

## US-Pakistan Relations:

### The Geo-strategic and Geopolitical Factors

#### RELATIONS AMERICANO-PAKISTANAISES:

#### LA GEOSTRATEGIE ET DES FACTEURS GEOPOLITIQUES

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**Abstract:** The relations between the United States and Pakistan (US-Pakistan relations) have a very tumultuous history, which is spread over nearly six decades. Owing to the diverse strategic and, sometimes, incompatible strategic interests, these relations have seen various engagements and estrangements. This paper aims at exploring the role played by the geostrategic and geopolitical factors in bringing US closer to Pakistan. It takes into account the cost and benefits of these relations for Pakistan and the United States. It also highlights the present warmth in relations between the United States and Pakistan in the perspective of geo-strategic and geopolitical factors. It also discusses the future prospects of these relations.

**Key words:** US-Pakistan Relations; Geostrategic factors; Geopolitical factors

**Résumé:** Les relations entre les États-Unis et le Pakistan (les relations américano-pakistanaïses) ont une histoire très tumultueuse, qui s'étale sur près de six décennies. En raison des stratégies diverses et, parfois, des intérêts stratégiques incompatibles, ces relations ont vu des engagements et des brouilles variés. Le présent article vise à étudier le rôle de la géostratégie et des facteurs géopolitiques qui ramènent les États-Unis plus proches du Pakistan. Il prend en compte le coût et les avantages de ces relations pour le Pakistan et les États-Unis. Il souligne également le réchauffement présent dans les relations entre les États-Unis et le Pakistan dans la perspective de géostratégie et des facteurs géopolitiques. Il aborde également les perspectives futures de ces relations.

**Mots-Clés:** relations américano-pakistanaïses; facteurs géostratégiques; facteurs géopolitiques

*“Geography determines a nation’s history – the political significance of an area bears a well-defined relation to its climate, land forms and natural resources.”*

A Napoleonic Dictum

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## INTRODUCTION

US-Pakistan relations are greatly indebted to the geo-strategic and geopolitical significance of the latter. There is no denying the fact that geography controls the political environment of a country and the same is true about Pakistan. Besides opportunities, the geography poses some challenges too. There is no escape from one's geography and from its impact on one's policies (Mujtaba Razvi, 2001.). The security of a state largely depends upon the extent to which it adopts a vigilant policy towards her neighbors that postulates a sound frontier policy. It is also stated by the scholars of international politics and diplomacy that the defense and foreign policies of the 'small' and 'weak' states do contribute to shape regional and international politics (Hasan Askari Rizvi, 2001). All these are true for Pakistan. Looking at the past, it can be seen that owing to the strategic worth of South Asia, it has always been the focus of world attention and after the partition of Indian subcontinent in 1947 into two independent states of Pakistan and India, its importance remained the same. Both the states were viewed as key players in checking the influence of communist threat emanating from both Soviet Union and China.

In 1947, possessing a unique geographical location, Pakistan consisted two distant parts; the West Pakistan, in the Indus River basin and the East Pakistan (later on became Bangladesh in December 1971) located more than 1000 miles (1600 kilometers) away in the Ganges River delta. Separated from each other, these two wings had 1000km wide Indian territory between them. On the West, Pakistan borders with Afghanistan, whose one kilometer narrow *Wahkhan* strip kept the defunct Soviet Union away from Pakistani frontiers. To the North, she has the Peoples Republic of China. The oil rich heart of the Persian Gulf region–Iran, is in the northwest of Pakistan. In the South, the Arabian Sea, the northwestern extension of the strategically important Indian Ocean washes Pakistan's coastal shores. The vitality of Indian Ocean has remained unquestionable throughout the known history as it provides not only a commercial and trade link between Europe and the Far East but has also remained a key to the seven seas. The East Pakistan was separating the Pacific Ocean from the Indian Ocean and bordered Burma on the East (Mohammed Ahsen Chaudhri, 1993). Thus, looking from the strategic point of view, Pakistan was and is still at the crossroad of Central, South and Southwest Asia and is the easiest link between the oil-rich Persian Gulf and the East Asia. In short, Pakistan is situated in the region called 'fulcrum of Asia' the strategic centre on which the stability of the Asia depends (Ibid., p. 202.). Apart from enjoying the proximity with the strategically significant regions, Pakistan, until the disintegration of the Soviet Union, faced the grave geopolitical realities on the ground as it was in the most troublesome region where the clash of interests between the two superpowers of that time was imminent (Farhat Mahmud, 1991). There were also certain intra-regional conflicts (Rizvi, p. 202.) that were startling Pakistan and added much to her agonies. The circumstances of Pakistan's origin and the composition as well as the unique geographical features (especially from 1947 to 1971) had made it particularly a security-conscious country (Razvi, P. 184). At the same time she was faced with economic deficiencies as a newly independent state.

Looking at the geostrategic scenario of the region, it becomes obvious that Pakistan was faced with a generally hostile geopolitical and geo-strategic environment because of the pattern of her relationship with her immediate neighbors i.e. India and Afghanistan. The Indo-Pak relations had always been characterized by mutual distrust, hostility and serious disagreements on regional and international political issues since day one of their creation in 1947. India had not accepted Pakistan and she was constantly engaged in weakening Pakistan (Shahid M. Amin, 2004). The Indian leaders wanted the hegemony of India over the entire subcontinent. To achieve that end, they were openly striving to merge Pakistan with India. The forceful annexation of the Muslim States of Hyderabad (Deccan) and Kashmir in 1947-1948, the deployment of a massive part of her army and all her armor on Pakistani border and imposition of a war, just within a year of partition, were clear indications of the Indian hegemonic designs (Chaudhri, P.148). India was applying not only warfare tactics but was also exerting political and psychological pressure of relentless propaganda against the very *raison d'être* of the origin of Pakistan. Indian leadership, with the help of some other countries, was also engaged in isolating Pakistan from the comity of nations (P.39). Pakistan was in a real stalemate and she had to look for an external ally to check

the Indian designs. Therefore, the entire edifice of Pakistan's foreign policy was based upon Indian fear (P.1).

Pakistan's relations with her western neighbor—Afghanistan, had also been far from cordial due to the *Pukhtoonistan* issue<sup>2</sup>. It was in 1947, that the Afghan government denounced the 1893's Anglo-Afghan treaty of the demarcation of an international boundary between Afghanistan and India (then a British colony). She also launched her irredentist claim over the North Western Pukhtoon<sup>3</sup> populated area and started supporting secessionist elements in Pakistan. Afghanistan was also pampered by India by extending support on this issue. Afghanistan also had the Soviet Union on her back. Moreover, Afghanistan was the only country to vote against Pakistan's admission into the United Nations (Abdul Sattar, 2001) This wave of tension kept creeping under the carpet but was not allowed by King Zahir Shah, the then Afghan king, to take a violent form although his cousin Sardar Mohammad Daud was fanning it (Ibid., pp. 381-382.). However, Pakistan had a perception of resurrection of this issue.

This precarious geopolitical situation confronted Pakistan with two-fold security concerns. This fear was further aggravated due to the narrow strategic waist of Pakistan as all her major cities were border outposts especially one of her provincial capitals, Peshawar, was just next to the border (Rizvi, pp. 202-204.).

In such a grim geopolitical milieu, Pakistan needed a strong, modern, well-equipped and hard-hitting army capable of combating any threat arising from her western or eastern border that could jeopardize her national security and territorial integrity (Ibid) Pakistan had a number of options for making her security invincible and to keep her national integrity intact. But the common democratic ideals, the westernized bureaucratic set-up and, above all, the inclination of her armed forces towards the United States pushed Pakistan to opt for a close US-Pakistan relationship in order to get a strong external equalizer against the regional threats to her national security and territorial integrity (Mahmud, and General K. M. Arif.). Pakistani leaders were fully aware of the strategic importance of this nascent state (Aziz Ahmed Khan, July 1960; and Dr. Safdar Mahmood, 1984). These leaders even could not afford to ignore the geopolitical compulsion of their country for they had influenced the course of Pakistan's foreign policy throughout the history (Chaudhri, p. 230.). Moreover, the economic needs of the country were considered to be best catered by the economically potent United States.

## **FIRST PHASE**

Pakistan, therefore, started efforts to win the United States' strategic and economic support (Mahmud, p. 6). But till 1949, the United States did not respond in the same coin as the focus of world-politics, at that time, was Europe. Europe was passing through a very critical situation and there was a race between the United States and Soviet Union to win its support. Therefore, the United States was giving much importance to Europe than any other region in the world. However, during 1949-1951, just after the communist triumph in China, the war on the Korean Peninsula, and the volatile political situation in the Middle East, the strategic analysts in the United States started to realize the importance of Pakistan's geographic location (Abdul Sattar, 2007). The US States Department, in a policy statement, recognized the leading role of Pakistan in the Middle Eastern region and viewed it as a potential balancer in the South Asian power paradigm but looked at India as a Japan's successor

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<sup>2</sup> The Afghan government had signed a border agreement with the British government in 1885, according to which border between Afghanistan and the United India, of which Pakistan was a part before partition in 1947, was demarcated and given the name of 'Durand Line'. But after the departure of British from the Indian sub-continent and the subsequent partition of India into India and Pakistan, Afghanistan started an irredentist claim over the North-Western part of Pakistan and gave it the name of Pukhtoonistan. Afghanistan has not only been taking up this issue from time to time but has also been extending support to the secessionist elements in Pakistan.

<sup>3</sup> A nationality occupying the North-Western province of Pakistan who speaks Pashto language. The largest part of this nationality is living on the Afghan side and makes the dominant part of the Afghan population.

in Asiatic imperialism<sup>4</sup>. The United States desired the use of air bases and other facilities in Pakistan during any possible combat with the communist countries, especially Soviet Union and China<sup>5</sup>. Formerly, the US administration had tried to build up India as the leader of Asia to check the flow of communism from China into Asia but on calculating Indian tilt towards non-alignment, her reluctance to join the US camp, her role in Korean War, a visible change came into US policy (Farzana Shakoor, January 2001). Keeping in view the catastrophe of the spread of communist dogma from Soviet Union into the South and Southwest Asia and into the oil rich Middle East region, the United States seriously diverted her attention to these areas and decided to form a ring of alliances in order to curb this menace (K. M. Arif, p. 390; and S. Adil Hussain, p. 11.). The rapid political changes in the Middle East were also adding to the US discomfort. In these circumstances, the United States found Pakistan as the most important, comfortable and valued asset<sup>6</sup>. Pakistan was also ready to fulfill US strategic objectives (Mahmud, pp. 1-3) not only due to the peculiar geopolitical requirements but also in order to gain economic and military assistance that was essential for her national security and territorial integrity. But still the United States did not want to antagonize India. The officials of the State Department were not in favor of giving any military assistance to Pakistan because they said, "India is the power in South Asia. We should seek to make it our ally rather than cause it to be hostile to us. Pakistan is distressingly weak". The US ambassador went to the extent of saying: "It is a bad arithmetic to alienate 360 million Indians in order to aid 80 million Pakistanis who are split into two sections" (Chaudhri, p. 232). The US-President, Eisenhower, and Secretary of State, Foster Dulles, were also not dismissive of these views<sup>7</sup> but the vital strategic interests in the Middle East were considered more important by them. The upheavals in the Middle East and a perception of threat to the West's control over the strategic oil resources necessitated a new policy requiring cooperation of Pakistan in arrangements for the defence of the region (Abdul Sattar, pp. 356-357.). The induction of a nationalist government in Iran and nationalization of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company testifying to the decline of British power and prestige triggered the new US policy of direct involvement in the defence of the region. Therefore, by 1952, Pakistan came to be looked upon as a potential partner in the arrangements aimed at the containment of the Red Peril, the Soviet communism. Testifying before a congressional committee, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles described Pakistan as 'a real bulwark' and remarked that the religious convictions and martial spirit found in Pakistan can play a pivotal role against communism (K. Arif (ed.), 1984) On June 1, 1953, in an address to the American people, the US Secretary of State expressed the same feelings and it was perhaps the first official introduction of Pakistan to the American people (Chaudhri, p. 138). In other words, it was the geo-political and geo strategic importance of Pakistan which brought her into the limelight of world politics and there established a close strategic partnership between Pakistan and the United States in early 1950s (Mahmud, pp. 1-2). The United States regarded Pakistan not only as a major player in the containment of communism but envisaged military of Pakistan as a 'stabilizing force', in the Middle East, and, even in Southeast Asia (Ibid., p. 8). The United States established close ties with the Pakistan Army to curb any possible anti-US or pro-communist popular movement in Pakistan, to keep the country's policies in line with the United States and grab power itself if the politicians show signs of derailing the US interests<sup>8</sup>. In 1958, when there was felt a mounting popular and political pressure for bourgeois democratic reforms and withdrawal from

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<sup>4</sup> See Department of States Policy Statement with respect to Pakistan (3 April 1950) quoted in Rashmi Jain (ed.), *The United States and Pakistan...*, pp. 17-19.

<sup>5</sup> See US National Security Council Staff Study (98/1): "The Position of the United States with respect to South Asia," (approved by President Truman on 25 January 1951) quoted in Rashmi Jain (ed.), *The United States and Pakistan...*, pp. 20-21.

<sup>6</sup> See First Report of President Truman on the Mutual Security Programme, December 1951; Abdul Sattar, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy...*, p. 42.

<sup>7</sup> In a statement John Foster Dulles, the then US Secretary of State, stressed for the flow of US aid to India despite the constant reluctance of the latter to join the US camp against communist countries. He said, "If she (India) lost the economic competition to China, it would mean the loss of another 350 million people to communism", see S.M. Burke, 1990, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy*. Karachi: Oxford University Press. p. 226.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

US backed defense pact, the Pakistan army led by General Ayub Khan staged a coup, abrogated the constitution and banned all political parties (Ibid., pp. 18-19). This military coup gave support to the American and British interests (Sangat Singh, 1970). Ayub Khan, the then military ruler had, later on, revealed that he had consulted officials in Washington, including the CIA Chief, Allen Dulles, before declaring Martial Law in Pakistan (Mahmud, p. 20). Ayub Khan had also spoken about his visits of the United States in May 1958 and he said that he had held extensive discussions with General Nathan Twining and Services Chiefs (Mohammad Ayub Khan, 1967). This US-backed military take over retarded the already delayed progress of constitutional development in Pakistan, politicized the army and increased the role of army at the cost of civilian and democratic institutions (Hasan Askari Rizvi, 2000). Neil H. McElroy, the US Defense Secretary, who was present in Karachi just one day before the military's taking control of power, defended the military coup in the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in 1959 (Rizvi, p. 80). The US State Department also termed Pakistan-military as "the greatest stabilizing force in the county" (Chaudhri, p. 148.). These statements fully endorsed the active US involvement in the military and polity of Pakistan that was in the US interests. In early 1950s, Pakistan, under the bureaucratic-military oligarchy, had joined the US-backed alliances, SEATO (1954) and Baghdad Pact (1955). The latter was subsequently renamed as CENTO<sup>9</sup>. One of the major reasons for Pakistan's participation in these pacts was propounded as the desire to strengthen her defense vis-à-vis India<sup>10</sup>. Pakistan, with the US support, wanted to check the Indian hegemonic tendencies and to prevent India from becoming a regional power by usurping the independence of her small neighbors and put their territorial security and national integrity at stake<sup>11</sup>. Thus, it becomes obvious that the United States had a global agenda while Pakistan had a narrow regional security perception. But in spite of all the divergence of interests, the geo-strategic significance of Pakistan brought the United States in close strategic collaboration with the former. It was an arrangement between two 'unequal partners'. Ironically, this collaboration was at the cost of Pakistan's relations with her two neighboring states; People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union. The aforementioned US-baked pacts alienated Pakistan from the Soviet Union and the latter got closer to India. The Soviet leaders supported the Indian stance over Kashmir issue and backed the Kabul regime on the issue of Pukhtoonistan. Resultantly, the Kashmir issue found no solution under the 'United Nations Resolutions' due to the overwhelming opposition of the Soviet Union. On Kashmir issue, the Soviet leaders clearly stood by the Indian claim when, in November 1955 during a visit to Srinagar, the Soviet leaders declared it as an integral part of India. In 1962, the Soviet veto to the resolution submitted in the United Nation's Security Council for the solution of longstanding Kashmir issue was the direct outcome of close US-Pakistan relationship that had sowed seeds of distrust and antagonism between Pakistan and the Soviet Union (Ibid., p. 52.). Apart from India, Afghanistan also remained hostile to Pakistan. During Ayub era (1958-1969), Pakistan adopted an anti-China policy in the footstep of the United States and even on the UN forum voted against People's Republic of China (Mahmud, p. 65). All these arrangements could not even provide Pakistan with any leverage against India as the United States and Western powers were afraid of annoying India<sup>12</sup>. It is evident from the fact that when India approached the United States for clarification of Pakistan Foreign Office's interpretation of the 1959's US-Pakistan Mutual Assistance Agreement, the United States assured India that this agreement could not be used against her (Jawaharlal Nehru, 1964) It was a clear indication that the United States was exploiting the geo-strategic significance of Pakistan for the sake of her own security interests but was not ready to defend the latter against Indian aggression that was the main

<sup>9</sup> CENTO (Central Treaty Organization) was the name given to the Baghdad Pact after the withdrawal of Iraq from it in 1959. Pakistan had joined it in 1955. Iran, United Kingdom and Turkey were also its members; *See also Mahmud, A History of US-Pakistan...*, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> Rizvi, *The Military and Politics...* p. 80; also see "Pakistan's Current Economic Situation and Prospects," Intelligence Report No. 7706 of the office of Intelligence Research of Department of States, 15 May 1958.

<sup>11</sup> Chaudhri, *Pakistan and the Troubled ...*, p. 148.

<sup>12</sup> The agreements that Pakistan entered with the US in mid and late 1950s did nothing to boost Pakistan's security but they helped in providing Pakistan armed forces with the latest weapons and technologies available at that time, *see Farzana Shakoor, "Pakistan-US Relations..."*, pp. 19-20; Chaudhri, *Pakistan and the Troubled World...*, p. 151.

concern and the cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy. Pakistan was the only country that could facilitate the United States to have a close watch on the Soviet and Chinese activities through her espionage technology system and which could enable her to counteract them. Therefore, this urgency to get an air-base in Pakistan made the United States to sign an agreement with Pakistan in 1959. As a result of close US-Pakistan partnership, an American airbase was established near Badabher, a village in the suburb of Peshawar. Pakistan got nothing in return except increasing her burden of geopolitical compulsions and problems. That is why the United States has always preferred military dictators over democratically elected governments in Pakistan. But this nexus of Pakistan army with the CIA and Pentagon (headquarter of the US army) brought a great havoc to the democratic and judicial institutions of Pakistan. It politicized military that, in turn, undermined the democratic and political culture in Pakistan and resulted in the dismemberment of the Eastern wing of the country in 1971, as it created a sense of deprivation due to prolonged military rule (1958-1971). Moreover, the establishment of US-military base in Pakistan made the latter more vulnerable to the Soviet incursion when the Soviet leaders warned Pakistan of the dire consequences after the shooting down of U-2 reconnaissance aircraft which had taken off from that base (Amin, p. 45). According to *The New York Times*, Pakistan would have been the direct victim, had any conflict taken place between the United States and Soviet Union<sup>13</sup>. Thus, the defense problem of Pakistan not only remained unresolved but also became more critical while the military as an institution got strengthened.

The other determining factor in the US-Pakistan relationship was the precarious and volatile geo-strategic scenario in the Middle East. In the late 1950s, Arab nationalism got a new impetus in the Middle East when Jamal Abdul Nasir became the president of Egypt and united the two important countries; Egypt and Syria into United Arab Republic in 1958. Moreover, in the wake of WW-II, the British withdrawal from the Suez Canal had given way to a power vacuum and to the Anglo-Egypt confrontation over the nationalization of strategically important Suez Canal. These and some other developments urged the United States to focus more on this region. The United States was already alarmed by the Korean War (1950) and the socialist revolution in China and the nationalization of US oil companies in Iran. She had also faced a humiliating defeat in Vietnam and could not afford to lose ground to the Soviets in the Middle East, the vital strategic zone to the world politics. Therefore, the United States and her Western allies envisaged a plan of setting up a Middle East Defence Organization (MEDO) on the pattern of NATO but geopolitical environment in this region was different from Europe and the idea of collective security could not get fame in the Arab States of the Middle East (Chaudhri, p. 150). But the non-Arab pro-US states such as Pakistan, Iran and Turkey, took it as a blessing in disguise and overwhelmingly provided their shoulder to carry on this US agenda. Pakistan enjoyed the status of most valued ally in the region and reaped some benefits but the costs incurred were greater. Her defense dilemma remained intact but got some confidence in the face of Indian threat. The deep sense of insecurity on the part of Pakistan lessened when Pakistan's army organized and modernized itself due to sufficient US-arms supply and military training facilities under the above-mentioned pacts. This military aid also strengthened the position of military at the domestic level as it had the resources, hierarchical system, discipline and *esprit de corps* which made it the most influential and modernized segment of the society (Rizvi, pp. 199-208).

## SECOND PHASE

In fact, during early 1950s and later 1960s, the US-Pakistan relations remained hostage to the Cold War paradigm and the former wasted no time in changing her priorities when she found another broker in the region. Therefore, in early 1960s, there came a great shift in the US policy towards South Asia and she put much of her weight behind India to check the influence of communist China into the South Asian region. In early 1962, the United States had started supporting India against communist China<sup>14</sup>. Simultaneously, the US administration successfully deterred Pakistan from taking advantage of the

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<sup>13</sup> *The New York Times*, (4 July 1960), cited in Amin, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy...*, p. 45.

<sup>14</sup> *The Wall Street Journal* (9 July 1962).

Sino-India conflict through diplomatic channels. This US move was to save India from a two-front war<sup>15</sup>. But the entire charm of US-Pakistan relationship withered away in October 1962 when the US administration decided to support India both militarily and economically and at the same time asked Pakistan to provide assurance to India that the former will not create problems for the latter during her war against China (Naunihal Singh, 2006). Pakistan made it clear that the entire political spectrum in Pakistan was opposed to the US military aid and to offer any assurance to India. But the United States had decided to help India to make her a regional power to counterweight the potential menace of communist expansion in Asia<sup>16</sup>. Therefore, President Kennedy, in reply to Pakistan, said, "question of assurances is [a] matter for Pakistani decision, but [the] US is interested in stopping the advance of communism in Asia (Naunihal Singh, pp. 154-160). The changing geo-strategic realities in South Asia urged the US and Western leaders to support Indian hegemonic role in the region. The United States wished a strong barrier against communist China while India needed dollars, war arsenals and propaganda devices to establish her hegemony in South and Southeast Asia. In November 1962, the Indian premier requested the United States for direct and substantial military aid by providing two squadrons of B-47 US-bombers and 12 squadrons of US-supersonic fighters manned by the US crew to defend the Indian cities and installations against possible Chinese air-attacks. Therefore, the United States and the Western powers rushed to help India both militarily and economically. The United States took the lead by announcing \$100 million annual aid for India (Chaudhri, pp. 158-159; and Naunihal Singh, pp. 158-159). The first outcome of these new developments transcended the geo-strategic relevance of India for the United States and consequently US-Pakistan relations got strained and Pakistan became disenchanted in spite of her enthusiastic policy of alignment (Chaudhri, p. 232). The new injection of US arms aid to India gave rise to a new arms race in South Asia that undermined the future economic growth of the region (Mohammad Ayub Khan, January 1964). The regional balance of power got serious blow and not only Pakistan's geo-strategic importance eroded but a grave threat posed to the very security of this country. Pakistan reacted strongly against the arms supply to India and established close relationship with the Peoples Republic of China by concluding trade, boundary, and civil aviation agreements that irritated the United States. The other contributory factor towards close Sino-Pakistan relations was India's intimate relations with the Soviet Union (Tom Rogers, 1994). Pakistan realized that she could no longer rely on the United States but marginal military support (Naunihal Singh, p. 207). The close Indo-US nexus forced both the Soviet Union and Pakistan to revisit their foreign policies and decided to mend their fences in view of the changing geo-strategic realities. It was the first time in the history of Pakistan that she adopted a balanced posture towards both powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, without being at the cost of the other<sup>17</sup>. With the newly emerged situation, it was established that mere geo-strategic interest could not provide basis for a durable and long-term relationship between two unequal powers. There was a lack of convergence of interests and, therefore, whenever the United States achieved the specific geo-strategic objectives, the geo-strategic importance of Pakistan relegated and the US-Pakistan engagement has given way to estrangement. The coolness in the US-Pakistan relationship encouraged India to speed up her hostilities against Pakistan that resulted in the 1965 Indo-Pak war. During this war, the United States withheld military supplies to both Pakistan and India but the former was fully aware of the fact India had other sources of procurement of military hardware while Pakistan was dependant on US arms supply only (Farzana Shakoor, pp. 19-25). The US attitude towards Pakistan during this war was quite sufficient to prove that the US can never come to defend the latter against the Indian threat for which Pakistan joined the US backed defense pacts and alienated her from her neighbors, the Soviet Union and China. Hence, all these alliances and treaties between Pakistan and the United States failed in the fulfillment of the objectives for which they were signed by Pakistan (Rashmi Jain, pp. 62-73). In the Cold-War paradigm, the real concern of the United States had been the 'communism mania' that had made her supporting Pakistan and India at one time or the other. America supplied military and economic aid to win support of these two Asian powers against communist Soviet

<sup>15</sup> On 30 June 1963, the US administration, in a statement, made it clear that US aid to India would remain unabated irrespective of the fact that India comes to terms with Pakistan on Kashmir dispute, see S.M. Burke, '*Pakistan's Foreign Policy*'. p. 289.

<sup>16</sup> President Kennedy's statement assuring Pakistan about military aid to India, 20 November 1962 as quoted in Rashmi Jain (ed.), *The United States and Pakistan...*, pp. 43-44.

<sup>17</sup> Statement by Foreign Minister Arshad Hussain in the National Assembly of Pakistan, 20 May 1968.

Union and China but she failed to understand that a serious effort of rapprochement between Pakistan and India could bring stability to South Asia that can ultimately check the expansion of communism in South Asia (Chaudhri, pp. 154-157).

In early 1970s, the situation took a new turn when the United States sought Pakistan's help in the establishment of entente with the Peoples Republic of China. The Pakistan-China relations, which the former US Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson considered abhorrent, became cardinal for US communication with China. To create a new global balance of power, the United States took it essential to have normal relations with China and, therefore, wanted to bring it back into the comity of nations by her inclusion into the United Nations. The US administration intended to use the US relationship with China as a lever for US-Soviet détente (Naunihal Singh, pp. 217-218). To accomplish this agenda, she sought Pakistan's help. Pakistan arranged secret visit of the then US foreign Secretary Henry Kissinger.

In 1971, the second war between India and Pakistan broke out and the United States again failed in helping out Pakistan, the most allied ally of US in South Asia. Although the Nixon administration showed some tilt towards Pakistan but did nothing to preserve East Pakistan from dismemberment on 16 December 1971 (Chaudhri, p. 234). On the contrary, US economic and military aid was stopped<sup>18</sup>. On the other hand, the Soviet Union fully supported India by providing political, diplomatic and military support to the latter (Amin, p. 64). In late 1970s, Pakistan's international stature and geo-strategic importance got a more decisive boost by two major developments; Pakistan's progress towards the acquisition of nuclear capability and the Soviet incursion in Afghanistan (Ibid., p. 78). The nuclear program was started by Pakistan in 1972, a few months after the separation of East Pakistan, but got impetus in 1974 after the Indian nuclear tests. Pakistan's nuclear program greatly annoyed the United States and she added pace to her efforts for non-proliferation but the main brunt fell on Pakistan. The United States turned the 'most allied ally' of the 1950s into a vital pariah. Nuclear sanctions were imposed against Pakistan under the Symington (1976) and Glen Amendments (1977). The earlier US-offer for the sale of A-7 aircraft to Pakistan was withdrawn (Abdul Sattar, pp. 148-152). There were reports that in the United States that beside other available options an interagency group, led by arm-control expert Gerard Smith, was planning to attack the Kahuta Research Laboratories in Pakistan in order to destroy the nuclear capability of Pakistan<sup>19</sup>. Alarmed by this plan, Pakistan agitated against the United States. The US State Department denied the plan categorically but suspicions in Islamabad remained unchanged. In November 1979, these relations were touching the lowest ebb. On 21 November 1979, another bitter incident took place when a mob of students set ablaze the US embassy in Islamabad on a report of the indulgence of US administration in the desecration of the Holy Ka'aba. A crisis of confidence was there between Pakistan and the United States until the Soviet military intervention into Afghanistan (Muhammad Islam, 1994).

### **THIRD PHASE**

In 1979, the world politics took a new and dramatic turn and once again Pakistan's geo-strategic importance came to the lime-light when on 26 December 1979 the Soviet forces rolled into Afghanistan under the pretext of invitation from the Afghan government (Abdul Sattar, p. 155). It rose Pakistan's geo-strategic and geopolitical relevance to such an extent that the most critical of all the critics to Pakistan's nuclear program, the United States, rushed to revive her strategic and military relationship

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<sup>18</sup> The US Congress pressed the administration to suspend economic and military aid to Pakistan until a diplomatic solution of the crisis is found by Pakistan. on 3 August 1971, the US House of Representatives passed a bill while on 5 October 1971, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee asked the administration through a resolution to choke all aid to Pakistan. See Niloufer Mehdi, 1999, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy 1971-1981: The Search for Security*. Lahore: Feroz Sons. p. 66.

<sup>19</sup> This story was unveiled by *The New York Times*. See Richard Brut, 'U.S. will Press Pakistan to Halt A-Arms Project', and 'Pakistan Protests to U.S. Envoy on Nuclear Report'. *The New York Times* (12 and 15 August 1979); and Dennis Kux (2003), *The United States and Pakistan, 1947-2000, Disenchanted Allies*. Karachi: Oxford University Press. p. 240.



with the latter and transformed her 'sanctioned ally' into the 'frontline state role'. The National Security Advisor to President Jimmy Carter and the Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher rushed to Islamabad to discuss the changed geopolitical scenario and offer a military and economic aid from the United States (Kux, 2003.). Thus, due to the specific geo-strategic location and geopolitical environment of the region, Pakistan not only came out of isolation but also enjoyed the Western and American economic and military support.

The 'Saur Revolution' in Afghanistan was a great political development in Pakistan's neighborhood. After this revolution the then Afghan government revived an old irredentist Afghan claim i.e. Puktoonistan over the North-Western Puktoon populated areas of Pakistan (Abdul Sattar, p. 154). The revival of this claim alarmed Pakistani policymakers. This apprehension further aggravated when more than 80,000 Soviet troops marched into the Afghan territory and the Pak-Afghan border became insecure due to the expansion of the Soviet military influence. Thus, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan enormously stirred Pakistan's security environment (Islam, p. 65). The Soviet Union not only had a history of strained relations with Pakistan but the former had also actively engaged in the dismemberment of East Pakistan in 1971 and nurtured secessionist insurgencies in Balochistan province of Pakistan. It had also played an abhorrent role in the Kashmir problem. Moreover, the Soviet communist leadership had an old *Tsarist* aspiration of having access to the warm water of the Arabian Sea (Abdul Sattar, p. 383). These factors multiplied Pakistan's worries of the future strategic repercussions (Rizvi, pp. 213-215). Pakistan had two apprehensions; becoming a periphery state of the Soviet Union, and any possible Soviet collusion with India to harm Pakistan<sup>20</sup>. The Soviet move was viewed to have altered the strategic situation in the area in a very ominous fashion, eliminating a buffer state between the Soviet Union and Pakistan, and presenting a new threat to Iran<sup>21</sup>.

Not only Pakistan but also the South Asian region, as a whole, became vulnerable to the Soviet penetration (A. R. Siddiqi, June-July 1982). It was feared in the backdrop of the history of this region that any power, in the past, which emerged from the Central Asia and consolidated its hold over Kabul, did not stop there but marched into the subcontinent and held sway over it. There was a fear that history would repeat itself.

At the beginning of the *Saur* revolution, the United States had remained unconcerned about the political development in this geographic centre of gravity of Central Asian region, Afghanistan, even at the agitation of Iran. Afghanistan was a country of very low priority for the United States and the latter was a silent onlooker during the overthrow of the monarchy in 1970s. The US did not bother to review its pattern of relations with her old ally, Pakistan, in order to cope with any future insurgency in the region as result of this serious development. This indifference on the part of the US administration was mainly due to her isolationist policy in the wake of Vietnam War. However, the fall of King Raza Shah Pehlvi, a despotic monarch in Iran and the roll over of 80,000 Soviet troops in Afghanistan prompted the United States to pay heed to the grave strategic changes in the region (Islam, p. 64). The strategic balance that had already changed in favor of the Soviet Union after the US withdrawal from Vietnam was further tilted towards the former and serious threats posed to the US and Western interests in the region (Razvi, p. 192; also see Islam, p. 67). This Soviet move was a continuation of communist triumphs, which were coming in the form of a chain after the success of communism in North Korea, in North Vietnam, communist victory in Cuba (1959), and fall of South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia in the orbit of communist dogma. Therefore, the Soviet military take-over in Afghanistan urged the United States to check any further Soviet advance in the South and East, which could threaten the security of the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean region and jeopardize the supply of oil to the West.

President Jimmy Carter declared that any attempt by any outside force would be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force (Ted Koppel, 24 February 2006). He was clearly referring to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. He went on to say that the United States would use military force to keep the oil lanes open (Amin, pp. 84-85). Besides, keeping in view the geopolitical implications, the US administration

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<sup>20</sup> *Dawn* (December 14, 1981).

<sup>21</sup> President Carter's State of the Union Message to joint session of the US Congress, 21 January 1980; and Islam, 'The Afghan Factor', p. 67.

interpreted the Soviet intervention of Afghanistan in terms of a serious threat to world peace and violation of norms of international behavior<sup>22</sup>. Japan and the Western European countries, which were dependant for two-third of their oil requirements on the oil-rich Persian Gulf region, extended their full-fledged support to the United States and joined voices to denounce the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (K. Arif, ed., p. 372; also see Amin, pp. 84-85)<sup>[23]</sup>. China also looked at the Soviet intervention as a potential threat to her own security. Harold Brown, the US Secretary of Defense, visited China and discussed that how the United States and China might work to eradicate this common peril (Rizvi, p. 192). Thus, China also sided with the United States. The oil-rich states in the Persian Gulf also got alarmed (Amin, p. 83).

In the backdrop of this newly evolved geopolitical and geo-strategic environment, cooperation of the regional countries was desperately needed by the United States. Iran and Pakistan were the two strategically important countries whose geographical proximity and political influence could provide path to check the expansion of Soviet military, political and ideological influence in the South and Southwest Asia. They could obstruct her access to the Gulf oil resources and keep it away from establishing hegemony in the Indian Ocean that could bring it in direct confrontation with the United States (Islam, pp. 67-68). But it was almost impossible for the United States to enlist Iran's support in the aftermath of ouster of the Iranian monarch, following the Iranian Revolution of February 1979<sup>24</sup>. Therefore, Pakistan was seen as the only country with which the United States could easily revive its strategic relationship to overthrow the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Hence, Pakistan came under international focus, and was praised with the words like 'a pivotal state', a 'wedge' and a 'frontline country' worth eulogizing (Farzana Shakoor, pp. 19-21; K. M. Arif, p. 185). The Carter administration was reported to have decided, in October 1978, to resume aid to Pakistan (Islam, p. 64)<sup>[25]</sup>. Pakistan was located at the Eastern flank of the Persian Gulf and, therefore, in case of any threat to her security, the security of the Persian Gulf would have been shattered which meant a direct armed confrontation between the two superpowers. Therefore, the United States decided to help Pakistan both militarily and economically in order to cope with any threat from the Soviet Union<sup>26</sup>.

Pakistan was not only aware of her strategic importance but was also fully acquainted with the geopolitical realities of the region. Therefore, to maximize gains from any new engagement with the United States, Pakistan adopted a cautious course (Azmi, p. 237). Pakistan's motives were not only the containment of the Soviet advance in South Asia but also included the inviolability of her eastern and western borders. For this purpose, Pakistan supported the internal Afghan resistance against Soviet forces to thwart out communist menace and establish a friendly regime in Kabul. Pakistan also needed the maintenance of a US-compatible government in Pakistan, and seeking an international recognition for her pro-West and anti-Soviet stance from the world at large (Rogers, pp. 101-102). Another factor was the establishment of US suzerainty over the Indian Ocean after the evacuation of British navy in the wake of World War-II. Pakistan had a strong aversion and resentment to any possible Indian superiority in the Indian Ocean (Rizvi, p. 216). Pakistan's security was also linked with the Indian Ocean and Gulf region (Razvi, pp. 183-184). Besides these external factors, Pakistan was entangled in domestic problems. The military government in Pakistan was in high need of recognition from the United States and her Western allies. Therefore, Pakistan tried to grab the opportunity with both hands. General K. M. Arif, a close aide of General Ziaul Haq (1977-1988) and a Vice Chief of army staff, has portrayed the scenario in these words:

*"The Soviet intervention provided an opportunity to Islamabad to take advantage of it without compromising her principles. However, Pakistan made it known to US that her nuclear program was not negotiable. And, Islamabad vigorously pursued it despite protests and veiled threats from Washington."* (K. M. Arif, pp. 185-190)

<sup>22</sup> See US Department of State, Bulletin, May 1989, p. 4.

<sup>23</sup> K. Arif, (ed.), *America-Pakistan Relations...*, p. 372; also see Amin, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy...*, pp. 84-85.

<sup>24</sup> Statement by Jack C. Miklos, Deputy Assistant Secretary of States for NEA (Bureau of Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs, Department of States), before the House CFA (House Committee on Foreign Affairs) Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, 15 May 1979

<sup>25</sup> Islam, 'The Afghan Factor', p. 64.

<sup>26</sup> See Department of States Bulletin (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1981), p. 83.

Thus, it was not only under external compulsions that Pakistan decided to revive the US-Pakistan strategic relationship but there were certain domestic factors too. To General K. M. Arif, "The US-led West wanted a Muslim country to remain in the forefront of the Afghan struggle, and Pakistan was willing to play such a role for her own domestic and security reasons." According to him, the western media suddenly 'discovered' that Zia, the dictator was, in fact, a 'good guy'. His opposition to the communist invasion in Afghanistan evoked sympathy and support. Pakistan's decision to act as a conduit for western weapons to Kabul was eulogized.

This is a fact that the US has always found it very easy to deal with a dictator instead of a democratically elected government in Pakistan. That is the reason to suggest that the US-Pakistan relationship flourishes much under a military regime in Pakistan and the most subversive factor to the democratic culture in Pakistan has been the US support for dictators. This time again there was a military ruler to bail out the United States from this monster.

The US attitude towards Pakistan underwent a literally overnight change (Naunihal Singh, p. 291). The President Jimmy Carter not only declared Pakistan a frontline state between the Soviet Union and the 'free-world' and reaffirmed the 1959 bilateral security agreement which was aimed at cooperation against communism (Kux, p. 302). President Carter unequivocally declared, "We will provide military equipment, food and other assistance to help Pakistan defend its independence and national security against the seriously increased threat from the North"<sup>27</sup>. In a message to the US Congress, President Carter stated, "the United States will take action to assist Pakistan in resisting any outside aggression"<sup>28</sup>. Zbigniew Brzezinski, the National Security Advisor, and Warren Christopher, Deputy Secretary of State, rushed to Islamabad on 1 February 1980, to ease tension between the two countries (Noor A. Husain, 1985). They made an offer of US \$400 million in economic and military assistance to Pakistan over a period of 18 months (Kux, p. 302). Pakistan rejected the offer but kept on her resentment against Soviet intervention. The two reasons put forward for turning down the US offer were: it did not commensurate with the magnitude of threat, and it did not further a credible US-Pakistan relationship (Rogers, p. 117). This non-acceptance in 1980 reduced the risk of direct involvement of Pakistan in the Cold War orbit and projected the Afghan cause in its genuine perspective of liberation of Afghanistan (Abdul Sattar, pp. 158-159). It also helped Pakistan in the formation of a broad international diplomatic front against Soviet occupation of Afghanistan that was not possible otherwise (Islam, p. 70).

The next US administration under Ronald Reagan (1981-1989), ranked Pakistan high on the US national security agenda and, therefore, an assistance of US \$3.5 billion, spread over five years, was proposed which was accepted. The United States recognized Pakistan as an important regional ally for three reasons; Pakistan's geographical proximity to the Persian Gulf and Afghanistan; her possible key strategic role in the prevention of Soviet hold over Afghanistan; and her role as a barrier against any further Soviet expansion in the southward direction (Ibid., p.74). Jane A. Coon, the US Deputy Assistant Secretary of States for Near Eastern, South Asian and African Affairs, expressed the readiness of the United States to help Pakistan cope with the threat emanating from the latter's northwest i.e. Soviet Red Army in Afghanistan. A military and economic aid package along with the sale of 40 F-16 warplanes was agreed upon. Thus, under Reagan administration, the United States and Pakistan came closer due to the striking coincidence of strategic Soviet threat. Although there was a sharp divergence of perceptions yet there was a close resemblance of target which engaged them in a new paradigm of strategic partnership. Pakistan and the US were operating from two different perspectives. The United States wanted to contain Soviet Union in order to safeguard the supply of oil from the Persian Gulf and secure the Indian Ocean suzerainty while Pakistan was apprehended by the Indian and Afghan factor. The Gulf region was also politically, strategically, religiously and economically important for Pakistan because it has common religious, political and economic ties with the Persian Gulf countries. Moreover, they could provide a strategic depth to Pakistan that was already anxious about her narrow strategic waist. For the US, the underlying considerations were global but for Pakistan, only regional considerations were important (Rizvi, p. 207). However, the nuclear differences lurked below the surface as this new relationship flourished. The nuclear relations got a new dimension when US administration abruptly

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<sup>27</sup> This statement was issued by Jimmy Carter on 4 January 1980. See Naunihal Singh, *The United States and Pakistan...*, p. 294.

<sup>28</sup> President Carter's State of the Union ... on 21 January 1980.

changed her tone and accepted Pakistan's assurances of not developing a nuclear weapon and nuclear non-proliferation (Rashmi Jain (ed.), pp. 377-378). To safeguard the US interests in Afghanistan and the Middle East, President Reagan buried the non-proliferation by dismantling the US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency that was set up by the former US President John F. Kennedy. The National Security Council and the office of the National Security Advisor in the US were both degraded (Adrian Levy and Catherine Scott-Clark, 2007). President Reagan and William Casey, the Director CIA, were unanimous in their views that winning a war against the Soviet forces in Afghanistan was a vital strategic objective of the US that could not be overlooked. For this purpose, they wanted to fuel the insurgency in Afghanistan by arming and funding them from the Pakistani soil to bog down the Soviet Red Army, just as the Soviets had done against the US troops in Vietnam. Thus, the US officials focused on Pakistan and pledged to ignore her much criticized nuclear program. Despite remaining outwardly committed to the non-proliferation, Reagan administration did not resort to check Pakistan's nuclear program by taking strict measures against the latter. Funds and arms were provided to Pakistan through the CIA. In a press conference, the US President Ronald Reagan, candidly admitted the strategic value of Pakistan by saying that Pakistan was in a very important strategic position in the changing situation in Afghanistan. He also expressed his belief that it was in the US interests to be supportive to Pakistan<sup>29</sup>. Pakistan was exempted from the provisions of the Symington and Glenn Amendments (Noman Sattar, 1994). In order to promote the US interests in the region, Article 669 of the US Foreign Assistance Act was amended and some of the nuclear sanctions against Pakistan were waived<sup>30</sup>. However, US apprehensions over Pakistan's nuclear program surfaced now and then due to the presence of some grey area and mutual mistrust in this field<sup>31</sup>. The voices against Pakistan's nuclear posture mainly stemmed from the US Congress and not from the administration. But it is also not wrong to say that of all irritants between Pakistan and the United States, the nuclear issue was by far the most serious (Islam, p. 76). In 1983, despite the conduct of a 'cold test' of the nuclear device by Pakistan, the US left the former unabated (Levy and Scott-Clark, p. 5). The Pakistan-China nuclear collaboration was also left unattended by the US administration. However, sensing the threat from Pakistan's nuclear program to the non-proliferation efforts, the US Senate adopted an amendment called the "Pressler Amendment" named after the US Senator Larry Pressler, who introduced it in 1985. Tying the US aid to Pakistan with the nuclear issue, this new amendment called for an annual presidential certification that Pakistan did not possess a nuclear device. Keeping in view the strategic US interests in Pakistan, the United States kept on issuing the required certificate in favor of Pakistan that paved the way for keeping smooth strategic relations intact<sup>32</sup>. The Reagan administration also urged the US Congress that curbing the US aid to Pakistan based on nuclear issue can hinder the US interests in the Southwest and South Asia (Islam, p. 77). In July 1987, following the conviction of Arshad Pervez, a Pakistani citizen living in Canada, on charges arising from his efforts to export a special steel alloy to Pakistan, the US president invoked the Solarz Amendment. The sanctions were considered counterproductive for the non-proliferation objectives and a blow for US Strategic interest in South Asia. Therefore, in a stroke of Presidential privileges, Reagan at the same time used his authority to waive against Pakistan under Symington and Solarz Amendment and in favor of US strategic interests in South Asia (Rogers, pp. 120-121). In April 1988, the Geneva Accord was signed and it was a great watershed in the world politics and the politics of South Asia. Pakistan achieved one strategic goal of the evacuation of Soviet military from Afghanistan when the last Soviet soldier, General Boris Gromov, crossed 'the Friendship Bridge' of Oxus River on 15 February 1989 (Victoria Schofield, 2003).

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<sup>29</sup> These remarks were given by the US President during a press conference On 16 June 1981, quoted in Levy and Scott-Clark, *Deception*. p. 379.

<sup>30</sup> US Department of States briefing on Pakistan's nuclear intentions, 16 September 1981, also see Rashmi Jain (ed.), *The United States and Pakistan...*, pp. 378-379.

<sup>31</sup> See statement by Schaffer, US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, before the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, 9 March 1983; quoted in Rashmi Jain (ed.), *The United States and Pakistan...*, pp. 383-384.

<sup>32</sup> See White House Statement, 15 January 1988.

## **FOURTH PHASE**

But for Pakistan, it was just the beginning of a long run. The other objectives were the end of the fratricidal war in Afghanistan, the return of normalcy to this war-ravaged country, achieving regional stability and preservation of unity and territorial integrity of Afghanistan (K. M. Arif, pp. 186-187). The Soviet departure from Afghanistan brought a number of benefits for Pakistan but the costs were also very high. On the other hand, the withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Afghanistan was the end of the strategic agenda for the United States and, thereafter, Kabul had no more significance in the US foreign policy. The departure of the Red Army and the collapse of Soviet Union put an end not only to the long-drawn Cold War but changed the strategic and political priorities of the United States. After the Soviet withdrawal, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of the United States that had played the pivotal role in the Afghan War, wanted to clean its hands of the Afghanistan episode (Naunihal Singh, P354). In the given circumstances, the succeeding democratic governments in Pakistan and the expression of determination to the steadfastness of the US-Pakistan relations, the US interests in South Asia changed as she no longer needed allies against Soviet Union; nor could it be blackmailed by countries threatening it to go over to the rival camp. The shift in the focus of the United States on South Asia changed the US attitude towards Pakistan (Islam, p. 90). The strategic significance of Pakistan had diminished, as she had no longer remained the 'front-line state'. The history repeated itself and once again, the nuclear issue dominated the US-Pakistan relations. With the end of Cold War, the US policy of negligence over Pakistan's nuclear posture changed altogether. Nuclear sanctions were imposed under Pressler Amendment (1985) when the US President refused to issue the required certificate in 1990<sup>33</sup>. The United States also denied the transfer of twenty-eight F-16 aircrafts and military equipments for which Pakistan had paid \$658 million in advance. In fact, the Afghan issue and the Soviet threat, which had relegated the nuclear issue, were no longer existent. Congressional circles in the United States were firmly persuaded that in the wake of Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the time had come to force Pakistan to abandon her quest for nuclear weapons (Islam, , p. 91). Thus, Pakistan was pushed from international esteem to international isolation just after losing her strategic importance. Even after aid cut-off, several efforts were made by Pakistan to mend fences with the United States but all in vain (Abdul Sattar, pp. 225-226). On the contrary, Pakistan was put on the watch list of states accused of sponsoring terrorism. Nevertheless, that was a problem of short-sightedness on the part of United States that she not only left Afghanistan at the disposal of the regional powers but overlooked the future strategic importance of Pakistan in her access to the oil-rich Caspian Basin. She also miscalculated the fatal repercussions of the war-nursery left behind in Afghanistan. The United States could not evaluate the outcomes of the Afghan Civil war.

## **CONCLUSION**

The unique geo-strategic location of Pakistan has played a key role in attracting the United States towards Pakistan. The US has always come closer to Pakistan to win support of the latter to carry out the US international agenda or to eradicate a menace threatening the US interests directly or indirectly. Thus, whether it was the containment of communist advance in South Asia, the protection of the US interests in the oil-rich Middle East or the US war against terrorism, the US has desperately needed Pakistan because the fulfillment of these objectives was not possible without Pakistan's support. Pakistan has also sought to compensate her weak military position vis-à-vis India through close military ties with the United States. The US economic aid and political support were also needed by Pakistan. But looking at the equation of benefits, the United States has benefited more than Pakistan. The US triumph over the former Soviet Union, which made her the sole power, was indebted to Pakistan's unqualified support during the last phase of the Cold War. The present US hold over Afghanistan is due to the marvelous

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<sup>33</sup> Letter by US President Bush-I to his Pakistani counterpart, Ghulam Ishaq Khan, wherein the former expressed his inability to certify Pakistan's compliance with the Pressler Amendment (1985), 18 September 1990.

intelligence and logistic support extended by Pakistan. On the other hand, Pakistan's gains had remained only marginal. Through US support, Pakistan could never safeguard her national frontiers from frequent Indian aggressions, which was stated as the main objective of Pakistan's strategic support to the US, nor could prevent dismemberment of her Eastern wing in 1971. The two major benefits that Pakistan reaped were; the successful nuclear technology by turning off the US pressure in 1980s and the military strength got through US support. As far as the nuclear gains are concerned, Pakistan cannot claim herself secure even in the presence of nuclear umbrella. The build up of a strong and well-disciplined military institution is the other gift of close US-Pakistan relationship that has every now and then uprooted the democratic institutions of the country and obstructed the way of evolution of a national solidarity among the federating units of the country. It is also a fact that military has not been successful in defense of the state, which was its prime duty, and it is quite evident from the fall of Dhaka (1971) and misadventurism in Kargil Operation (1999). However, a strong Pakistani military was needed by the US as a stabilizing force to promote US interests in the Middle East and to crush any anti-US sentiments in Pakistan. This US objective has been successfully achieved by the Pakistan army. However, the main drawback of the US-Pakistan relationship is its flimsy nature. The root-cause of this fragility in relations lies in the fact that the main driving force behind the intermittent close US-Pakistan relationship has not been the convergence of interest but the need to accomplish their separate, different and sometimes divergent interests through mutual collaboration. Only the geo-strategic factor cannot turn the alliance among the unequal partners into a durable and long-standing partnership and the same has proved true for the volatile US-Pakistan relationship. Each time the evaporation of strategic relevance of Pakistan has not only resulted in a cleavage in the US-Pakistan relations but also put the latter under much political, economic and diplomatic pressure than before.

Since 9/11, Pakistan has once again become instrumental in the US strategic war against terrorism due to the strategic worth arising from her geographical proximity to Afghanistan, her military superiority in the region and sophisticated intelligence and logistic facilities. Analyzing the history of Pakistan's engagements with the United States, it can be predicted with greater degree of authenticity that this new phase will meet the same fate as in the past i.e. the US strategic interests in Pakistan will diminish as soon as her agenda gets materialized. At the end of this unmatchable relationship, Pakistan may face a number of dreadful consequences both at home and abroad. Once the US military hold over Afghanistan gets firm, the very existence of nuclear Pakistan will be put at stake. The United States would need an uninterrupted flow of hydrocarbons from the mineral-rich Caspian basin. Only Pakistani ports of *Gawader* (constructed with Chinese support), and Karachi can provide the easiest routes for their direct and economical transportation. A peaceful, stable and sovereign Pakistan could become a hurdle to the smooth transit of the US shipments. The peace in Afghanistan would ultimately turn the US attention towards Pakistan and she would not leave any stone unturned in making her interests secure.

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