

## **PAK-US RELATIONS IN 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PAKISTAN**

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**Abstract:** *After the September 11 attacks on United States the whole scenario of world politics has been changed. US had to suffer a large number of casualties of its people. The Al-Qaida was blamed for those attacks and US wanted to take revenge and to punish Al-Qaeda for this offence. President Bush declares war against terrorism and decided to attack Afghanistan where Osama Bin Laden and his companions were hiding. In this entire scenario, Pakistan got the pivotal importance because Afghanistan is a land lock country and without help from Pakistani side no country could attack and capture it. So it joined US in war against terrorism and has suffered a lot of damages as a US ally in this war. The war on terrorism is still going on, and Pakistan stands in the middle but without its support US could not control the whole situation.*

*US has been demanding from Pakistan all kind of support. First Musharraf agreed to provide it and now President Zardari is also following his path. This war against terrorism brought major shift in US policy towards Pakistan. All the sanctions were promised to be lifted, economic and military aid also given to Pakistan continuously. History repeats itself, and once again Pakistan became a closer ally of US.*

*Presently the Afghanistan has become the centre of the great game, so the future of Afghanistan poses a threat to Pakistan. It is feared that after US withdrawal from Afghanistan none will be there to control the government. It is a big question to answer that what will be the nature of relationship between Pakistan and US after this withdrawal.*

### **Terrorism and Problem with its Definition:**

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Terrorism is an illegal act of aggression against any innocent individual or people at large. The main object of the person that commits an act of terror is to frighten other, and tries to get the desired result from that fear. Various organisations and states are also involved in this brutal act. The main reason of terrorism is also that the world community failed to formulate any concrete and final definition of terrorism that is accepted by all communities of the world. In that scenario it is a chance that the hero of one nation might be foe for other.

The US department of state and CIA defines terrorism as:

“Premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatants targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience” (Khan, 2006:370).

The terrorism in the real sense means any kind of threat or act of aggression against the people who did not do this to counter it and they were innocent people.

### **The 9/11 attacks:**

It was a bright sunny morning in the American city of New York. The people were busy in their routine work. Previous to that day, September 11 was not a special day for the citizen of US. While in future that day would become the most important day for the people of America.

When the clocks were at 8: 45 am, an American airline which named as Boeing 767 tore into the north tower of the World Trade Centre (WTC). That tower was a symbol of American giant economy. After the first crash nobody knows that, this was only the beginning. Shortly after the first plane hit the North tower another Boeing 767 of United Airlines flight no 175 crashed into the South tower of World Trade Centre. The fire broke up and a large number of people in those towers and also on the streets were killed. The third plane which named flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon building, which is a symbol of American military power. That third plane crashed killed 64 people on board and 125 inside the building. The fourth and last plane crashed in

Pennsylvania, 44 people which were in the plane were killed, and also the crew members of the plane and hijackers. It was confirmed later that the passengers fought with the hijackers in the plane, that's why the hijackers could not succeed to destroy their perceived target that was the White House Building (Malik, 2008).

### **THE US RESPONSE OVER 9/11 ATTACKS:**

It was the most tragic event in the history of US According to few people, that incident was compared with the Pearl Harbour incident (Japan attacked over pearl harbour, and killed a large number of people. that heap on the World War 2.) that shocking and very sad incident of 9/11 killed more than 3000 people and economic loses reaches to a hundred billion dollars. That sad news spread very fast into the whole world and especially in US The Americans were wanted to take revenge of that incident (Sattar, 2009).

Immediately after the incident of 9/11, the US media and the policy makers in the country pointed fingers on to the Al- Qaeda. They believed with certainty without any investigation, that only Al – Qaeda could do this to them. So the Americans wanted to punish the Al- Qaeda and its members for the attack over its people. It was stated with confidence, that because Al-Qaeda was involved in bombing of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, and also had its hand in a small attack over world trade centre before September 11.

President George W Bush was also very tense and in grief situation at the sad incident of 9/11. The world community looking towards Bush, that what he will decided to do. On September 15, 2001 President Bush stated:

“I am going to describe to our leadership what I saw; the wreckage of New York City, the signs of the first battle of war. We are going to meet and deliberate and discuss.... but there is no question about it, this act will not stand; we will find those who did it; we will smoke them out of their holes; we will not only deal with those who dare attack America,

we will deal those who harbour them and feed them and house them”  
(Hasnat, 2008: 261).

After the 9/11 incident US wanted to get the world community support to attack over Al-Qaeda. All the countries of the world believed that being a Super Power US could initiated an attack over militants unilaterally. It seems final that US decided to take revenge from terrorist, but in spite of ability to bypass all other countries of the world and take an action, US wanted a combine effort in war against terror

### **THE U.N & WORLD COMMUNITY RESPONSE:**

All the members of United Nation were stunned at the sad incident of 9/11 which killed large number of people. All members of U.N condemned these terrorist acts and supported the US action against them. The Security Council passed three resolutions on different days.

- i. The resolution 1368 passed on September 12, 2001.
- ii. The resolution 1373 was passed by the Security Council on September 28, 2001.
- iii. The third resolution came in on September 28, 2001 that numbered as 1377.

The U.N ask for global cooperation on terrorism by all its member states and also stresses on freezing of assets by the terrorist groups involved in the 9/11 (Rizvi, 2005)

All the countries of the world supported US in any kind of effort to punish Al-Qaeda. Afghanistan, the country where it was assumed that masterminds of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, were hiding had not been with the United States. The Taliban government controlling the Afghanistan had different views. The countries like United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, France, and Australia all are willing to support US on that sad moment. In South Asia region, where Afghanistan located, was also with the US, India the biggest power in that region was willing to give all kind of support to the coalition forces.

For the first time in history of NATO, it invoked article 5. According to that article of NATO an attack on one member state considered as attack on all. Australia also invoked the article 4 of ANZUS Treaty (which is a security treaty among Australia, New Zealand and United States) to support the threat that has come; Japan also gave support to US and deployed naval warships (Hasnat, 2008).

### **PAKISTAN’S ROLE IN “MISSION ENDURING FREEDOM”:**

In a joint session of congress and to people of US President Bush gave a historical statement. “Every Nation, in every region now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists (Rahman, 2003:65).

After that statement from President Bush, Pakistan faces an immense challenge. US decided to punish the Al-Qaeda and its terrorist who they think might be involved in attack on World Trade Centre and Pentagon. Pakistan being a neighbouring country of Afghanistan had to make some tough decision in the days coming ahead. Afghanistan is a land lock country; it does not has a link to the sea. It was very difficult to attack Afghanistan without the help from Pakistan.

The US after 9/11 incident demanded Al-Qaeda members from Afghanistan. President Bush in his address to the nation gave five demands to Taliban.

1. Handed over all Al-Qaeda leaders and members to US
2. The US stresses to close all terrorist camps in Afghanistan.
3. Give access to US authorities to verify the elimination of training camps.
4. Taliban should release all foreigners.
5. Taliban should protect foreign aid workers (Hafeez, 2008).

The Taliban rejected those demands. They are not willing to give Osama to U,S authorities.

In that situation Pakistan's role becomes very crucial. Pakistan sent few people to talk with the Taliban leaders and tries to convince them on demands of US but all went unsuccessful. Taliban rejected the demands of Pakistan and also the US demands.

The Taliban were not willing to hand over Osama Bin Laden to US. After that US decided to wage a war with Taliban and to punish them. In that situation US gives a list of demands to Pakistan to cooperate with US.

1. Stop Al-Qaeda operatives at its borders, stop the arms transfer through Pakistan and also end logistical support to Osama.
2. Pakistan should allow the blanket over flight rights to conduct air operations.
3. Provide territorial access to the United States. That included the use of naval ports, air bases, and strategic location and borders.
4. Pakistan should provide the intelligence support to the US authorities, about the Taliban and Al-Qaeda.
5. Continue to condemn publically the terrorist attacks of 11 September and also any other act of terror against the US and its coalition partners.
6. Cut off all shipments of fuel and any other items to the Taliban.
7. Pakistan should cut off all diplomatic ties with the Taliban (Harrison, 2009).

The Pakistani President General Pervez Musharraf was in Karachi, when that tragic event of 9/11 happened. He came back to Islamabad and called the meeting. Musharraf also invited people from various walks of life and consulted with them. The religious leaders were not in favour of acceptance of those seven demands by Pakistan. While the people from military and civil bureaucracy insisted on president to accept the demands and to support the US in war against terrorism.

Musharraf after consultation with all the people in the country and friends outside the country decided to support US in war against Al-Qaeda and Taliban and accepted all seven demands. It was surprising for the Americans, because they were expecting that Pakistan will not

do that very easily and Musharraf will accept one or two demands and can be convinced for one or two later. That's why the US authorities back in United States were not thinking that Musharraf will compromise on one or two very serious demands from US (Jabeen; Mzahar; Goraya, 2010).

President of Pakistan General Pervez Musharraf supported the US coalition partners in War against Terror that decision creates great problems for him. The religious leaders and people in FATA and also in other parts of country turned against him. They all stresses that Pakistan should not supported US in that war against a Muslim country. Musharraf was targeted more than once by the militants after taking the decision to support US led coalition forces in War against Terrorism. In fact the decision from Musharraf's decision to support US makes more enemies than few friends inside the country as well as in the outside world.

General Musharraf in his speech of 19 September 2001 declared.

“Some scholars and religious leaders are inclined towards making emotional decisions.... They are poised to create dissensions and damage the country. There is no reason why this minority should be allowed to hold the majority as a hostage” (Jones, 2002:1).

## **PAKISTAN'S WEAKNESS IN NEGOTIATIONS**

Pakistan decided to support US and coalition partners in war against terror. Few people think that, the hasty decision from Pakistan to agree upon all seven demands of US shows weakness of Pakistan in negotiation, these people believed that Pakistan should deal the whole process with ease; it should gain more time to consult with people inside the country and round the world. While gaining some time Pakistan could devise its policy in a more sophisticated way. Musharraf should talk to US authorities on nuclear issue and especially the Kashmir issue. Through that tactic he might be successful on putting extra pressure over India to give right of self-determination to the Kashmiri people. It was stated that after 9/11 US was not in position to confront with Pakistan, so ultimately it had to accept the Pakistani demands. Without help from

Pakistan US will never know exactly about the Al- Qaeda and Taliban hideouts. So the air operation might not be as successful as it was after the Pakistani support (Faruqui, 2008).

A former US ambassador Tereshita Schaffer is of the view that Pakistan and US have few different goals and agendas concerning the South Asian region. Pakistan and US agreed on the safety and security of Pakistan, but there are few divergent points in these two countries agendas.

1. The first main point of divergence between Pakistan and US is Kashmir issue, both countries have their own views on Kashmir, Pakistan wanted to resolve the Kashmir issue in favour of itself, while US could not do this because of Indian pressure.
2. Pakistan wanted a clear cut differentiation between the campaign launched inside Afghanistan by US and its coalition partners and the freedom struggle in Kashmir by Kashmiri people. The US has its own agenda, concerning that issue.
3. The third main goal of Pakistan is that, it wanted to establish a friendly government in Afghanistan after the fall of Taliban regime, while US just wanted to install a stable government after the early crisis (Faruqui, 2008).

### **US Pressure to “Do More” & Afghan blame game over Pakistan:**

Pakistan joined the coalition forces in war against terrorism, it suffers more than anybody else participating in this war. In spite of all effort from Pakistani side US consistently pressurising to “Do More”. The situation for Pakistan is not as simple as the western countries leadership thinks, Pakistan never sent its military inside the tribal areas before. It was first time in history of Pakistan that the tribal elders allow the military to come in their areas, for that reason Pakistan must consider the customs and traditions of tribal people (Rana, Gunaratna, 2007).

These tribal areas always have unique history, they never bear any outside pressure, so it was very difficult for Pakistani Army and other law enforcement agencies to fulfil the US demand of do more .US always demanded more troops on the border, but the reality is that US



itself has a deficiency of army in Afghanistan to control the situation. The other fact is that, the border of Afghanistan and Pakistan is very porous, there are very large mountains, and it is very difficult to secure the border between the two countries. In fact Pakistan is also suffering, because Taliban and other terrorist from Afghanistan come into Pakistan and create internal security problems for Pakistan (Rana, Gunaratna, 2007).

Pakistan always stresses on Afghanistan to stop the blame game over Pakistan, and work with coordination to each other to resolve the common problem of terrorism. Pakistan's President Musharraf categorically rejected the Afghan allegation and urges that Afghanistan must stop the blame game over Pakistan. He stresses in his address to the community and political leaders in his two days visit to Afghanistan

“Certainly, I completely agreed that Al - Qaeda and the Taliban are operating both in Afghanistan and Pakistan, Certainly there are some who are crossing from Pakistan to Afghanistan, it was not sponsored by his government, this blame game has to stop. We have to stop this blame game on both sides.... and trust each other” (Haq, 2007:26).

## **OBAMA'S NEW STRATEGY AND PAK – US RELATIONS**

Since taking charge Obama administration has to face a worsen security situation in Afghanistan which include the enlarge militant Presence in some areas, growing dissatisfaction and resentment toward the Afghan Government under president Hamid Karzai, Penetration of Taliban and militant from the Safe havens in Pakistan and the growing number of civilian and military deaths. So Obama administration has to adopt a clear strategy toward Afghanistan to handle these core issues. Joint Chief of Staff chairman Admiral Mike Mullen stated in this regard that “I am not sure we are winning: in Afghanistan (Katzaman, 2009).

Obama adopted a new strategy named “Strategic Review” which was announced on March 27, 2009 in advance of April 3-4 2009 in NATO summit. The key goals of this new strategy are:

1. Destroy the Terrorist networks in Afghanistan and Pakistan and reduce their aptitude to launch international terrorist attack.
2. Establish and maintain a strong capable government in Afghanistan.
3. Provide training to Afghan security forces and make them able to conduct counter insurgency with the minimum US assistance.
4. Sought help from international community to fulfil these objectives in practical terms.
5. 17,000 additional combat forces are to be sent to Afghanistan to insure security in the region.
6. Promote reconciliation with the Taliban leaders who accept the Afghanistan's constitution and lay down their arms.
7. Increase cooperation on bilateral bases between Afghanistan, Pakistan and US Provide military assistance to Pakistan's army to destroy militant networks in their country and provide 1.5 billion per year economic assistance for the next five years. US would support "Reconstruction opportunity zones" areas of Afghanistan Pakistan and US for cooperation in economic field.
8. US sought to establish a "Contact group" which would be consist of all states whose security is highly linked with the Afghanistan e.g. NATO allies, US's other partners, central Asian States, Iran, Pakistan, Russia, India China etc (Katzman, 2009; Khan 2009).

Obama's new strategy toward Afghanistan and Pakistan is slightly different from the Bush administration. Obama did not mainly focus on the adding of more military troops in Afghanistan but also adopted a reconciliation strategy toward Taliban and militants and give importance to the reconstruction of Afghanistan rather than only targeting Taliban networks.

The new strategy provides a more close relationship with Pakistan in developing its economy as well as helping in destroying terrorist networks in Pakistan. Pak-Afghan's bilateral relationship is not so good for decades, US would help to establish a friendly relationship between both countries because both Pakistan and Afghanistan faced terrorist attacks at a large scale which posed danger to their security as well as sovereignty.

## **DRONE ATTACKS:**

US military used unmanned airborne vessels (UAV), or popular named as drones, first time in Kosovo and Bosnia for only surveillance purposes, but this new technology got importance in Afghanistan and Iraq war, especially in Pakistani tribal areas (khan, 2011).

C.I.A using the Drone technology in Pakistan from 2004, after the arrival of Barack Obama in White House the use of Drones on Pakistani areas is increased. Pakistani public stated against the Drone Attack on Pakistani soil in which many innocent people were killed. US has no loss in that technology, because in that plane there is no pilot. United States could not give any legal reason over the use of drone on a independent country, because US always violates the sovereignty of Pakistan. On the other hand it was realized by few American policy makers and also Pakistani government, that Drone Attacks are counterproductive for US, because when a drone killed an innocent person, the family member of that person joined the militant organizations to take a revenge of their loved ones. In that way militants have many suicide bombers, who are willing to sacrifice their lives for sake of revenge (khan, 2011).

US launched Predator Drone Attacks within the Tribal areas of Pakistan to destroy the terrorist network of Taliban and militants. These Drone Attacks achieved considerable success in targeting the Taliban and other terrorist networks. According to some US officials;

“Drone strike have paved the way for a complete “Al-Qaeda” Defeat”  
(Pape; Eldman, 2010:23).

US wanted to launch free action against the militant in Pakistani federal administrative Tribal Area (FATA), where it perceived that these militants were hiding. The best way to destroy their networks is to attack by using the instrument of Hellfire missile, Liftoff from Predator and reaper unmanned Arial vehicle (UAVs); which also commonly known as Drones (Synnott, 2009). These drones are based on automatic or remote control technology which conducted accurate attacks in suspected area in FATA, without the need of ground forces in Pakistan.

These drone attacks are directly the violation of Pakistan's sovereignty, Pakistani government protested on this policy. US administration showed its intention that US would respected Pakistan's sovereignty but there is no evidence to follow this commitment in practical terms. These drone attacks got little success in targeting Taliban and other terrorist but the innocent civilian deaths are at large scale which resulted in counterproductive in terms of losing Pakistan's public support to cooperate US in this war further more.

Public polls show that between 75-90% Pakistani bitterly opposed the drone attacks. The Pakistani press, Pak government and public bitterly condemned these attacks. Even US counter insurgency experts also condemned them as counterproductive efforts because that destabilizes Pakistan. In spite of all these consequences, Obama administration is also committed to his former Bush policies and authorized to increase drone strikes in Pakistan (Oakley; Hammes, 2010).

CIA launched dozens of drone attacks in Pakistani territory which brought innocent people death at a large scale with minimum number of terrorist deaths. It is reported by a Pakistan based newspaper that CIA launched 60 strikes between 2006- 2009 in which 14 al-Qaeda leaders killed with 687 innocent civilian's death (Synnott, 2009). These drone attacks produced anti-American sentiments among Pakistani public and as little number of people favours that Pakistan has to cooperate with the US International Republican institute Poll concluded that only 2% of the Pakistan people were in favour of Pakistan's good relations with the US (Oakley; Hammes, 2010).

Pakistan government is protesting about this violation of its sovereignty; but it is a fact that it did not bitterly protested at this activity. It is predicted that Both states has a bargaining commitment with each other that US would continues committed to drone strikes and Pakistani government formally protested to counter the public opinion in this regard.

## **EXIT STRATEGY**

In an interview Obama said that “There needs to be an “Exit strategy” for Afghanistan so that US policy does not appear to be perpetual drift” (Katzman, 2009: 30). President Obama announced that US forces would be started to withdraw from Afghanistan in the beginning of 2011 and will completely withdrew until 2014 (James; James, 2011). This war has affected bitterly, the US economy and also provoked negative public opinion among US public. In spite of congress demand to close cooperation, the NATO allies have divergent views over it, some says that, for reconstruction and stabilization in the Afghanistan, NATO forces should remain there for some time more than 2014. The others have divergent views and wanted to quit from Afghanistan as soon as possible. ISAF has the number of core mission in Afghanistan before complete withdrawal:

1. Train the Afghan army, police and Judiciary
2. Maintain strong government in Afghanistan which could be able to counter narcotics efforts
3. Develop market system
4. Suppress Taliban as a whole (Morells, 2009).

These contradictory policies brings anxiety among the stakeholders especially for Pakistan and China. The increase of US partnership with India and its growing influence in Afghanistan is not seen as good for Pakistan and China’s strategic interests. All stakeholders except India strongly favoured the withdrawal of US coalition forces from Afghanistan. The long-term presence of US forces brought great changes in regional balance of power.

### **Conclusion:**

Pak-US relations transformed drastically after 9/11 incident. Pakistan became the closer ally of US Asian allies. US is still waging war in Afghanistan and Pakistan’s role in this war is of pivotal importance, Pak has a role to play in the future politics of Afghanistan and also in exit strategy of US. Relation between the two countries were cold after the killing of Osama Bin Laden. Pakistan also has its reservation on drone attacks on its soil. The need of the time is that

both old friends sit together and discuss the matter of common interest and also discuss the exit strategy of US, because as long as US will not withdraw from Afghanistan, situation could not get better in the region.

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