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# Cooperation and confrontation in Pakistan and United States Relations (1999-2008)

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*The relationship between Pakistan and the United States has seen many ups and downs, since the time of independence. The aim of this article is not only to provide a comprehensive historical account of the relations; it also aims at explaining cooperation and confrontation between the two countries in the broader sense during Pervez Musharraf era. "The purpose of the article is also to focus on how the two countries reached various formal agreements, how the official dialogues were conducted on major issues of bilateral interest, and what impacts it made on the relationship between the two nations. It has also been probed how the US policy towards Pakistan changed from confrontation to cooperation after 9/11 attacks. It has also encompassed Pakistan's economic dependence on the US aid, its social sector's developments and the need for the US military aid for the balance of power in the region and national security of Pakistan. The backlash and aftermath on the economy of Pakistan, socio-religious life, law and order situation, suggestions to reduce the atmosphere of mistrust, and the way forward to improve the two countries relationship have also been part of the analysis.*

**Keywords:** Independence, official dialogues, nations, US policy, 9/11 attacks, law

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## Introduction

The relationship between Pakistan and the United States are a combination of cooperation<sup>1</sup> and confrontation<sup>2</sup>. The two states relationship was worsening due to a number of reasons including terrorism, narcotics, and nuclear issues, when Musharraf took control of Pakistan on October 12, 1999. Nuclear program that was initiated by Z.A. Bhutto was not in good books of the United States. Severe economic sanctions were imposed on Pakistan by the United States and its allies. Funds for Ghazi Barotha Hydropower Project were stopped by the World Bank. Pakistan had always been labeled as an enemy by India. Pakistan, a nuclear country with its modern missile technology was considered by them more dangerous not only for India but for the entire region. The growing relations of Pakistan with China were a great cause of concern both for India and the US, which wanted India to counter the communist threat. In spite of that situation, the US did not wish to put pressure on Pakistan and wanted their relations to remain unobstructed mainly due to strategic location of Pakistan. While knowing the importance of their country for the US and its allies, the new military regime in Pakistan also tried to play its cards with utter care.

Due to its nuclear technology pursuit, Pakistan had been facing severe economic sanctions imposed not only by the US and its allies but from some world institutions as well. Because of the nuclear issue, the opinion against Pakistan in the US had hardened. After the military takeover in Pakistan, the situation went from bad to worse. Despite persistent opposition from the US, Pakistan conducted a nuclear test on May 28, 1998. Following which Bill Clinton, the US President, imposed non-humanitarian sanctions on Pakistan under section 102 of the Arms Export Control Act. An additional layer of sanctions under section 508 of the Foreign Appropriations Act that included restrictions on foreign military financing and economic assistance was also imposed.<sup>3</sup> Since the beginning of 2001, Pakistan has faced a variety of sanctions imposed by the US. In September 2001, Pakistan was criticized for receiving Chinese components for missile development and was accused of violating the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). This became the main reason of sanctions from the US in 2001. The two countries relationship was revolving around the signing of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) that was associated with the *Taliban* and the military rule in Pakistan, in the mid 2001. Tensed relations between the two countries had also been due to the unresolved issue of F-16.<sup>4</sup> Due to the sanctions imposed by the US, Pakistan had to face hardship. In this situation, the US Assistant Secretary of State, Christina B. Rocca, visited Pakistan in 2001. Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Abdul Sattar, during a meeting with her, insisted that the US should lift economic sanctions.<sup>5</sup>

Musharraf had been criticized for adopting a US dictated policy because it depicts the cause of all the ills Pakistan was facing. While the Western media blamed Pakistan of providing safe havens for terrorists, training camps, and sponsoring religious extremism in the region. It had also severely censured Pakistan, for Abdul

Qadeer Khan's efforts for the nuclear proliferation.<sup>6</sup> The US media painted Pakistan as a foe before 9/11, and despite its U-turn in its foreign policy the country remained a foe in their eyes after 9/11 as well. However, because of its geo-strategic location, Pakistan remained important for the US. That's why diplomatic ties were not broken, both in the hot and cold days of mediation. After 9/11, Musharraf administration could not completely comprehend the value of Pakistan for the US. Therefore, the US terms were accepted by them unconditionally, i.e. agreeing to send Pakistan into hot water and Bush's (2001-2009) seven demands for cooperation were accepted by Pakistan.<sup>7</sup>

A key component of the US policy towards the South Asia has been to achieve regional stability by encouraging both India and Pakistan to solve their bilateral issues, especially the Kashmir dispute, through peaceful negotiations.<sup>8</sup> Musharraf paid a weeklong visit to the US, from September 7 to September 14. The purpose of his visit was to attend the special commemoration of 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York. During his visit, many vital issues of regional and bilateral concerns also came under discussion with the Bush Administration. Musharraf also raised the Kashmir dispute, with the Secretary of State, Colin Powell. He highlighted that without solving the Kashmir dispute according to the wishes of the Kashmiris, the normalization of relations between India and Pakistan was not possible. Both countries confronted several challenges ranging from the war on terrorism to Pakistan's nuclear program and more importantly its relations with India. For reducing tension between India and Pakistan, over the Kashmir dispute, the US agreed to play an active diplomatic role in efforts.<sup>9</sup>

Instead of that, Pakistan had to pay the price of her cooperation with the US. Pakistan had to face several internal security threats, the uprising of sectarian violence, and suicide attacks on its Army and the civilian population. Perhaps, all problems and issues relating to the sovereignty and integrity of the State were not fully comprehended. The relations of the two countries could have been enhanced under very different terms and on conditions at the time of 9/11, which would have suited both Pakistan and the US, and the fatal consequences could have been avoided. Pakistan faced crisis after crisis, including the challenges to its writ and danger to its integrity. Pakistan had to confront serious issues, on the diplomatic front, especially in its relations with Iran, China, and newly independent Russian States. Due to the turbulent law and order situation, foreign as well as domestic investors lost their confidence in the State. Though the Gross Domestic Product, (GDP) and foreign remittances were increased, but unfortunately, this rise had no sustainable and long lasting impact on the economy.

Relations between Pakistan and the US became complicated after 9/11 but overall it brought a soother change in the attitude of the US. Pakistan not only condemned the terrorist attacks, but also avowed its willingness to join the US in the War against terrorism. Therefore, Pakistan supported the US against the *Taliban* regime in Afghanistan. According to Musharraf, the reasons to join the US led war in Afghanistan were to protect Pakistan against the threat from India, to preserve its nuclear and missile assets, to revive the economy and to promote the Kashmir

cause. On the other hand, the US decided to ignore the lack of democracy in Pakistan. The sanctions against Pakistan, imposed in response to the nuclear explosions, were lifted and aid was also restored. Due to the unexampled inflow of foreign aid at the end of 2001, Pakistan's economic condition improved.<sup>10</sup>

It is no longer a secret that at the time of the takeover by Musharraf, the economy of Pakistan was in a shamble. Because of nuclear tests in 1998 and the military coup in 1999, Pakistan was already facing US sanctions under Symington (1978), Pressler Amendment (1990), Glenn Amendment (1998) and other sanctions.<sup>11</sup> The International Monetary Fund (IMF) had frozen final instalment of 1.56 billion US dollars' worth of credit, which had been allocated to Pakistan in 1997. The sanction had also led to dry up foreign investment which lowered to almost zero in 1999-2000. The domestic debt rose from 1877 billion to 3096 billion, which was 97.5% of the GDP. Foreign debt went to 237 billion rupees and as a result, 45% of the budget spending was being allocated in the budget as debt servicing. The major economic developments and other policies towards Pakistan were revisited, after acceptance of the demands of the US: i.e. friendly readjustments of foreign loan, World Bank, IMF, Western Europe, US grant in aid were rescheduled. After 9/11, Musharraf himself admitted that it was because of Pakistan's economic weakness that it accepted the conditional ties while restoring Pak-US relations. Surely, due to financial and economic constraints, Pakistan could not get better terms and conditions in the war against terror; for, the economic gains could have been magnified and could have long term impact on the economy of Pakistan. Because of shift and acceptance of their proposed terms, as a reward, US Congress authorized the US President to provide aid and extend complete financial support to Pakistan.

In 2002-2003, Pakistan got 1.2 billion dollars US assistance. To pay its internal debt, US aid worth 600 million dollars was transferred to Pakistan Government directly. Moreover, the US agreed to reschedule 379 million dollars bilateral debts through the Paris Club and also agreed to support Pakistan's 12.5 billion dollars bilateral debts with Paris Club Members. On its textile goods, Pakistan was also given trade concessions by lowering its tariff and restrictions. The US President authorized by Senate to reduce, suspend, and execute duties on import of textile. On the same analogy, the IMF executive board approved 135 million dollars for disbursement of Pakistan loan.<sup>12</sup> In 2002-2008, Pakistan received 13696.86 million dollars fund in terms of economic assistance United States Agency for International Development (USAID), military assistance, and Coalition Support Fund.<sup>13</sup> Similarly 12.139 million dollars were provided in different social sector programmes during the same period which included the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) Development Plan, International Disaster Assistance, and Civilian Assistance Programme. Therefore, the overall economic condition and GDP growth of Pakistan reached almost to 7-8%, during the Musharraf era. The Administration of the US seemed concerned and raised questions relating to corruption and transparency issue in the proper utilization of funds. On the use of the aid, the US and its allies tried to put certain conditions. Despite all objections

and reservations, President Bush was compelled to give remarks “Brave and courageous leader of Pakistan” for Musharraf. Surprisingly, it was the same Musharraf, whom Bush had denied a handshake two years ago.

For the year 2002-2010, another important factor was that “the military aid provided to Pakistan by the United States included extraordinary defense supplies worth 5.4 billion dollars. Pakistan also received 2.1 billion dollars in foreign Military Financing Grant in addition to military equipment which included P-3/C Orion maritime patrol aircraft (valued at 474 million dollars), 6312 Tube-launched, Optically tracked, Wire-guided (TOW) anti-armor missiles (186 million dollars), 5600 military radio sets (163 million dollars), six surveillance radars (100 million dollars), six C-130E, 20 cobra helicopters (48 million dollars). Similarly, under Coalition Support Funds, from the Pentagon budget, millions of dollars and equipment were handed over to Pakistan Army. Almost 2.1 billion dollars were also provided to the Pakistan Army to purchase weapons for counter terrorism.” The special military training and capacity building programme was given to the Pakistan Army.<sup>14</sup>

The shift in foreign policy narrated by Musharraf, but the Pakistanis as always, had remained mostly allied but distrustful ally of the US.<sup>15</sup> Pakistan needed by the US to play a pivotal role in advancement of their interests in the region, due to its geo-strategic location. American interests demand their influence in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. That’s why Pakistan’s demand for parity with India was always dispelled by the US. Consequently, the two states had a history of mistrust, and anti-American sentiments in Pakistan were also obvious.

During Musharraf era, the pitfall in the policy of the US relationship with Pakistan remained always in different intensity. Anti-American sentiments in Pakistan and the trust deficit between the both States on the implementation of even mutually agreed policies had always been an issue of great concern for policy makers. Moreover, issues like export of missile technology from China, Pakistan policy on Islamic militancy, A. Q Khan’s alleged role in the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and the US areal drone attacks on Pakistani soil added difficulties in the US relations. Although Pakistan had accepted the influence of the US in the region yet every step Islamabad was analyzed with a lot of skepticism in Washington, during Musharraf era. The US was not satisfied with Pakistan’s efforts and consistently pressurized to do more by deploying troops on Pak-Afghan borders at a time when Pakistan was facing the *Taliban* and other terrorists coming from Afghanistan into Pakistan and has been creating internal security problems. On the issue of drone attacks, because of the loss of human lives and due to the violations of Pakistan’s sovereignty, Pakistan had serious reservations. Tremendous anti-American sentiments in Pakistan were produced by the drone attacks, which somehow became a supporter of terrorists by earning sympathies despite their inhuman acts.<sup>16</sup>

Pakistan had always been at loggerheads with the US, on the nuclear issues. The so-called safe-haven for terrorists in FATA was another issue on which both states had divergent point of views. During bilateral talks between the two countries, the

discussion on “good” and “bad *Taliban*” remained the focal point of discussion. The role of India in Afghanistan and its repercussions for Pakistan’s security also remained a hurdle and always created mistrust and skepticism on both sides.

The endeavors to modify Pakistan’s foreign policy had shown serious repercussions. The concept was in a successful moderate model state which could remove economic disparity, and provide equal opportunity for progress of every citizen unlike capitalism and socialism. Due to the deep rooted Islamic ideology, inculcated in the heart and mind of people of Pakistan, the changed policy was not accepted and the public reacted with growing anti-American sentiments. Not only the religious sector of Pakistan, but also liberal and moderate civil society condemned the US for committing acts of terrorism. The growing influence of India in Afghanistan also created serious issues with specific reference to Balochistan and Karachi where India was accused of providing weapons and financial support to the separatist groups creating serious security threats to Pakistan.

By creating serious sectarian issues through suicide bombing thus depicted the State of Pakistan as “unsafe” for the minorities, India and Afghanistan took the advantage of turbulent Pakistan. It also provided an opportunity to hostile countries to raise the issue of human rights violations in Pakistan. With the support of the Afghan based *Taliban*, the extremists tried to capture Swat Valley, South and North Waziristan. “Furthermore, *Jindullah, Hizbullah Tehrik, Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, Lashkar Jhangvi, Sipah-i-Sahaba* and *Sipah-i-Muhammad* and some other small local militant groups also challenged the writ of Government. From 2001 to 2009, Pakistan suffered a loss of almost 67.926 billion dollars. Resultantly, socio economic sectors pertaining to human development index fell down. Direct foreign investment, the backbone of the economy of any country, also touched the lowest ebb.” The Kashmir dispute and other issues with India were compromised; collateral damage, loss of life was immeasurable.<sup>17</sup> The sovereignty and independence of Pakistan was compromised. Farhat Mehmood said in his interview that the relations between the two countries improved in Musharraf era because of the resumption of US military and economic aid in the post-9/11 era.<sup>18</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Having gone through the history of Pakistan-US relations, as far as Musharraf era is concerned, it was a period when Pakistan had to decide either it was with the US or not in the war against terrorism. Due to her support in the war against terrorism, Pakistan won the cooperation of the US and accordingly her policies were modified, during Musharraf era. Towards her former allies, the *Taliban*, Pakistan also changed her policies. The incident of 9/11 changed the world, including the political scenario of South Asia, and Pakistan in particular. Both the countries tried their best to eradicate terrorism, but till date it still exists in the region. The participation of Pakistan in the war against terrorism was essential. And its cooperation towards the US became a reason of the US aid. Pakistan had to face a lot of internal problems while providing logistical and tactical support to the US.

While giving access to the US to her military bases (Pasni, Jacobabad, Shamsi and Dalbadin), it had to confront problems. The cooperation was against the *Al-Qaeda* and *Taliban*, resulting in tremendous loss of lives leading towards more challenges. The relations between the two countries, were the combination of cooperation and confrontation because relations marred with mutual mistrust and suspicion all the way from 1965 war till today.<sup>19</sup>

In February 2002, Musharraf visited Bush at the White House\_\_\_ an event characterized by abundant handshakes, smiles, posed photograph, and compliments. Bush, in line with his personal approach to diplomacy, declared,

“When (Musharraf) looks me in the eye and said there won’t be a *Taliban* and won’t be *Al-Qaeda*, I believed him, you know” Bush had called the general “my buddy”, and during his White House visit, and stated that he was proud to call Musharraf a friend. The US president also applauded what he portrayed as Musharraf’s vision of “Pakistan as a progressive, modern and democratic Islamic society”.

For Musharraf, the visit was positive. Although he did not get the trade concessions he sought, Bush announced a package of increased economic and military aid.<sup>20</sup>

In 2007, as Pakistan faced growing instability and political strain within and without, the US came to see the presence of Benazir Bhutto as more and more important. Musharraf’s dismissal of Chief Justice, Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhary had generated public debated, rallies and street demonstrations calling for his reinstatement. This opposition soon became known as the “Lawyers movement” growing over the course of the year into one of the largest mass movement in Pakistan’s history.<sup>21</sup> Over the period 2001-2007, total transfers from the US to Pakistan amounted to 7,135 million dollars, including 2,335 million dollars in military assistance, budgetary support, development assistance, earthquake relief, and 4,800 million dollars in reimbursement of expenditures on logistic support to US forces in Afghanistan. In addition, the US wrote off 1,600 million dollars in debt.<sup>22</sup>

Moonis Ahmar said, Pakistan has got instability, violence and terrorism in the country, rise of anti-Americanism.in the field of socio-economic by cooperating the US.<sup>23</sup> It is true that after the 9/11 incident the two countries had established the alliance from two different positions: “Washington needed Islamabad to launch attacks against Afghanistan, that was ruled by the *Taliban*, who were sheltering *Al-Qaeda*, allegedly involved in terrorist attacks against the US on September 11, 2001; on the other hand, for Pakistan, the purpose of the alliance was to save itself from the anger of the US, and reap economic and military benefits from it and other western powers. It is because of this, that the cooperation in the war on

terrorism between the two countries has remained unstable and hostage to their respective strategic interests in the region”.<sup>24</sup> The mutual relationship established in 2001 remained firm. As had happened with both Ayub and Zia, the US leadership looked on Musharraf as the personification of its ties with Pakistan. The relationship was also strong at the reinvigorated military-to-military level, a particularly important link given the key role of the senior leadership of the Pakistan Army even after Musharraf restored constitutional government and installed a cabinet drawn mostly from the political world. It remained so until Musharraf lost power following the February 2008 parliamentary elections.<sup>25</sup>



## End Notes and Bibliography

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1. Cooperation means the action or process of working together. Cooperation among nations has become the focus of a wide range of studies in the past decade, a subject of interest to political scientists, economists and diplomats. During the past decade, much of the international relations literature about cooperation has adopted a distinct approach, which has tended to focus on the systemic level of analysis, that is, on the sources of and constraints on cooperation behavior among states as a function of the international system. The recent literature on international cooperation has made two general contributions. First, there is now a consensus on a definition of cooperation, which can help distinguish what behavior counts as cooperation. Knowing what we mean by cooperation is certainly an important first step. Second, the literature has developed propositions about the conditions under which cooperation is likely to emerge, by using game theory to model relations at the systemic level. Following Robert Keohane, a number of scholars have defined cooperation as occurring “when actors adjust their behavior to the actual or anticipated preferences of others, through a process of policy coordination”. Helen Milner, “International Theories of cooperation among Nations: Strength and Weaknesses”, *World Politics*, 44, no. 3 (April 1992): 466-467.
2. Confrontation means a situation in which people, groups, etc fight, oppose, challenge each other in an angry way. To see what a confrontation strategy is we need to see how it is implemented at various levels. We begin by discussing its implementation at grand strategy, military, strategic, operational and tactical levels of command. The general’s confrontation strategy needs to be analyzed and broken down into strategies that can be carried out by units reporting to him at the tactical level. This is the objective and essential principle of a confrontational strategy. In relation to what is done at the tactical level, the point is that while we are conducting a confrontation, we are not essentially doing anything except communicating. Here “essentially” means that we may be doing other things, but all such other things will have communication as at least one of their functions, and it is function that our confrontation strategy is concerned with. Nigel Howard, “Confrontation Analysis: How to win Operations other than war”, CCRP Publication Series (August 1999) 193.
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