message of massive assault in case of their refusal to hand over bin Laden.

## **Response to the War Against Terrorism**

Prior to September 11, Pakistan supported the Taliban movement and played a key role in their rise to power in Kabul in September 1996, and extended recognition to their government along with military, technical and logistical support. Pakistan became somewhat disappointed from Taliban by 2000 due to their policies on socio-cultural issues. The Taliban demolished the pre-Islamic Bamiyan Buddha in February 2001 despite the international pressure and a personal appeal from the then, Pakistani President Musharraf. Taliban also misbehaved international relief agencies. They did not heed to Pakistan's requests for not allowing sanctuary in Afghanistan to the activists of religion sectarian groups involved in terrorism and sectarian killing in Pakistan. So Pakistan justified its position in the light of American hostile policies (Jabeen, 2002). Pakistan slightly pulled back from Taliban but its policy-makers dealing with the Taliban emphasized that a pro-Pakistan government in Kabul would provide strategic depth against India. This argument was not much strong as an extremely ideological government could not be a reliable partner in the complex international system.

For its pro-Taliban policy, Pakistan faced sustained American diplomatic pressure to seek the Taliban compliance with international demand for the closure of terrorist camps and handing over of Osama bin Laden to the US. Islamabad's repeated but failed attempts to influence Taliban not only put Pakistan at risk to face consequences but also made Islamabad realize the limits of its influence over Kabul. The foreign policy documents, which appeared after the fall of Taliban indicates that Islamabad was reconsidering its position before September 11 and this event provided the immediate reason. Above all Musharraf calculated that in failure of cooperation to Washington, India would avail the opportunity of improving its ties with the US and would try to marginalize Pakistan. Furthermore, the consensus at the international level for adopting a tough stance against terrorism convinced Pakistan to go along with the global consensus (Zeb, 2004: 2).

Pakistan became the pivotal coalition partner of the US-led global war against terrorism as the geographical position on the Southern and Eastern border of Afghanistan was the best location of supporting the US coalition against the strongholds of Taliban. Pakistan was also in a position to provide the vital intelligence that made it necessary for the US to renew its military and diplomatic relations with Islamabad. Pakistan transformed itself from supporter of Taliban to a partner of an on-going war against terrorism and the US applied this leverage to achieve its own objectives. In the Post-Taliban scenario too, Washington continued to rely on Pakistan to root out Al-Qaeda terrorists who were suspected to operate from within Pak-Afghan border (op.cit, 2006).

India also offered logistical facility to the US for air operation against Afghanistan but aircrafts from Indian bases would still have to over fly Pakistan (Washington Post, 2001, September 17). The coalition's reliance on Indian airbases could be highly risky for Pakistan's security. Musharraf responded quickly and closed its airspaces for several hours to enable the US in order to prepare and deploy its forces at the Northern military bases in Pakistan. He also made it clear that Islamabad had abandoned its former Taliban allies in the larger interest of the war on terrorism (Hussain, 2004:35). The fact remains that the military rule in Pakistan enabled Islamabad exceptionally rapid decision and contributed to the efficiency of subsequent Pakistani cooperation. Sealing of Afghan boarder was also included in this cooperation to pursue the capture of Al-Qaeda leaders who were assumed to infiltrate into Pakistan in the course of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) by quick and positive actions. Pakistan undercut any US temptation to use Indian support against Afghanistan.

### **Changing Patterns of Relationship**

Pakistan's decision to support the war against terrorism brought a positive change in bilateral relations. Pakistan once again achieved significance for regional

security interests of the US. Islamabad and Washington took many steps to remove the hurdles that marred their bilateral relations since 1990 and adopted new measures to expand the scope of mutual interaction covering terrorism, security and political and economic affairs. President adopted this policy as it was not in favour of Pakistan to be used as an instrument, once containing communism in early Cold War years and in the decade of 1980s against the backdrop of the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan to strengthen the resistance and now destroying Islamic terrorism. On first two occasions, the relationship was strained and troubled with the charge of regional and international security environment. Pakistan found sanctions on the end of both phases with multifaceted problems in its foreign affairs (Schaffer, 2002-03). Pakistan was under four types of the US sanctions when 9/11 terrorist attacks occurred.

1. The Sanctions imposed by President Bush (Senior) under the Pressler Amendment suspending the economic assistance and military sales to Pakistan. This provision made it obligatory for the president to certify every year before the release of economic assistance that Pakistan did not possess any nuclear explosive device. In October 1990, the President did not certify to the Congress and it suspended the aid along with military sales and training programs.
2. The second set was related to the military and economic sanctions, which were imposed after the nuclear explosions of May 1998. Earlier India was under these sanctions because of its nuclear explosion of May 1998.
3. The third was regarding the democracy. Under the democracy law, sanctions were applied after General Musharraf's assumption to power on October 12, 1999. These sanctions were part of the US efforts to promote democracy at the global level.
4. In November 2000, the US imposed two years' sanctions on Pakistan's Ministry of Defense and Pakistan's Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Organization on receiving missile technology and equipment from China.

In September 2001, prior to September 11, the sanctions were again imposed for two years on some Pakistani companies on the same charge. In March 2000, limited sanctions were imposed on Pakistani nuclear and missile research organization for violating the global norms of checking proliferation of missile technology.

First three sets of sanctions were lifted after the events of September 11 due to Pakistan's support for combating terrorism. Security agencies of the two countries shared information on the terrorist groups and American agencies were allowed to operate in Pakistan and the result was the arrest of a large number of Taliban and Al-Qaeda personnel from different parts of Pakistan. Through this coalition, Pakistan improved its image and won appreciation at the international level. Pakistan also gained huge economic benefits from the US and many other countries for combating terrorism. The US extended technological assistance to

secure the borders, improving communication and road building in tribal area to control entry-exit points. This economic assistance wrote off the debts which gave Pakistan sufficient economic space to pursue the policies for the development of the countries (op.cit, 2004).

### Challenges and Changing Trends

Pakistan experienced friendly relations with the US during fifties and eighties. Despite convergence of many interests, the US has divergence of interests on several issues and policies. So there are frequent ups and downs in bilateral relations of the two countries. The attacks of September 11 transferred Pakistan from failing to a frontline state and reduced its status from the major recipient of the Western aid in South Asia. It soon became obvious to policy-makers that they had no choice of losing or preserving their strategic position in Afghanistan at the cost of Washington. They had no option but to support the American intervention.

At the same time, India's announcement of unconditional support and extending offer for logistic facilities to American troops further tightened the position of Pakistan. The US tried to balance its interest in the region and Bush administration assured Indian leaders that the military and economic assistance provided to Pakistan, was designed to assist the war against terrorism (Mohan, 2002-3: 144). India's general importance to US interests after the Cold War has not been set back directly by the war on terrorism. The US perception of India's future importance as a strategic partner remained as an inducement to cultivate further security cooperation (Raghu, 2005).

The question is not about India's importance to the US core interests and policies towards South Asia, rather it is about Pakistan's position to hold its ground with the US in the same policy areas. If India has not lost ground in its relationship with the US despite nuclear proliferation or war on terrorism, the question arises how Pakistan would evaluate its role for future pursuit of its interests. This became the major challenge for the policy-makers.

The second challenge that Pakistan faced was the religious Islamic militancy. Pakistan banned some of the well-known extremist Islamic groups and arrested a large number of people involved in sectarian violence and assassinations. Musharraf also enforced tough legislation to regulate the activities of Islamic madrassahs to modernize their academic program, though this law was not fully enforced due to the opposition from Islamic groups, yet the government made efforts to moderate the policies (Schaffer, 2003). Here Pakistan and the US have diverged interests, as the apparatus of the state can not be fully employed against extremist Islamic and sectarian groups.

Third was the search of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda personnel in the tribal areas by the US military authorities. Pakistan was not willing to grant such permission



in order to avoid the anger of Pushtun tribes. But Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has undertaken security operations in collaboration with Pakistani intelligence agencies. In the beginning, the US military authority sought permission to conduct operation in Pakistani tribal area but later it did not bother for the grant of such permission from Pakistan. FBI not only conducted security operation in tribal area but also undertook it in Islamabad, Faisalabad, Lahore and Karachi with the help of Pakistani agencies. It arrested a lot of Pakistanis and foreigners for alleged involvement in terrorism. Some of the arrested persons by FBI caused controversy in media and politically active circles raised objections on their investigation by FBI (op.cit, 2004:75-76). The government's action against the militants increased as domestic violence led to the attacks on foreigners like the abduction and murder of Daniel Pearl, a reporter of Wall Street Journal in January 2002 (Pattern of Global, 2002).

In the beginning, Pakistan was not ready for the bases and raised objections on stationing American troops on its soil but eventually permitted American troops to station on its territory (Washington Post, 2001, September 15). Pakistan also opened bases in Sindh and Baluchistan for logistical and communication support to launch military operation against Pakistan's erstwhile ally, Taliban in Afghanistan (op.cit, 2002: 71-72). In the second week of October, American troops began to move into Pakistan bases at Pasni and Jacobabad and launched their operation in Afghanistan. Since the war is likely to take a long time, it may expect that present deployment continue in the coming decades (Singh, 2003: 39).

Presence of military troops in the Mohmand agency and operation in Wana for strengthening security is not appreciated outside and inside Pakistan. It is creating criticism for the government. This may have satisfied Washington which is insisting on a more assertive policy in the tribal areas. It views the porous and mountainous border as a refuge for the Taliban and Al-Qaeda elements that have been launching skirmishes with the local tribal militia. But Washington should know the fact that this area traditionally enjoyed wide measures of autonomy and is not strictly policed like the rest of Pakistan. This operation is not only being resented in Pakistan but Afghan Tribal Chiefs are also raising question of Afghan sovereignty. The dynamics of Afghan politics can make it imperative for Kabul government to adopt a highly nationalist position on the border clashes with Pakistani troops. The decision is on the insistence of the US military authorities, which is causing new crisis with dire consequences for Pakistan.

Recent missile attacks in these areas and killing of many innocent people on the basis of wrong information about Al-Qaeda leaders have been raising the question of Pakistan's status. These attacks are flagrant violation of Pakistan's sovereignty and it may harm important relationship with the US. On the contrary, by not doing so, Pakistan has been left with no option but loosing importance in Washington.

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Fourth security challenge for Pakistan is the activities of neighbouring state India. The relations between India and Pakistan reached at the lowest ebb after the incident of terrorist attack on Indian parliament on 13 December, 2001 that killed over a dozen people. Despite swift and strong condemnation of the attacks by Pakistan, tensions escalated in the area when Indian public started demonstration with the demand of an accounting. Bus, train and air services were terminated between the two countries. The military build up between both the countries that followed the bombing, intensified the situation. India called back its high commissioner in Islamabad for the first time after 1971 war (Hataway, 2003:6). India accused Islamabad of supporting Kashmiris militants, whom it blamed for carrying out these attacks. Islamabad rejected these allegations of cross-border terrorism. India announced to deploy troops along the border with Pakistan and rejected the call for free and independent investigation of the event. However, this threat of war was ceased, as Washington was worried about its on-going military campaign against Al- Qaeda in Afghanistan. Washington launched a diplomatic campaign to defuse the crisis and Richard Armitage, the then US Deputy Secretary of the State, visited both countries in June 2002 to pull them from the brink of a catastrophic war (Dawn, 2002, June 25). Collin Powell, the then US Secretary of the State, remained in contact over a period of several weeks that might represent the most intensive engagement ever in region by state secretary. In three months, Powell made his second trip to region 'to cool it.' Bush called Vajpayee to urge him to have patience and showed his concerns for Indian loss (op.cit, 2003:7). Pakistan also banned all sectarian related activities and set up a speedy trial court to punish those involved in the attack.

From Washington's perceptive, there was possibility that the war on terrorism would be disrupted by Indo-Pak clash and this conflict might even go nuclear, creating a crisis with worldwide implications. Washington was not willing to ignore its new 'natural' ally as it viewed India a rising power and potential balancer for China. India tried to reframe the debates over peace and New Delhi argued that the issue facing in South Asia was no longer Kashmir but terrorism. It also expected Washington to see Pakistan-backed struggle in Kashmir as being of the same like the US terrorist campaign and the activities for freedom in Kashmir as a terrorist act. India refused to talk about Kashmir unless the terrorism ended and adopted exactly the same position once held by the United States in Afghanistan and by Israel in the Middle East (Mohen, 2002-03). This argument was against Pakistan's long standing position that peace would come to South Asia, once India would agree to negotiate over Kashmir dispute. Though India could not accomplish its designs but succeeded in bringing the international pressure to Pakistan and tried to portrait the image that Pakistan itself is a sponsor and source of international terrorism. This propaganda is stigmatizing Pakistan in international circle. This is partly due to the fact that Pakistan supported Taliban before 9/11 and provided refugees to some Al-Qaeda elements in Pakistan due to

its porous border. This allegation is further strengthened by the reports of capturing these elements and the question remains in mind about the refugee of Al-Qaeda terrorists in Pakistan.

Fifth is the risk of hijacking of the nuclear assets and their use for terrorist activity or to introduce them for profit into international terrorist channels. These nuclear risks weigh heavily in many Western minds as well as American's who perceived them as a threat for its security concerns. As they consider that Pakistan may sell these weapons and its technology to the Muslim extremist states ignoring its verbal assurance to the United States. Pakistan is also under the threats and allegations of nuclear proliferation due to as activities of A. Q. Khan network. The US officials believe that Pakistan made a deal with North Korea, Libya and Iran to exchange its nuclear technology (Corera, 2006: 206-07).

Finally, the factor that adversely affects Pak-US relations is enhancing anti-US sentiments for biased policies and the laws of US, which are dealing Pakistani as extremist Muslims. Several Pakistanis were kept under detention without trial for months, in other cases; many were deported on baseless allegations after September 11. Stories about Cuban prison are much horrible. Issuance of American visa has become a far cry, which is causing frustration in professionals as well as students who have to wait for months before they know if the visa would be granted. Pakistan is not excluded from the list of those twenty countries whose nationals are required to register them, ignoring the fact that the government of Pakistan is totally siding with the US. It appears inconsistency with Pakistan's role as a frontline state and ally in the war against terrorism that has no leverage on Washington which wants Pakistan to combat terrorism but keeps Pakistanis away.

## **Conclusion**

The new international security environment has affected Pakistan's foreign policy in South Asia and particularly its participation in the US- led war on terrorism. To assure its national defense and security, Pakistan was not in a position to isolate itself as a rouge state. It discarded its pro-Taliban policy and cooperated in the formation of a new government in Kabul and made measures to curb Islamic militancy in Pakistan and end armed support to the insurgents in Kashmir. Pakistan supported US military operation in Afghanistan to assure its own security as Washington threatened to do the same in Pakistan. Reversal of the policies on Kashmir and nuclear weapons program were also at stake due to this threat, it would be better to define this period in terms of war generated by the terrorist attacks. So the foreign policy was formulated perceptibly to deal such threats and new trends that have come to form the core of its policy options. Terrorism is now viewed as the principal challenge to Pak-US relations.

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In the changing situation, formulations of policies require some durable bases for cooperative interaction with the US regarding its shift in priorities from counter terrorism to other considerations. Pakistan needs to define its policy to hold its ground with the US in the areas of mutual interests and to establish strong durable and reliable relation to the future pursuit of the US interest in Pakistan. US must engage positively with Pakistan to a long-term program of security, economic development and political support to stabilize its struggling economy and stagnating social development.

In the prevailing situation, Pakistan can make US to play a leading role in finding a resolution of the Kashmir dispute, which remains the core issue of Indo-Pak confrontation. After years of rejecting any role for the US in resolving this dispute, India now seems flexible in including the US for resolving it. Though there is no clarity as to what kind of solution to the Kashmir issue will be granted by the US but there are hopes to resolve the issue according to the “wishes of the people of Kashmir”, such proposals are already emanating from the US-based Kashmir Study Groups.

Pakistan must be conscious of the sensitivities of the US on the issue like the transferring of nuclear technology and to work towards creating a nuclear safe South Asia. Pakistan should adopt the policy, which is least hazardous. Instead of becoming alliance/ partner or ally to Washington’s designs, it should ensure its security by going these coalitions.

A major tilt of US towards India and flowering relationship in the form of strategic partnership is also a matter of great concern for Pakistan. No doubt, international relations are based on strategic consideration, economic benefits, ideological compatibility and culture but they should not be at the expense of an ally.

The policy-makers need to devise a long-term strategy, which would secure an honourable position and would be helpful to settle the regional disputes while ensuring our national security and economic well-being. No doubt, it is daunting but not an impossible task. However, prerequisite for achieving this goal is a democratic, politically and economically strong democratic Pakistan. So the future of Pak-US relations can be made mature, friendly and normal with the cooperation on all possible areas.

## Note

1. For details see, Baalz and Bob Woodward, *Washington Post*, 2002, January; Woodward, *Bush at War*, 58-9; Litwak, *Regime Change*, 40; Hussain, “War against Terrorism,” pp. 34-35.

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