

Reevaluation of U.S. Security Policy towards South Asia

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ABSTRACT

South Asia has always been regarded as a significant area for the security interests of the United States. In view of the U.S. threat perceptions in Asia, the American policy makers were constantly motivated to construct a stable security system in the region. The U.S. security programme in South Asia actually is predominantly exerted on United States-Pakistan –India triangular relationship. Given its strategic perspective in the area, the U.S. policy is found transferred. During the Cold War days, the U.S. interests were attached with Pakistan. Thus Pakistan was regarded as the ‘America’s most allied ally in Asia.’ With the end of Cold War, the U.S. policy underwent a tremendous change that subsequently picked India as a potential counterweight to China and called it a ‘natural partner.’ Eventually, the U.S.-Pakistan relations had been in a depressing setting. However, in the post 9/11 period, the two countries came closer and collaborated in war against terrorism. But this single-issue alliance could not engulf the differences between the partners.

This paper attempts to trace the US security policy and its maneuvering in South Asia during and after the Cold War periods.

Key Words: South Asia, Security, Cold War, Strategic Partnership

Introduction

Asian continent with its large economic resources was vital for the objectives of U.S. foreign policy. The U.S. engagement in the area had a long history, but it was restricted to the economic interests only. Political developments in the area had impact on economic matters but the American policy makers hardly took notice of the political affairs of the region.(Dougherty & Pfaltzgraff,Jr., 1986)

By the end of nineteenth century, Asian political scene was marred with swelling power politics of Russia and Japan. The unstable security situation of the Asian continent had posed stern threats to the sovereignty of China where the United States had huge economic interests, framing a larger portion of the trade balance within the area.(Green, 1968)

Alarmed by the emerging state of affairs in Asia, the Americans needed to design a new strategy to protect their commercial interests in the area. Consequently, the United States introduced its Asia policy in 1899 known as the ‘Open Door’ policy that added new dimension to the U.S. Asia policy but the Americans avoided military means, rather they preferred diplomatic maneuverings. After the end of First World War, the U.S. also altered its foreign policy. In that context, it took on a number of “good-faith agreements with Asian and Western nations in order to promote its policy concerns in the area.

- The 'Four-Power Treaty' of 1921 which granted security to "insular possessions" of France, Britain, Japan and the United States in the Pacific.
- The 'Washington Treaty' or 'Five-Power Naval Treaty' of 1922 gave Japan naval superiority in the Pacific and assured honour for 'Open Door' strategy.
- The 'Nine-Power Treaty' of 1922, signed by Britain, France, Japan, China, Belgium, Italy, Portugal, Netherlands and the United States, proclaimed that "respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of China."
- The 'Kellogg-Briand Pact' of 1928, whereby about 60 countries condemned war as 'national strategy' and pledged to promote peace and stability. (Dougherty & Pfaltzgraff, Jr., 1986)

However, the United States sustained its commitment to isolationism and noninvolvement in political matters.

After Far East, Indian Subcontinent had importance for Americans for economic gains and over time, since the World War II, US started to give attention to political and strategic affairs of British India and the US involvement constantly deepened in the regional political and strategic affairs.

Since beginning of Cold War, Americans underlined South Asia as a vulnerable area for communists' moves. The American security agenda for South Asia was for the containment of Soviet's influence.

This paper attempts to trace the US security policy and its maneuvering in South Asia during the Cold War period.

U.S. policy framework in South Asia

The commercial links between the United States and British India were initiated in 1784 with arrival of the first American ship-'United States of Philadelphia'- at Pondichery. (H. Malik, 1984) Since 1794 the United States established diplomatic posts in different cities to protect the commercial interests of the American traders. Obviously, these links were with the consent of the British government. The American consuls were called "merchant princes."

Over time, the American commercial contribution in Indian subcontinent were enlarged so far that the "American trade fairs" were organized in the region. (H. Malik, 1984) Over time, the volume of trade was raised significantly. The U.S. became the second largest trade partner of British India. In 1938, the British Indian government established the office of trade commissioner in New York. (Ejaz, 1991)

The initial United States-Indian subcontinent commercial relations were combined with religious and intellectual dimensions. The American missionary societies established missions in Indian subcontinent, which were designated for modern education through various programmes. However, this course of interaction between the two societies could not develop a strategic concern for American policy makers, because the basic responsibility for the area rested with the British.

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During the World War II, the military victories of the Japanese forces in Far East and South-East Asia posed a serious threat to Indian subcontinent. Given the Anglo-American alliance, British government planned to channelize the American presence in the region and proposed to designate an Indian official in its embassy in Washington, who was to deal with the non-political matters of United States-British India relations. The U.S. government welcomed the British idea of stationing the representatives on a reciprocal basis.(H. Malik, 1991) Consequently, the US State Department issued a press release on July 21, 1941 that formally declared the exchange of envoys between the United States and British India. This was the commencement of a new relationship between the United States and British India.

The Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor in December 7, 1941, and conquest of Burma by axis forces in particular, heightened the posture of threat to British India. United States consequently broadened the scope of engagement in India. In view of the geostrategic significance of Indian region as a strong base of allied forces, the Americans valued the security of the area, and accordingly the “contingents of American troops and battle ships” started reaching Karachi, Bombay, and Calcutta. Over time India became important for the U.S. strategic as well as political interests.(H. Malik, 1991)

The Americans were apprehended that the political situation in British India might hamper the war efforts. Thus the U.S. government built pressure on Britain for independence of India.(Prime Minister Churchill & President Roosevelt, 1942) With the end of World War II, new controversies marred the international political scenario. The expansionist policies of communist Soviet Union posed a serious threat to the capitalist world. The United States as a new emerging world power realized the new realities of the international politics in the post-World War II global system. It embarked upon a policy of containment of communism.

Cold war extended to South Asia

Since the United States emerged on world scene leading the free world, it realized the importance of South Asia that has been constantly increasing. The U.S. security policy towards South Asia is neither for one country. It deals with the security of South Asia. India and Pakistan have had always been ideal for the U.S. designs in the region.

During the Cold War era, South Asia having proximity with communist powers – Soviet Union and China – got prominence in the U.S. security agenda in Asia. Pakistan due to its unique geostrategic location was preferred and became part of the U.S. security alliance system in Asia to contain the communist threats in this area. Though India did not support the U.S. strategic designs in Asia and declined to join the U.S.-sponsored security arrangements in the region, it remained favourite to the Americans.(*The New York Times*, 1949) The US security strategies could not achieve goals in a security deficit and divided South Asia. So the Americans did not remove the India from the U.S. strategic milieu in the

region. They always wished to retain both South Asian powers on board. In words of President Eisenhower, the U.S. relationship with India was of the 'head', and that with Pakistan was of the 'heart'.

The basic objective of the American security policy designers was to coordinate the U.S. policy for Pakistan and India, in order to develop a balance in its security objectives. However, the sharp differences between India and Pakistan on a number of major and minor conflicts they inherited from the British Indian Empire poised their strategies towards each other.

Washington constantly wished Islamabad and New Delhi to mend their relations. United States made a number of efforts to defuse tension between the two neighbours and bring them to table for peaceful settlement of thorny issues, Kashmir in particular. (Ejaz, September 1996)

The U.S. policy towards South Asia had certain variables to the rhythm of its global security interests. With some lessening in the Cold War controversies in the latter half of 1960s, linking to the relaxation in East-West tensions, and the détente in super powers' relations, South Asia was downgraded as a low priority area to the Americans. This development had impact on U.S.-Pakistan alliance that began weakening, and relations were severely jeopardized by the differences over Pakistan's nuclear programme, and subsequently Pakistan faced economic sanctions. Relations with India were on a smooth track. During the Carter administration, Washington and New Delhi came close. Under the calculation of President Carter, the close relations with India were more important for the safety of the U.S. interests in the region than ties with Pakistan. Carter administration's nuclear nonproliferation policy towards South Asia was not evenhanded. (Kux, 2001) It could not equally deal with Indian and Pakistani nuclear options. In most situations it leaned favourably towards India. Pakistan's nuclear programme was point of irritation for the Americans, who believed that Pakistan with the atomic weapon would spread nuclear technology to the Middle Eastern countries, and that would result in heightening antagonism with Israel. The United States in April 1979 cut off military and economic assistance to Pakistan. It was to punish Pakistan for its enrichment programme. The action was taken under the provisions of the Symington Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act. The Iranian revolution in February 1979 and the Soviet forces' invasion of Afghanistan in December of the same year changed the U.S. security perception of South Asia. These developments brought about a far-reaching change in the geostrategic environment of the region, carefully constructed by the United States. (Kux, 2001)

Consequently the Americans again realized the importance of Pakistan in the region for protection of the U.S. interests, and they started to look at Pakistan as a bulwark of Soviet expansion in South Asia. During the second strategic U.S.-Pakistan engagement, Pakistan became a frontline state in warfare against Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Both countries signed an agreement in 1981 that regulated the U.S. economic assistance and military sales programmes under which huge economic aid and military equipment were supplied to Pakistan. Though United States and Pakistan had entered a new phase of security alliance,

they were tangled by regional issues like nuclear proliferation, arms race, drugs trafficking, human rights, and democracy.

United States-India expanding strategic partnership

The U.S. South Asia policy was never at quest to sideline India. The Americans recognized India as a big power of the area. The basic dilemma of the U.S. strategy was to wean India from Soviet influence. Washington's policy- 'opening to India-' was a strong initiative to warm up the relationship with India. During Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's visit to United States in 1982, the Reagan administration approved that instead of United States, France would provide nuclear fuel to India. The U.S. Congress also enacted a bill opening the way for sale of the U.S. weapons of worth \$1billion to India. In July 1985, the Secretary of State George Schultz announced about the decision of the Reagan administration to supply India with sophisticated nuclear reactor components. Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visited to United States in 1985 and 1987 made a substantial progress in the ties between the two states. Both sides' leaders agreed for expansion of the bilateral trade, collaboration in defense production, space research, transfer of high technology, and escalation of cultural, educational, and scientific cooperation.

The growing Indian conventional military power, nuclear ambitions, instability in Afghanistan and improvement in U.S.-India relations augmented Pakistan's security dilemma. However despite this situation, the strategic alliance between them remained intact. After withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Afghanistan, America again packed up and departed region, leaving behind a war-ravaged Afghanistan, a restive jihad, a new breed of military adventurers and Muslim militants and an isolated, desolate and sanctioned Pakistan. The U.S.-Pakistan relations again moved entirely into an adversarial direction. United States started to bracket Pakistan as a promoter of terrorism in Kashmir and nuclear proliferator.

Reorientation of US policy in Asia-Pacific

With the end of Cold War, new strategic and economic realities transformed world into a U.S.-led planet. The U.S. strategies in Asia-Pacific region installing new centers of power picked India as a strategic partner underlining it as a counterweight to the swelling economic and military might of China. In the Americans' perception, China's growing economic and military potentials pose stern threats to the U.S. interests in the area, and soon China would eventually lead to a multipolar international system against the U.S. aspirations in world.

The U.S. new policy orientations in Asia-Pacific also had a great impact on the U.S. approach towards South Asian region. The options of past were reversed and new trends in diplomacy were set. The US India-centric policy underlined India as a dominant power in the region that would play a central role to check the

upcoming challenges including China's expanding influence in Asia-Pacific, and rising wave of Islamic extremism and terrorism in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia. The U.S. strategic concerns ultimately prompted Washington to form a strategic partnership with New Delhi. (Ashley, 2005) The American policy makers had observed the Indian growing military capabilities and escalating blue-water navy in particular as enormous significant for the U.S. security interests in the area, in terms of U.S. access to the Indian Ocean and, to a lesser extent, the Persian Gulf as well as counterbalance to China. In a discourse at an Indo-U.S. strategic symposium, in 1990, Rear Admiral W. Pendley of the U.S. Pacific Command named India as an emerging power of Asia-Pacific that would play a momentous role and establish the course for stability in the region. (Singh, 1992)

On the Indian side, it also had aspiration to share the US strategic concerns, adopting new tendencies in relations. Indians took opportunity in new international political and strategic structure that delivered a great opening to New Delhi to come close to Washington and fill the vacuum left with the end of United States - Pakistan alliance. In this regard, *Times of India* wrote:

The end of the Cold War and the beginning of the Gulf war has created unprecedented opportunities for India to wean the U.S. away from its traditional ally, Pakistan. The transformation of US-Pak relations is a major security gain for India. In fact, Pakistan is not likely to hand over a nuclear device to fellow Islamic countries, but the pan-Islamic wave sweeping the region can hardly make the U.S. comfortable on this score. U.S. now sees militant Islam as one of the biggest threats (and) Pakistan simply cannot be a credible U.S. ally against militant Islam. In sum, India has a golden opportunity to capitalize the U.S. on downgrading of Pakistan, (and) should not spoil this by knee-jerk anti-imperialist sentiment. (*Times of India*, 1991)

Mr. Misra, former National Security Advisor of India, is also quoted who candidly advocated for partnership with America. While speaking at the Council of Foreign Relations, New York, he spoke:

It is an unquestionable fact that USA is the pre-eminent power in the world today. ...The US economy is as large as those of Japan, Germany and Britain put together. ...It would make poor political or economic sense for a country – or a group of countries – to set itself up as an alternate pole in opposition to USA. Most countries advocating a multi-polar world also affirm that they attach great importance to relations with USA. ...In the world order defined by the Cold War, India and US were not really allies though, to be fair, nor were they enemies. India-US relations reflected a lack of engagement, coupled with wariness and a periodically recurring suspicion whenever the shadow of the Cold War fell over our region.

In the post-Cold War world (and even in the post-9/11 world order), the situation is dramatically different. We have shared geo-political interests and economic opportunities, which can bind an enduring partnership. ...Given its past history, the Indo-US relationship needs to liberate itself from a number of

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misconceptions and prejudices of past years. ("Speech by Shri Brajesh Mishra, National Security Adviser of India, at the Council of Foreign Relations," 2013)

The Indians did not remain unnoticed about China's swelling military and nuclear power in Asia-Pacific region. Amitabh Mattoo, Professor at School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India, wrote that China's presence in Asia-Pacific was a common concern of the United States and India. He said:

In terms of strategic issues, the rise of China and continuing uncertainty in the Asia-Pacific region should be of critical importance and concern to both New Delhi and WashingtonChina's revival as a great power, after a century of western humiliation, is already translating into sporadic acts of aggressiveness. Chinese claim, and the belligerence with which they are asserted, over most of the South China Sea, particularly the Spratly, the Parcel and the Senkaku islands, are only the most recent examples.(Mattoo, 1997)

The Americans believe that the strategic partnership with India is based on shared values and vision of democracy, and regional security across Asia. The United States-India strategic partnership have been constantly moving ahead, expanding cooperation in the fields of defense, civil nuclear, and counterterrorism. (Ejaz, 2012)The United States-India defense agreement signed in 2005 and the 'U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Agreement,' signed in 2008 are considered leading-edge deals that paved the way to step-up the military and nuclear ties between the two states. Under the defense agreement, the parties agreed to work for joint weapons production and to boost the other security initiatives. Under the U.S.-India nuclear deal India was recognized as a responsible nuclear state. The nuclear deal provided U.S. assistance to India's civilian nuclear energy program, supported India's economic growth, and expanded the U.S.-India cooperation in energy and satellite technology. Forging a strategic relationship, the Americans and the Indians have decided to pursue interests of fighting terrorism, spreading democracy, and strengthening the global nonproliferation regime.(Ejaz, 2012)

As much as Washington and New Delhi came close, the distance between U.S. and Pakistan had been widening. Pakistan was stared with suspicions that as a politically and economically unstable unclear state, it could be dangerous for world peace. Pakistan could most probably supply nuclear material to other Islamic countries. Later on Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan's nuclear black market network provided firm ground to Washington to check Pakistan's nuclear capability. Though Pakistan took measures to dismantle the nuclear black market network and ensure effective export controls, and to prevent the possibility of nuclear proliferation from Pakistan, Pakistan's nuclear option was internationally maligned.(Bruno, 2000) Pakistan's international image as a state sponsor of terrorism in the region also added more agony for its nuclear capability. It was suspected that in view of free mobility and growing influence of extremist groups on its soil, Pakistan's nuclear arsenals could be any time fall in hands of terrorists. We quote here U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta who expressing danger about fall of Pakistan's nukes into hands of terrorists, said: "The great danger we have

always feared is that if terrorism is not controlled in their country, than those nuclear weapons could fall into the wrong hands.”(*Times of India*, 2012)

In view of Pakistan’s expanding support to Talibanization in Afghanistan, the opinion in the United States that Islamists might have an access to the Pakistani nuclear nukes got more strength.(Ejaz, 2016b)

US war against terrorism and Pakistan’s engagement

After the terrorist strikes of September 11, 2001 in New York and Washington, the reorientation of U.S. national security strategy identified terrorism as a primary target. President Bush declared a war against international terrorism with a determination of operating every resource and diplomacy to eliminate terrorist networks and to target the states that had harbored and bolstered terrorism. (*President Bush’s speech in Congress*, 2001) The strategic shift in the foreign policy of the United States jolted its relations with other countries, particularly in connection with the U.S.-led global campaign against terrorism.

The 9/11 tragedy once again transformed the U.S. international security strategy. The U.S. campaign for hot pursuit of terrorists accentuating Afghanistan altered the U.S. policy towards Pakistan. Washington again needed Islamabad’s help for its strategic objectives- removing Taliban and defeating Al Qaeda. Pakistan’s attentions for full cooperation in war against terrorism again brought old ‘disenchanted allies’ together but hollowness in their ties persisted. The emergence of Pakistan in particular, as a front line state in the war had added new dimensions to the regional security perspective. In this new situation, the United States reassessed its concerns in South Asia which were linked with:

1. Ensuring the safety of South Asian nuclear weapons –related material that must not be accessed and obtained by the terrorists.
2. Preventing an accidental or unintended escalation of a nuclear conflict in South Asia.
3. Maintaining cooperation of India and Pakistan in international campaign against terrorism.
4. Preventing operational deployments and further development of nuclear and missiles capabilities of India and Pakistan.
5. Engaging India and Pakistan in negotiation process to seek out an equitable solution of the Kashmir dispute.(Rafique, 2002)

The U.S.-Pakistan relations had experienced a steep decline. However, Pakistan finally could not throw away the U.S. demands for full cooperation, deciding about its future course of action in post 9/11 era. The U.S. Secretary of State Collin Powel’s phone call to President Musharraf, saying that “you are either with us or against us” left no option for Pakistan but to take pro-America position in war against terrorism.(Musharraf, 2006)

The U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, during a meeting with ISI chief Lt. General Muhmood Ahmad in Washington, also added to Collin Powel’s notice on Pakistan’s role in the follow-up to September 11 terrorist attacks

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in New York and Washington. He presented a 'stark choice' that "Pakistan must either stand with the United States in the fight against terrorism or stand against us. There was no maneuvering room." Mahmood Ahmad responded with assuring Armitage that "he could count on Pakistan's unqualified support, that Islamabad would do whatever was required of it by U.S. action request." (*Deputy Secretary Armitage's Meeting with Pakistan Intel Chief Mahmud*, 2001)

Consequently, Pakistan, on a tight rope with dictatorship, derailing economy, and increasing isolation in world, had to take a U-turn in its policy of harboring and supporting Taliban in Afghanistan and provided full cooperation to United States in military operation to abolish the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. There was a general perception in world that Pakistan's joining of war against terrorism was not outcome of a structural transformation in Pakistan's policy. It was a result of tactical considerations aimed at limiting the losses that Islamabad would suffer because of the collapse of the friendly Taliban regime in Kabul. Rejecting cooperation with Washington "could have provoked American wrath and placed at risk Pakistan's strategic and economic interests in South Asia." (D.C., n.d.-a)

The Washington's disquiet concerning the Islamabad's role in war against terrorism and pressure on Islamabad to 'do more,' as well as the opposite perceptions on different issues, relating to the Washington's growing relations with New Delhi in particular, had damaged the U.S. relationship with Pakistan on both ends. The defense and nuclear agreements with India and Washington's refusal to give Islamabad the same deals and further coercing it on Kashmir issue ended up adding to the trust deficit and fostering the incompatible approach in Washington and Islamabad.

Anyhow the U.S.-Pakistan relations proceeded in shape of a partnership in war against terrorism but India factor was not deceased. The America's India-centric strategy was not diluted.

In return of Pakistan's unconditional cooperation, U.S. showered Pakistan with military and economic support that was inconceivable before September 11, 2001. Nuclear and democracy sanctions were removed. Pakistan received immediately an aid as economic and military and security assistance. In June 2003, President George W. Bush hosted Pakistani President General Pervez Musharraf at Camp David. Both countries also signed a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement and a Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement. (Kronstadt, 2003)

With an immense flow of the American aid, Pakistan emerged as a bigger receiver of aid from United States.

Deepening of strategic cooperation finally led to declare Pakistan in June 2004 a non NATO ally of the United States. This title upgraded the status of Pakistan as a U.S. partner in war against terrorism. It made easy for Pakistan to acquire U.S. arms. Pakistan became eligible for a series of benefits in the areas of foreign and defense cooperation. Pakistan was also exempted from the suspension of American military assistance and qualified to receive surplus defense material from the U.S. stockpiles. (*Dawn*, 2004) Furthermore the designation of Pakistan as

strategic partner of United States in 2006 streamlined the engagement of both states in war on terror. The exchange of visits of President Bush and President Musharraf respectively in March and September 2006 reaffirmed their shared commitment to a broad and lasting strategic partnership, agreeing to continue their cooperation on a number of issues including, the war on terror, security in the region, strengthening democratic institutions, trade and investment, and education. The deliverance to Pakistan of eight night –capable cobra attack helicopters AHI-F in February 2007, two F-16 aircrafts in July 2007, and four refurbished F-16 jets in June 2008, and series of joint exercises reflected upward trend of U.S.- Pakistan partnership.

Both countries had entered a strategic dialogue that focused on particular areas which were dealt with by establishing working groups.

Mistrust engulfed

The trust deficient between Pakistan and United States had dampened the two countries' efforts to enhance counterterrorism cooperation. The mistrust had tremendously increased so far that the U.S. officials had openly claimed that Taliban and Al-Qaeda had established safe haven in tribal areas of Pakistan and were using Pakistan's soil for their activities. (*Pakistan Horizon*, 2007) The unsatisfied U.S. officials prodded Pakistan to 'do more' in war on terror, otherwise, they threatened to use force and military strikes inside Pakistan to hunt terrorists. The U.S. mistrust on Pakistan had been multiplied with the Americans concerns on Pakistan nuclear programme, and missile technologies, the Abdul Qadeer Khan's nuclear network in particular. In December 2004 Ackerman Amendment to the Intelligence Authorization Act required the CIA, over a five-year period, to make annual reports to Congress about Pakistan's nuclear activities, democratic development, and counter terror efforts. The U.S. congress finally passed a bill that linked U.S. assistance to Pakistan with Pakistani government's counterterrorism efforts. ("Pakistan Horizon," 2009)

The bill passed in July 2007 required Pakistan to demonstrate, significant and sustained progress towards eliminating terrorist safe havens from Pakistan. The provisions noted that Pakistan maintained "a network for the proliferation of nuclear and missile technologies," and added that "the maintenance of such a network would be inconsistent with Pakistan being considered an ally of the United States." The bill maintained that there were a number of critical issues that could interrupt the relationship between the United States and Pakistan, undermine international security, and destabilize Pakistan. These issues were related to:

- Curbing the proliferation of nuclear weapons technology.
- Combating poverty and corruption.
- Building effective government institutions, especially secular public schools.
- Promoting democracy and the rule of law.

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- Addressing the continued presence of Taliban and other violent extremist forces throughout the country.
- Maintaining the authority of the government of Pakistan in all parts of its national territory.
- Securing the borders of Pakistan to prevent the movement of militants and terrorists into other countries and territories.
- Effectively dealing with Islamic extremism.

Proposing restrictions on the United States security assistance to Pakistan, the bill termed:

1. For fiscal years 2008 and 2009, the U.S. military assistance to Pakistan may not be approved for until 15 days after the date on which President determines and certifies to the appropriate congressional committees that the government of Pakistan is making all possible efforts to prevent the Taliban from operating in areas under its sovereign control, including in the cities of Quetta and Chaman and in the Northwest Frontier Province and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas.
2. The President may waive the limitation on assistance for a fiscal year if the President determines and certifies to the appropriate congressional committees that it is important to the national security interest of the United States to do so.
3. The limitation on assistance to Pakistan shall cease to be effective beginning on the date on which the President determines and certifies to the appropriate congressional committees that the Taliban, or any related successor organization, has ceased to exist as an organisation capable of conducting military, insurgent, or terrorist activities in Afghanistan from Pakistan. (“Bush to sign bill linking aid to anti-terror fight: U.S. Congress adopts measure,” 2007)

Such measures had increased resentment on Pakistan’s side. The situation between the two countries became more gruesome by U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan tribal areas as well as U.S. government’s policy of taking side with Indian government in accusation on Pakistan for promoting terrorism in India following the Mumbai terror attack in November 2008. The U.S. officials alleged that the perpetrators of the Mumbai attacks had links with Pakistan’s intelligence agencies. (“Pakistan Horizon,” 2009) The emergence of Haqqani network also generated suspicions in the Americans’ mind. The U.S. believed that Haqqani network had the backing of elements within the Pakistan’s security establishment, and maintained closer ties with Al-Qaeda and other foreign extremists in Pakistan. It setup safe havens in North Waziristan, across Afghanistan’s Southeastern border, and worked as a proxy force to represent Pakistan’s security interests in Afghanistan. The Haqqani forces planned and executed operations in Afghanistan, and particularly targeted Indian infrastructure and construction projects in Afghanistan. (D.C.; n.d.-b)

Perception over Kashmir

Though the U.S. security policy in South Asia swung time to time in connection of its interests in the region, Kashmir dispute always shared the U.S. security agenda in the region. The dispute and its spillover have turned the region in to a security deficit, unstable and divided zone that does not seem advantageous in the long term to the protection of U.S. interests in the area. Accordingly, the U.S. security options in the area always emboldened regional situation for the equitable resolution of the Kashmir dispute. Though the U.S. perception of Kashmir issue transformed time by time but its basic stand that Kashmir is a disputed region between India and Pakistan remained unaltered. The U.S. officials understand that a harmonized perception in Islamabad and New Delhi regarding the strategic developments in South Asia can provide a conducive environment that will allow both the neighbours to work together for the peace and security in the region. Thus Washington constantly induced Islamabad and New Delhi to seek a peaceful settlement of the Kashmir dispute. The United States on its part always played a role to deescalate the conflict-pronged situation between India and Pakistan over Kashmir through carrying out the crisis preventive diplomacy, and convinced the two rivals to sit for negotiations. (Ejaz, 2016a)

Conclusion

South Asia always retained importance for advancement of US strategic interests in the Asian landmass. The US threat perceptions in Asia always molded its policy setting bounds to construct security system in the area. There are three phases of US security policy towards South Asia: balance of power before and after the Cold War, and new balance of power after 9/11,2001. The US policy in South Asia in fact is predominantly exerted on US-Pakistan-India triangular relationship.

US always switched over its South Asia policy in the perspective of its security interests and goals in the region. In the Cold War period its threat perception was arisen from the expanding communist menace, and in that situation Pakistan was chosen as protector of US interests in the area and it grew as the America's 'most allied ally in Asia.' With the end of Cold War, Pakistan lost its significance for US. The new world order transformed the world to a unipolar system that reshuffled the US foreign policy and security policy. Given the US security interests and goals in Asia-Pacific region where new pattern of balance of power has grown up, the US South Asia policy underwent a reformation that subsequently picked India as a 'natural partner.' The Americans have pondered India as a potential counterweight to balance a rising China, envisioning the India's economic and military potentials. The US' South Asia policy turned to be Indo-centric that led to the foundation of a long term strategic partnership between the two states.

US has recognized India's leading role in South Asia, and envisioned its prominence in the Asia-Pacific affairs. On other side of the US South Asia policy,

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US relations with Pakistan had been in a dissuading setting. In post 9/11 period, US and Pakistan came closer and were tethered in war against terror, but this 'single-issue alliance' was for a temporary period that was terminated with the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan.

The US security policy towards South Asia asserts for a peaceful and stable area. Both India and Pakistan were always urged to normalize their relations and start a new era of co-existence. The Americans successfully used the crisis preventive diplomacy on a number of times to decrease the conflicts between the two aggressive neighbours that could have South Asia to a horrible battle.

The peaceful settlement of Kashmir dispute ever remained the foremost concern of US. It always motivated India and Pakistan to seek an equitable resolution of it. The US is the only extra-regional power that has long record of tremendous contributions to scale down the aggressiveness over Kashmir and encouraged India and Pakistan to undertake talks on the issue. However the US perception over Kashmir has been switched over time to time according to the US security policy in the region. The Cold War view of the Kashmir does not seem to be the basis of the US' position on the issue today. The US current standpoint is essentially one of detachment based on maintaining cordial relations with India without injuring relationship with Pakistan. However US has not deviated from the central point of its Kashmir policy that recognizes dispute over Kashmir and urges India and Pakistan to seek a peaceful solution of it on the bilateral level.

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