

U.S- Pakistan Foreign Policy during Musharraf's Era

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Abstract:

This article is about Pakistan's foreign policy with United States of America specifically during Musharraf era. The article studies that since its independence, Pakistan has faced advantageous and disadvantageous situations that yield to periodic ups and downs in the association with USA. However, Retired General Pervez Musharraf's era have important and significant insights that hold special value in the history of Pakistan's foreign policy. The tragic incident of 9/11 placed Pakistan initially, in a very favorable position where U.S and Pakistan shook their hands for the long term mutual benefits. Pakistan was expected to play their role on war against terrorism and in return U.S aid will provide development in social and economic sectors in Pakistan. Since 9/11, both states witnessed an era of close ties with shared interests. Conclusively, President Musharraf realized that he has been struck in a complex situation between Taliban and US along with national and international criticism, possible threat from India and country's future at stake. The article studies the details of this era and tries to rationalize President's hidden motives.

History of United States and Pakistan Relationship: A Brief Overview:

The period of 68-years of independence of Islamic Republic of Pakistan has witnessed both engagement and disengagement in terms of relationship with US. Since independence, Pakistan's account of foreign policy has documented episodes of courtship and periods of distrust.

Beholding over the past, the history reveals that the Pakistan's emergence on the international stage was not supposed of any certain implications by the US. However, beginning in the 1950s the two independent states came into each other's terms as a result of Cold war pressures and the politics of South Asia, and that resulted in Pakistan being regarded as America's 'most allied ally in Asia'(Kux, 2001)

When Jinnah died on 11 September 1948, that is just one year after the independence from Great Britain, the newly independent state was mounted at a very crucial point. Both India and Pakistan were at the inception of the Cold War and for the sake of their future, both anew independent states needed to make a decision about their respective alignment. In a little while after the freedom, India and Pakistan were confronted with the dilemma of aligning either with the United States or the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Although India promptly availed the opportunities to make promising and favorable relations with the USSR, Pakistani leaders that took their educations from Western institutions and thus were highly impressed with western management, opted for aligning with the West. Correspondingly, Liaquat Ali Khan, the first prime minister of Pakistan, gave priority to visit Washington in 1950, instead of visiting Moscow and postponed the invitation of Soviet leader Joseph Stalin.

The 33rd President of the United States Harry S.Truman (1945-1952) generally remained indifferent and uninterested toward Pakistan from 1947 to 1952. When Eisenhower started his administration era in January 1953, the US government became increasingly anxious and concerned about the extent of communism to Asia and started to take an interest in Pakistan. This interest and concern concluded in the 1954 Mutual Defense Agreement By mid 1950s Pakistan also became a member of military alliances such as the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization and the Central Treaty Organization. This result in better and healthy US-Pakistan relationship and the alliance between the two, continued to improve as Pakistan joined the South East Asia Treaty Organization in 1955 and the Central Treaty Organization in 1956. A main pillar of the affiliation undoubtedly was the military cooperation between the two countries, which flourished through an active training exchange program and the fielding of US arms and armament to Pak military. While initially reluctant and uninterested, the US went on to provide economic and military aid to Pakistan for their own benefit. However, during the 1965 India-Pakistan war, the US seized martial aid to Pakistan. A fruitless and ineffective coordination developed during the 1971 crisis in East Pakistan. US again in 1980's, took interest in Pakistan and build up their bond due to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, which provided an opportunity for intensive and serious engagement.

Pakistan became the channel for the US war effort alongside the Soviet Union. However after the Soviets left Afghanistan in 1989, the relationship between the two countries again began to sour. In the 1990s the Bush Administration invoked the Presler Amendment, cutting military assistance and spare parts for weaponry. The Clinton Administration, initially, did show some sympathy and consideration for the Pakistani especially on the burning issue of Kashmir, but throughout the whole year of 1990, Pakistan's support of the Taliban, associations with terrorist groups and progressive conversion into radicalized Islamic society tensed relations between the two countries. The major breakthrough was the 9/11 attack. The 9/11 attack appear to dubbed a 'major non-NATO ally' (Alan Kronstadt, 2009). But by this time the inconsistencies in the US-Pak relationship had gained a new direction and intensity. Hussein Haqqani's observation reflected in his book that 'Pakistan cannot easily be characterized as either friend or foe' (Haqqani, 2005). Till now, relations between these two states have been characterized by engagement, concern, indifference, considerations, disagreements, disengagement, tensions and alliance. Even the analyst predicted that the high-lows of the relationship will persist in future. The foreign relation was considered as such an association that seems to have frayed and yet has persisted. Clearly, much ink has been split in attempts to comprehend when, how and why these states have joined their hands with each other. The literature regarding the history of US-Pakistan relationship and its ups and downs is comprehensive, detailed and humbling, and yet as we bury ourselves in the historical insides of this association, we are puzzled by anomalies and variances that evident enough to question reasoning and demand explanations.

The Era of 1999–2008 in terms of US-Pakistan Relationship:

As said prior, the Clinton Administration did show the interest and tried to improve the relationship by providing assistance and sympathy on the issue of Kashmir. Clinton administration also supported the Pakistani stand on Kashmir issue, however the escalating consideration became sour when Pakistan gradually became a radicalized Islamic society with the growing connections with extremists and terrorist groups and overall support and encouragement for Taliban. Then in 1999, General Pervez Musharraf took over and this coup was received with a combination of apprehension and equanimity by the US. However the 9/11 attacks gave a completely new direction to the Pakistan's foreign policy. The 9/11 attack changed the US-Pakistan relations to the point that by 2004 Pakistan was labelled as a 'major non-NATO ally' (Alan Kronstadt, 2009) but along with that, the contradictions and conflicts between the two states also gained some depth.

The history of post-1999 phase has shown a qualitative amplification in interactions through diplomatic visits between these two countries. This change is exemplified by the regular exchange of visits by senior officials and politicians, the extraction of various sanctions imposed on Pakistan, the transfer of weapons and provision of aid. Pakistan was no longer considered an outcast or has the near pariah status that it had just prior to the 9/11 attacks. That being said, the bilateral relations over the course have been strained on multiple occasions, though there was no serious effect on relations. The events of September 11 set in motion the process of re-engagement. The US set aside its hesitation regarding the Musharraf dictatorship and took the first step to positive relationship through visits of top political and military leaders from US. In return Pakistan also sent her prominent officials to US. Also, to make a positive promise, the US cancelled a series of sanctions against Pakistan and renewed aid (Epstein, Susan, & Kronstadt, 2012). While this aid and assistance was particularly meant to help Pakistan's expansion towards equipment and training of Pakistani security forces and increasing border security, it was also somewhat directed towards health, education, food, democracy promotion, human rights and narcotics (Kronstadt, 2007). Security cooperation between the two countries has witnesses denote worthy transfer of weapons and military equipment to Pakistan (Epstein, Susan, & Kronstadt, 2012). Between 2002 and 2009 the experts believe that Pakistan received \$15.3 billion in reimbursements and assistance from the US (Alan Kronstadt, 2009). With the passage of time, political analysts believe that Pakistan gradually became more integrated into the American strategy by allowing the US military to use bases and permission to serve as a communication route to Afghanistan which result in tightening the border. Pakistan also helped in identification and detainment of extremists and formally banning militant groups such as Jaish-e-Muhammad and Lashkar-e-Taiba. By 2002 the US military and law execution personnel began openly assisting in the trepidation of suspected Al Qaeda and Taliban fighters. In fact, by late 2005 and 2006 there were intelligences that the US propelled undeviating missile occurrences on Al Qaeda goals (Kronstadt, 2007). Lately, Pakistan also claimed to have apprehended at least 750 Al Qaeda suspects and handed them over to the US. Several important arrests were made in Pakistan, including Al Qaeda members such as Khalid Sheik Mohammed, Abu Zubaydah, Ramzi bin al-Shibh and Abu Faraj al-Libbi (Kronstadt, 2007).

Post 9/11:

The significant event of 11 September 2001 had a dramatic impact on US-Pakistan relations and thus it is considered a crucial point in timeline of US-Pak relationship. President Musharraf was prompt in extending full

support to America by encouraging war against terrorism. He enthusiastically agreed to all requests by Secretary of State Colin Powell. According to a number of sources, his positive response was considered as beyond expectations (Amir, 2001). With such prompt responses, certain questions were being raised by political analysts and President Musharraf has been frequently criticized within Pakistan for cooperating too readily and compromising on too many things particularly on national security to the United States without the demand of any adequate recompense (Amir, 2001). The most probable reason for his plainspoken response could be his foresight that America and Pakistan together census due the radical religious and terrorist elements growing within the region, particularly in Pakistan President Musharraf's whole-hearted support to the United States subsequently helped building a stronger affiliation between the two nations (Gastright, 2005)

As it is already known that General Musharraf condemned the 9/11 misfortune as the "most brutal and horrible act of terrorism" and in his message to President Bush, he had said that the world must unite to fight against terrorism in all its forms and root out this evil (Dawn, September 12, 2001). Pakistan was asked to provide logistical support to the U.S. military along with the use of Pakistani airspace, if needed, and to share all the information and intelligence on suspected terrorist leader Osama Bin Laden and his followers in Afghanistan. U.S. had already given seven point demand list to Pakistan, which has been mentioned below. Washington had also asked for a complete and detailed report from the ISI on Bin Laden, including his contacts with Pakistani and other Islamic militant organizations. Pakistan ultimately negotiated with the U.S.A. that no combat missions would be carried out from its territory and, instead of given unlimited over-flight rights, an air corridor was assigned to U.S. planes. Pakistan was agreed to break diplomatic relations with the Taliban immediately, yet American administration delayed it on purpose. Christina Rocca, The U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, discussed with Ambassador Lodhi that Pakistan should keep the political network open with the Taliban until the U.S. incursion was accomplished (Hussain, 2007, p. 37). In this respect General Musharraf met with his Cabinet and national security team. The question rose whether the Pakistani government would permit and admit the strains made by the United States. Corps Commanders saw in Islamabad, trusting that they could dialogue without the jeopardy of U.S. scrutiny in a highly protected setting. Nine corps commanders and dozen other high-ranking staff officers at the Army's General Headquarters (GHQ) were in attending, including the chiefs of the ISI and MI. General Musharraf did not find it hard to coax his nominated civilian cabinet, but it was not that much suave when it came to his top commanders and members of his military administration. There was a comprehensive detachment over the matter. At least four topmost commanders, with General Mahmood who had previously, in Washington, contracted on the dotted line, revealed uncertainties on the verdict to offer unreserved sustenance to the United States in its war on Afghanistan. LT. General Mohammed Aziz, Corps Commander Lahore, Lt.-General Jamshed Gulzar Kiani, Corps Commander, Rawalpindi, and Lt.-General Muzaffar Usmani, Deputy Chief of Army Staff, were amongst those who disparate pulling out support for the Taliban regime. They had all played key roles in the 1999 military coup. Musharraf, however, had the backing off other Corps Commanders. It was a precarious situation for him. (Hussain, 2007, p. 41)

General Musharraf persuaded with a convincing explanation of why Pakistan had to stand with America and how Pakistan is not in a position to face dreadful consequences by US. He told them that Pakistan faced a blunt choice—it could either join the U.S. coalition that was supported by the United Nations Security Council, or expect to be declared as a terrorist state, leading to economic sanctions.

However, General Musharraf was under enormous burden, both nationally and internationally, on how to proceed concerning U.S. demands and expectations. While talking to a gathering of retired generals, diplomats, and politicians, on September 18, Musharraf argued that the decision to extend "unstinting support" to the United States was taken in the face of fears and due to immense pressure, that in case of denial, a direct military action from the alliance of the United States, India, and Israel was very much expected against Pakistan (Khan, September 14 2001)

On 19 September, General Musharraf looked strained as he appeared on state television to explain why he had decided to side with the U.S.A. on the stance of war on terror. He justified his decision saying it was done to save the country's strategic assets, for the defense of Kashmir and prevent Pakistan from being declared a terrorist state (Hussain, 2007, p. 41)

This speech to his nation was clear about what was at stake for Pakistan. If it did not join the U.S. war effort, the country would be downgraded, isolated or labelled as "extremist". Also it is noteworthy that India had already offered its full support and cooperation to the United States, which means refusal to US may result in loss of any remaining international sympathy for the Pakistani position on Kashmir. He was perplexed about the survival of Pakistan's hard-won nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles (Washington Post, Online, 2001) Thus with this scenario, he offered five reasons for choosing this course of action:

- i). Secure strategic assets of Pakistan
- ii). The Kashmir issue should be safeguarded
- iii). Preclude Pakistan from being professed as a terrorist state
- iv). Avert an anti-Pakistani government from impending power in Kabul
- v). Pakistan re-emerged diplomatically as an accountable and distinguished nation. It was expected that the chief powers would range collaboration to the United States in grueling the terrorists. None would compete with a probable U.S. verdict to stand an outbreak against the Taliban. No resistance would be sought, or measured essential, of Taliban involvement with bin Laden.

Pakistan has been supposed to play a vital and active role in the war on terrorism; that contributed two opinions among the general public of Pakistan. There are those who constructed the notion that Pakistan's support for the war on terrorism is being sustained solely due to the efforts of President Pervez Musharraf's personality alone—and also that it does not reflect the true priorities of the country's general public as well as it is not in consensus with Pakistan's national interests. Interestingly, on the contrary the other notion is based on the same argument which is being used by Musharraf's political opponents as well as some of his supporters. His political opponents and the anti-US lobby try to imply that assisting US on the war against terrorism is extremely unpopular in Pakistan and a larger fraction of populace disagrees with the General Musharraf's policy. This segment argues that President Musharraf is fighting an unholy and unfavorable war to please the Americans and that he should be removed from power. On the other hand, the President's supporters, emphasize that it is only President Musharraf who has clear terms and can provide unrestricted and unhampered Pakistani support on the subject of war against terrorism. If this is supposed to be true, then his continuation of presidency is central to the interests of the United States as well as to the Pakistan. Both arguments miss the mark and undermine President Musharraf's personal security. It should be obvious that the perception that this policy is dependent on the individual has led to multiple attempts on the President's life, at least two of which nearly succeeded. In fact, President Musharraf's opposition to religious extremism began well before 9/11.

President Musharraf's efforts to minimize the effects of extremism and eliminate religious radicalization began to strike long before being advanced by the United States following 9/11. Furthermore, a large majority of Pakistanis do not share the Islamists' vision of the future of the country and are concerned about the growth of extremism. It is unfortunate that Pakistan lack the direction for its vision since its emergence as sudden death of Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah in 1948 left Pakistan in abeyance and the declaration of the clear vision for the state remained an unfinished business. This resulted in confusion and ambiguity among the populace of Pakistan. On a broader view, it is considered that majority of Pakistani are afraid of intensification of religious extremism in the country Consider, for example, Pakistan's 2002 general election: The Pakistan Muslim League (Quaid) and its associated parties that supported President Musharraf's political ideology at that time, won in three of the four provinces and were able to form a central government as well as three provincial governments. On the other hand, the Muttahida Majlis Amal (MMA), an alliance of six religious political parties, who were at that time running against Pervez Musharraf's political ideology and were very rigid towards US aid, won its seats primarily within the Pukhtun area of the tribal-dominated NWFP. Hussain Haqqani said, "Despite the MMA's unparalleled electoral recital in 2002, the coalition (MMA) gathered only 11 percent of the entire votes troupe; the Islamist vote as a percentage of total recorded voters has been more or less immobile since the 1970s." (Haqqani, 2005)

Furthermore, the penalties of negative retort of President to US could effect in drawbacks. Many radical predictors rely on that after 9/11 occurrence, Pakistan was left with no optimal excepting an assertion to US demands. General Mahmood on September 13, 2001, was given an official list of the U.S. demands. Armitage said, 'This is not passable,' as he gave him a solitary sheet of paper with a list of seven demands that the Bush government wanted him to receive. The General, glanced through the paper, read the demands and then forward it on to Ambassador Lodhi. Before he could start analysis of the paper, General Mahmood replied, 'They are all suitable to us'. The unexpected and instantaneous reply took left everyone in the room astounded and particularly all Pakistani officials amazed. 'These are very authoritative words, General. Don't you want to converse this with your President?' he asked. 'I know the President's intention,' replied General Mahmood. A reassured Armitage asked General Mahmood to see with Tenet at his headquarters at Langley. 'He is waiting for you,' said Armitage (Hussain, 2007).

The famous seven demands were as follows:

- i) Stop Al-Qaeda operatives coming from Afghanistan to Pakistan, intercept arms shipments through Pakistan, and end all logistical support.
- ii) Give blanket overflight and landing rights to U.S. aircrafts.
- iii) Give the U.S. access to Pakistani naval and air bases and to the border areas between Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- iv) Give all intelligence and immigration information.
- v) Condemn the September 11 attacks and restrain all local expressions of support for terrorism.
- vii) Cut off all shipments of fuel to the Taliban, and stop Pakistani volunteers from going into Afghanistan.
- vii) Note that, the evidence strongly implicate Osama Bin Laden and the Al-Qaeda network in Afghanistan, and should the Taliban continue to anchorage him and his collaborators, Pakistan will break diplomatic relations with the Taliban regime, and support for the Taliban, and assist the U.S. in the aforementioned ways to destroy Osama and his network.

This was undeniably forth coming threat to Pakistan as President Bush declared that, “either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. Either you stand with civilization and good (U.S.) or with barbarism and evil (Them). Choose and to those nations that choose wrongly, beware.” (Fani, July, 2004)

As compared to the relationship between the United States and Pakistan in the era of 1980s, present-day collaboration, although originated as a result of the World Trade Centre and Pentagon attacks, has developed along a more sophisticated agenda. Instead of a one time or one item agenda focused entirely or solely on the war on terrorism, Pakistan has used the existing situation of improved relations to pursue a broad series of issues that can help Pakistan in longer run. The policies pursued by the government of President Musharraf have proven to be in the finest interest of both Pakistan and the United States in both the short and long-term. This comprehensive approach consolidates national views related to globalization, the abolition of militancy, economic development, and democratization. The US government has also sincerely sought to reduce Pakistan’s foreign debt. Besides using its influence on G8 countries for economic cooperation, the United States ’was facilitated Pakistan’s negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). America has also promised to remove all sanctions imposed on Pakistan and lately has reassured the country’s leadership that its nuclear weapon competency is acceptable. The United States and Pakistan are also united on matters related to nuclear limitation, agreeing to resolve the proliferation issues involving Dr. Qadeer Khan founder of Pakistan’s nuclear weapons program, in a mutually acceptable and mutually beneficial manner.

With regard to Pakistan’s economy, President Musharraf has enacted macroeconomic measures to remove the country from its long-term debt trap. According to the CIA Fact Book, “IMF-approved government policies, strengthened by generous foreign assistance and renewed access to global markets since 2001, have generated solid macroeconomic recovery in the last three years. The government has made substantial macroeconomic reforms since 2000.... While long-term prospects remain uncertain, given Pakistan’s low level of development, medium-term prospects for job creation and poverty reduction are the best in nearly a decade.” (The World Fact Book: Pakistan, n.d.)

In addition, “Islamabad has elevated development spending from about 2 percent of GDP in the 1990s to 4 percent in 2003. GDP growth, stimulated by double-digit gains in industrial production over the past year, has now become less dependent on agriculture. Foreign exchange reserves continued to reach new heights in 2004, supported by strong export growth and steady worker remittances.” (The World Fact Book: Pakistan, n.d.) Surely, Pakistan was enjoying an economic recovery. The past fiscal year has indeed been fruitful for Pakistan’s economy, recording several multiyear “firsts.” Pakistan’s real GDP growth of 8.4 percent in 2004-05 is the most rapid in two decades. Pakistan was stood as the second fastest growing economy after China in 2004-05. It witnessed the largest expansion of private sector credit in the 2004-05 timeframe. Pakistan’s exit from the IMF Program was indeed considered as an important milestone; and the country’s public and external debt burden declined to their lowest levels in decades (Report on Economic Survey , 2004-05)

The government has also introduced standardized subjects in 8,000 Madaris in an effort to bridge the gap between madrassas and the formal education system. The government’s involvement is designed to strengthen the lines of communication between the madrassas and the government, educate over 1.5 million students, and help eradicate extremism throughout the country (Ullah, 2006)

The US government was taking a keen interest in supporting Pakistan's education reforms; having already invested about \$100 million. According to the State Department, the United States had a long-term vision for Pakistan's education system and also planned to support modernization of Pakistan's engineering and high technology sectors. (Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, 2006) Additionally, the government of Pakistan made a commitment to democratization. The government is now in the hands of designated councils who aid in a legitimate parliament. A tremendously daring and eventually prevalent step by the leadership is due to the transmission resistor of local government to nominated representatives. These and other liberal ingenuities by President Musharraf as part of his strategy of transformation and rational moderation are not only important for Pakistan's long-term objectives; they also aid the long-term securities of the United States associated to globalization, annihilation of radicalism, and democratization.

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