

Pak-US Relations and Indian Factor

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Abstract

The South Asian region has always been a place of major concern for United States due to its strategic location; inter linked conflicts, threat of nuclear proliferation and tenacity of security threats such as terrorism. The region is hub of many conflicts and violence due to Pakistan-India's historical rivalry, terrorism and sectarian divisions. Security of the Pakistan has been unstable and highly based on proxy wars and involvement of Non-state actors. US has taken the responsibility to contribute in peace process of Pakistan-India conflicts to bring stability to the region but did not succeed. The Indian factor has always been primary for Pakistan while conducting relations with America. US tilt towards India has been significant since 2010 when strategic partnership between two initiated. After Trump came into power the US tilt towards India increased. To counter this US-Indo duo and maintain the balance in the region Pakistan has strengthened ties with Russia and China and also focusing on making adjustment in its nuclear doctrine to maintain its deterrence against the historical regional rival India.

Key Words: Pak, US, Relations, India, South Asia

Introduction

In an anarchic international order security is primary to the states. The security concept emerged from the absence of threat so if there is any threat then there will not be any security. National Security has been emphasized more than anything in US since the incident of 9/11. US adopted aggressive response in the wake of 9/11 and agreed upon using all available means to eliminate this threat of terrorism. US administration decided to launch war on terrorism in which Pakistan became partner of US. Bush administration at that time demanded Pakistan to become part of this war or go against it. Operation Enduring Freedom started in 2001 against Al-Qaeda and Taliban in Afghanistan. Due to Afghanistan being neighboring country of Pakistan, the administration of Pakistan reluctant to become part of it but supported US in this war on terrorism on three conditions. The first condition was that NATO would not take control in Afghanistan's capital. Second, US will mediate in Kashmir Issue and help Pakistan in this matter. Third was that Pakistan's nuclear assets will remain intact. The United States promised to fulfill its promise but proved to be failed in honoring these demands by Pakistan. Instead of that US rewarded Pakistan in form of financial aid, debts were reduced and diplomatic isolation of Pakistan was ended. But this was not enough for Pakistan as Pakistan was suffering much more because of becoming partner to this war on terrorism. In combating terrorism after the incident of 9/11 Pakistan has received more than \$30 B as financial aid and military compensations since 2001.

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Direct U.S Aid for Military Reimbursements to Pakistan from FY 2002-2020

Program or Account	FY2002- FY2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	Program or Account Total	FY 2019 (req.) ^a	FY 2020 (req.)
CN	273	18	23	12	15	^b	341	^b	^b
FMF	3,031	280	265	255	242	—	4,075	*	—
IMET	32	5	5	5	5	—	52	*	—
INCLE	774	57	40	40	38	21	970	*	21
NADR	146	11	10	10	5	2	184	*	1
PCF/PCCF	2,352	—	—	—	—	—	2,352	—	—
Total Security-Related	6,920^c	371	343	322	305	23	8,284^c	a	22
CSH/GHCS/GHP	249	—	—	23	23	—	283	*	—
ESF/ESDF	7,351 ^d	477	468	200	200	48	8,744	*	48
Food Aid ^e	590	30	—	23	—	—	643	—	—
IDA	724	101	93	85	62	36	1,101	—	—
MRA	257	—	—	—	—	—	257	—	—
Total Economic-Related	9,457^f	608	561	331	285	84	11,326^f	a	48
CSF Reimbursements ^g	12,125 ^h	1,198	700 ^g	550 ^g	^g	^g	14,573	^g	^g
Grand Total	28,502	2,177	1,604	1,203	590	108	34,183	a	70

Sources: US Department of Agriculture, State, Defense, US agency for International Development

The financial aid provided to Pakistan was nothing to the expenses that Pakistan faced due to large influx of Afghani refugees in Pakistan. The economy of Pakistan shattered because terrorist attacks started in Pakistan as well due to supporting US in Operation Enduring Freedom. The internal security of the Pakistan was highly compromised due to terrorist attacks and United States' drone attacks against Taliban in tribal areas of Pakistan. Another important incident of 2011 when US naval forces held controversial operation in which they killed Osama Bin Laden, was serious blow to the sovereignty and credibility of the state. Pakistan's intelligence and security forces came under serious criticism due to this operation and not knowing that presence of Osama in their country and inability to detect the foreign military's operation inside its own state. This event totally deteriorated the relations between two states. Further in November 2011 another act which completely fueled the anger of Pakistan towards US was the attack of NATO Forces on 24 Pakistani soldiers. In response to this Pakistan completely banned the supplies of NATO in Afghanistan. The level of mistrust and hatred increased between two countries.

During the tenure of Obama administration Pakistan felt pushed from US to do more even after sacrificing a lot in fight against terrorism. US also threatened to cut aid and put sanctions if Pakistan did not do more which worsened the relation between two. US felt that Pakistan did not do enough in fighting terrorism and If Pakistan had done more the results have been different. On the other hand Pakistan military felt that US blamed Pakistan for its own policy failures and Pakistan had done enough for US but received ungrateful attitude from the other side. Consequently the element of mistrust and uncertainty prevailed in Pak-US Relations.

Pak-US Relations under Trump Administration

In the above circumstances and constant failure of the US government to produce successful results, Donald Trump in 2017 after coming into office addressed his strategy on South Asia. Trump's strategy clearly allowed protuberant role to India and condemned the role of Pakistan while giving warning to Pakistan about providing safe heavens to the terrorists which poses threat to the interests of US in region. Trump said, "We can no longer be salient about Pakistan's safe havens for terrorist organization, we have been paying Pakistan billions and billions of dollar and at the same time they are housing the very terrorists we are fighting. But that will have to change." After Trump's derogatory comments about Pakistan's efforts in war on terrorism the sense of disregard about the promises made to each other prevailed over relations of Pak-US relations. Pakistan felt used and then discarded by US when their interests were served and no longer needed Pakistan. United States attempted to put all the burden of failure on Pakistan. By taking no responsibility of own wrong policies the relation further

deteriorated as Pakistan was blamed for failure instead of receiving appreciation and reward for fighting war which was not their at first place. Pakistan learned the lesson from this to not get involve in the wars of others if it does not have direct effect on you.

In January 2019, Director of National Intelligence of U.S while addressing to senate said that “Pakistan’s recalcitrance in dealing with militant groups,” and anticipated that Pakistan will keep threatening U.S interests “ by increasing nuclear weapons capabilities, maintaining its ties to the radicals, restricting the cooperation on counterterrorism and developing close ties with rising power China. US keep distrusting Pakistan’s intentions towards fighting terrorism and always considers Pakistan as well-wisher of terrorists and believed that Pakistani government support and use the terrorist groups as proxies against its neighbor India. U.S administration consider Pakistan as an ineffective partner in terms of fighting terrorism and believes that long term provided financial aid has been wasted, especially after the leader of Al-Qaeda Osama Bin Laden was found and killed in Pakistan in 2011.

Trump administration has taken even harder approach towards Pakistan, while keep pressing for doing more, US also suspended the assistance and aid related to security. The Washington continues to press for taking irreversible and decisive action against militant groups and terrorist organizations which are operation from Pakistan’s territory, until then the assistance will continue to be suspended. Trump administration’s threats did not work on Pakistan because Pakistan had already learned their lesson and faced the consequences for helping US in war. Pakistan started focusing on partnership with China and building new relation with Russia and Gulf countries rather than worrying about U.S threats of cutting aid.

In 2018 during the U.S Secretary of State Michael Pompeo’s visit to Islamabad he talked about the “Reset” of the bilateral ties and expressed his hope that both countries can find common ground for cooperation under the new leadership of Imran Khan. However the relation of distrust continues and influence of U.S is more reduced. United States realized that their purpose is not accomplished and they need Pakistan in the matter of Afghanistan. U.S relations with Pakistan have always been need base and this time again U.S came to Pakistan to fulfill their own objectives. In same year 2018, President Trump wrote letter to newly elected Prime Minister of Pakistan and requested to facilitate in negotiations of U.S with Afghan Taliban. Pakistan accepted this offer by keeping own benefit in mind out of this peace deal. Once again the cooperating between two started for strategic interests.

Pakistan agreed to help U.S wholeheartedly as Pakistan seeks benefit in bringing peace to the region. This time U.S appreciated the efforts of Pakistan by realizing the vital role of Pakistan and in March 2019 the Commander of U.S central command while addressing to the congress said, “We have seen Pakistan play a helpful role in helping to bring Taliban representatives into negotiations.” Pakistan by putting all efforts, made Taliban agree on conducting negotiation with US. But despite this cooperation of both countries on peace process of Afghanistan, the relations are not friendly. Both states have no common interests on which they can work together. Apart from Peace process no collaboration is being conducted in any other sector between two which is detrimental for the relationship of two states.

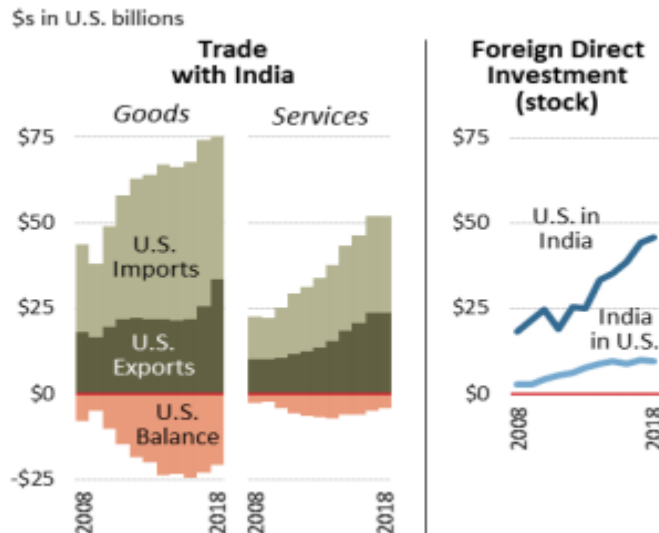
India-US Ties under Trump Administration

Meanwhile US shifted focus from Pakistan to India and Pakistan left alone without any major ally in international world. India became the priority and close friend to US and with time Trump-Modi friendship strengthened. In June 2017 Trump invited Modi to the Whitehouse and met him for the first time. The joint statement from both leaders following this meet up ensured the strengthening of Defense ties, boosting economic relation and cooperation on counterterrorism.. To strengthen the partnership in Defense another step taken forward through initiation “two plus two” dialogue in New Delhi. US Secretary of the State and Foreign Minister of India signed an agreement on military information sharing and India was given access to advanced technology used for communication. This agreement was under negotiation from decades which finally signed under Trump’s administration which shows the Trump’s willingness in order to develop strong ties with India.

In February 2020 Donald Trump made his first to India and while addressing to the rally of more than one hundred thousand people in Ahmedabad Trump praised the US-Indi relation and Leadership of Modi. Leaders of both States announced to work together on project of antinarcotics and mental health. India also purchased the U.S military equipment of \$3 billion and an agreement signed between the oil companies of both countries.

The trade relation between both states also strengthened under Trump's administration and has been more beneficial for India. In 2018 US was the second largest export destination of India after European countries and third largest import supplier to the India after China and Europe. Defense sales are significant in the bilateral trade between both countries.

U.S Investment and Trade with India



Source: CRS Analysis, Bureau of Economic Analysis data.

During Trump's visit to India, the deadly clashes between Hindu Muslim communities were going on. The clashes are connected to the break out of controversial citizenship law in New Delhi. Trump did not publically made statement about violence against Muslims in India for which he was criticized about discriminating against Muslims. Trump and Modi both share the ideology against Muslims and considers them as threat to state. Both are considered as racist leaders in views of critics.

Recently with the outbreak of Corona Pandemic the mentality of both leaders have been reflected through their actions in their states. In India Muslims are being considered responsible for the outbreak of Corona Virus. The ruling party BJP considers Muslims TablighiJamaat as "corona terrorists" and blame Muslims for spread of this virus in India. Trump shares the similar ideology against Muslims which brings the leaders of both countries more close.

Indian Factor in Pak-US Relations and Pakistan's Foreign Policy

In the above scenario where United States left Pakistan alone after using it and developed close ties to Pakistan's rival India, Pakistan felt need to balance out this power equation in the region. Pakistan to balance out the US-India partnership developed close ties with Russia and reached to next level of partnership with China. CPEC project started in Pakistan and with Russia many Defense and strategic agreements signed. Pakistan is also expanding cooperation with Russia in counterterrorism and working on its nuclear doctrine and capabilityto maintain deterrence against US-India duo. Apart from that India has also been actively engaged in putting efforts to diplomatically isolate Pakistan by projecting it as a state sponsoring terrorism. The latest Indian military doctrine has made the nuclear policy ambiguous. The threats of its surgical strikes have also made the security of the region in jeopardy.

In response to this Pakistan's policy has been balanced and pragmatic. Pakistan in order to cope with the challenge of diplomatic isolation, attempted to improve tie with other regional states. Under the government of

Imran Khan Pakistan focused on improving relations with Russia and Saudi Arabia. Pakistan maintained the policy of neutrality in Saudi-Iran rivalry and kept balanced relation with both states in order to prevent itself from isolation. Pakistan also attempted to strengthen its ties with Afghanistan by helping in US-Taliban negotiation. Pakistan also increased its high level engagement with the Central Asian countries. Pakistani administration in order to ward off Indian efforts to isolate Pakistan, demonstrated the active and skillful diplomacy within short time. Especially under the leadership of Imran Khan the foreign relations with Gulf countries, neighbors and Central Asian countries have been better than previous government. Pakistan has also become part of many regional projects for example, TAPI, SCO, IMA, CPEC that all promotes the regional cooperation and economic development among the members of these organization and projects.

Theoretical Perspective

Major Powers like US and India are always looking for the opportunities to gain the supremacy over the rival state to achieve the hegemonic status internationally or regionally. According to the theory of Realism the relation of US with Pakistan can be defined. Realism suggests that in an anarchic system states are uncertain about the intentions of other states and to ensure its survival states have to take certain action because survival is the primary interest of every state. In order to ensure survival states maximize their power whether by increasing size of military, weapons or by gaining influence internationally through making alliances. In the current international order it is very obvious that China is rising power and Pakistan has always been close friend of China and rival to India. India also shares bitter and uncertain relations with China. So, US used it as opportunity as the famous saying suggests "Enemy of my enemy is my friend", US adopted this approach and established close ties with India. This sudden tilt of US towards India is definitely due to the emerging China's rise as major economic power which poses threat to the hegemony of US.

There US formulated the long term strategy and looked for long term benefit partner which is India for them. India is also one of the major economies of the world so US is using it to counterweight China. The extended cooperation between India and US definitely have significant implications for Pakistan because with neighboring and rival state of India it has to maintain balance of power. Due to this reason Pakistan's security policy mainly been Indian centric. Pakistan always have to keep in check the military, technology and economic developments of the India to keep it in proportionate to Pakistan.

The strategic balance is important aspect of the balance of power theory so Pakistan has centered its security policy by maintaining the equilibrium of power. According to Waltz the theory suggests that if balance of power is disturbs between two states there is chance of war among states. So in order to keep the balance and prevent others from over powering, states go for gaining power through different means. This theory explains the Pakistan's correlation with the Indo-US strategic partnership. Therefore India is important factor that policy makers of Pakistan consider before making any policy with other states.

Analysis

The relation of US with Pakistan has always been need based. During cold war it was all about making more alliances and after the incident of twin towers the main objective of US was to destroy the military network in Afghanistan with the help of Pakistan. But after fighting for years nothing was gained and Pakistan is blamed for it instead of analyzing about their own policy mistakes. US is exhausted now to fight war in Afghanistan and in this process Pakistan has suffered a lot due to the wrong policy decisions of US. The current leadership of Pakistan and many other officials have always been in the favor of negotiation rather than fighting war with Taliban. US now come to this solution and once again the help of Pakistan is requested and Pakistan is playing the role of mediator in this process.

One of the other reason of US interest in Pakistan is because of the region in which this country lie. Asian Pacific region is important for US and they want control over this region for two main reasons. First is to counter the rising China in the region and second is because of richness of this region in natural resources. For US, Asian Pacific region is place of high economic value because of its geo strategic location but China is making most out of it by starting projects like CPEC and OBOR. China is the second largest economy in world so US's interest is in suppressing China and for that India is being used. India is also major power in region so US by helping them in improving diplomatic, military and defense so they can become challenge for China in region. Before China the

fear of Russian Federations' dominance in the region was threat to US. So the relation of US with Pakistan has always been to maintain its own hegemon position in the region. Pakistan is used as pawn by US to reach its own objectives and now India is being used to gain own objective.

On the other hand Pakistan is continuously facing a dilemma because of its decision of taking part in Afghan war. The effects of being part of that war are still faced by Pakistan. Terrorism came in this country and economy devastated due to burden of refugees, IDP's and destruction of terrorist attacks. The loss of many soldiers is also the price Pakistan had to pay for fighting the war for US. The cost of fighting this war is way more than benefits that were given by US. The relation with US always been asymmetrical and based on Mistrust, in this Pakistan suffered and US benefit most out of it. Pakistan developed close ties with US to gain advantage over India and also did not want to take risk of opposing super power. Pakistan also had the objective of Kashmir dispute resolution in their mind but that promise of US was never honored.

Indian factor is another important aspect of Pak-US relations, like US developed relations with Pakistan to counter Russia and now China, Pakistan has always interest of countering India in mind. The relation of two countries are always because of other countries and other than this no apparent interest is common between Pakistan and US. Now the tables have turned and Pakistan is more close to China and Russia rather than US. And US developed close partnership with India which is neighbor and rival country of Pakistan. Both Pakistan and U.S are trying to balance its equation with their rivals to ensure their survival which is primary objective of every state.

Recommendations

- Pakistan and U.S both need to refrain from public negative narratives about each other.
- Trump administration should have unbiased view about Muslims and must stop criticizing publically because of relations with Muslim states like Pakistan and Saudi Arab.
- Multilateral projects must be started to strengthen the relation and build trust between two.
- Diplomatic and Military coordination mechanism is necessary to be on same page on policy matters regarding Afghanistan peace talks. This would help to avoid mistrust.
- Indian factor must be excluded from policies towards each other.
- Create principles for Pak-U.S cooperation that could ensure mutual interest and respect.
- Track II diplomacy must be pursued between Pakistan-US and China to resolve issues.
- Pakistan should not become proxy in the great power struggle
- U.S must adopt a sensitivity to South Asian region's dynamics and avoid actions which could fuel the rivalry between Pakistan and India.
- To end Islam phobia people to people contact must be increased via educational exchanges. U.S must facilitate Pakistani students to reach to U.S institutions. This would help to provide better understanding of each other's culture, ideologies and work.
- U.S must assist Pakistan and India to develop CBM's in the area of conventional military and strategic weapons.
- The normalization of relationship between Indo-Pak will be beneficial for world's peace as both states are nuclear power. U.S must play role to revive economic cooperation between two.
- Pak-US must identify common interests and work on those to foster peace, stability and development in the region.

Conclusion

What both countries need to build the solid relation is to redefine their relation. Instead of building relation because of other states both need to find the common interest for cooperation. The Indian factor from Pakistan side and objective to maintain hegemony from US side has always been important rather than finding common ground for cooperation. For building strong relation these factors need to be side lined. Currently the common interest of both states is peace in Afghanistan and both states will benefit out of it. So working together on negation with Taliban and getting positive result out of it is important for the improvement of Pak-US relations. The cooperation between two countries needs to be expanded in other areas as well such as trade, education and health sector. Despite the difference in strategic interest of both states, Pak-US have potential to cooperate

and benefit out of each other. However, due to the strong tilt of US towards India the strengthening of relationship between Pakistan and US can be challenging but both needs to find way of cooperation despite this situation. It would be better for Pakistan to broaden its foreign policy and come out of traditional mindset of making Indian-centric policies. Pakistan must also avoid being part of power politics of major power and should adopt policy of non-alignment by establishing close ties with all major powers instead of choosing one.

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