

## Post 9/11 Challenges in Pakistan Relations with the United States

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### Abstract

*The United States and Pakistan have a fluctuating relationship from the beginning of their engagement. Their engagement encompasses convergences and divergences of their national interests over different periods. The event of 9/11 revitalized their relationship and waived nuclear and democratic sanctions on Pakistan. The US war against the terrorism was not possible without an immediate neighbour of Afghanistan. Pakistan utilized this opportunity to end its global isolation and repress economic difficulties. Pakistan became a frontline state and was considered the most important ally of the United States. The advantageous geographical location of Pakistan brought it some gains but the US-Pakistan alliance could not turn into a long-term partnership. By studying and analyzing crucial details from books, newspaper, research articles and other relevant literature, this research aims to explore key challenges in US-Pak relations particularly after the major incident of 9/11. It includes the drone warfare, Kerry-Lugar bill, insurgency, Raymond Davis issue, the death of Osama bin Laden and nuclear issue. It particularly answers the question what are post 9/11 challenges in Pak-US relations. Pakistan being a war victim was passing through worst ever situation. Still the increasing demands of the United States, a blame game and mistrust created challenges in their relations. The research suggests some possible ways to enhance bilateral ties between Pakistan and the United States and engage them in a mutually beneficial partnership to achieve a long-term, reliable bond.*

**Keywords:** US, Pakistan, Afghanistan, 9/11 incident, India, challenges

### Introduction

The US-Pakistan relations swinging on a pendulum shows highs and lows with passing time. Witnessing on and off relations from the past. With the end of the Cold War and dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the United States appeared as the sole super power of the world. This strategic shift led to reconsideration its alliances, including with Pakistan, which was a close ally during the cold war. Pakistan attempted to adapt itself to new geopolitical landscape but faced isolation and estrangement. It was the tipping point of 9/11 that brought Pakistan back into limelight, playing a crucial role in regional and global geo-politics again. Pakistan entered in a coalition against terrorism with the United States as a frontline state post 9/11 incident. The significant geo-strategic position of Pakistan

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revived cooperation between both states but also generated tension specifically on the issue of drone strikes, counterterrorism and mistrust. The US policymakers see Pakistan through a security lens while Pakistan remains vigilant of US reliability, particularly due to its preferential treatment with India and rising competition with China.

The renewed ties of Pakistan with the United States after 9/11 helped it to abandon its isolation and get meaningful benefits over coming decades. But this period of close cooperation and assistance ended with the recent withdrawal of the United States from Afghanistan. During this phase despite geopolitical interdependence, their divergences arise on contrasting global and regional issues. With global concerns the policies of the United States have historically been India-centric, while Pakistan's focus is more regional with regards to security against India. This alliance led to achieving short-term objectives like aid and stability but could not boost a long-term trustworthy relationship.

The aim of this paper is to emphasize the major challenges and areas of conflict in US-Pakistan relations in the post 9/11 framework. It will help to understand how friction emerged in their relationship despite close cooperation against the war on terror and will recommend for improving their future relationship. The data sources used are secondary which include books, international journals, dissertation, newspapers, websites and videos related to US-Pakistan foreign policy and their relations. Document analysis is used throughout. The data collected through different sources is analyzed and examined carefully to reach the facts. Through analytical approach and qualitative methods, the challenges persistent in Pak-US relationship post 9/11 are investigated.

### **Major Challenges Post 9/11**

The disastrous event of 9/11 turned the tide and Pakistan became a significant ally where the United States reconsidered its foreign policy stance towards Pakistan. Although after Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, Pakistan was not only left with the mess of Afghan jihad but also Pressler Amendment and nuclear sanctions were imposed (Nadim, 2017). Their relations were at the lowest ebb when Pakistan was pressurized for signing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. But the incident of 9/11 changed the whole paradigm and United States found Pakistan the best option for it, when it was searching for allies. Pakistan also agreed to cooperate United States in its war against terrorism without any specific demand. The cooperation was necessary for Pakistan to escape its economic problems caused by sanctions, to protect Kashmir cause and to escape the blaming for harboring terrorists. While for US the support of Pakistan was of great importance to curb terrorists due to its

significant geographic location and its understanding and bond with Afghanistan. Despite common objectives and mutual cooperation in the war against terror, mistrust created challenges for both and the game of allegations and counter-allegations remained continue which broadened gaps between them.

### **1. The War of Drones**

The Pak-US relations were in challenging situation when US violated the sovereignty of Pakistan by launching the first drone attack in South Waziristan on June 19, 2004. This strike marked the commencement of a long covert war killing around 3700 people in nearly 414 total drone strikes including 245-303 civilians and 211-328 unknown people besides 1910-3071 militants. In total deaths the militant leaders killed are 3.1% while 97% are other deaths (Bergen et al., 2018). Conducting drone strikes in the tribal region of Pakistan reflects that the US is acting solely for its own national interests to safeguard their citizens even at the cost of security of other state citizens and also to curb the possibility of another 9/11 in future, by eliminating the breeding ground of Taliban and Al-Qaeda in Pakistan.

The killing of innocent civilians and frequent violation of Pakistan's sovereignty increased anti-Americanism in Pakistan and motivated angry youth from FATA to join the terrorist activities for retaliating Pakistan who decided to cooperate US and caused to lose their family, relatives and their houses. The conditions were more exploited by militant groups like TTP by preaching against state and Americans for launching attacks in Pakistan (Shah, 2009). The strikes were highly protested and condemned by the public of Pakistan. In response of criticism John Brennan, the White House advisor made first-ever statement about CIA drone strikes and proclaimed them as 'legal, ethical and wise' (Hussain, 2012). He also stated that international law doesn't forbid them to operate remote controlled aircrafts or use force against their rivals without active battleground, especially when the concerned country is willing, incapable or showing no consent to combat the threat itself (Hussain, 2012).

North Waziristan was a sore-point between Pakistan and United States and was considered the residence of Haqqani network (Roggio, 2011). US believed that Pakistan was reluctant to take actions against militant groups including Haqqani network so it decided to take matters into its hands and hence North Waziristan became the chief target of US strikes. These strikes in the form of covert military action caused heavy collateral as well as political damage. According to an assessment it is said that in the strikes from 2006-2009 more than 700 civilians while only 14

Al-Qaeda leaders are killed. A report of Brookings Institute in Washington disclosed that for killing every single insurgent 10 civilians have been died (Hussain, 2010). The media of United States called Obama as the most warlike US president of the present-day. There was a sharp decline in drone strikes during the period of President Trump. In the view of Gul, although the drones are inexpensive and risk free but Trump is reluctant to launch these strikes due to two main reasons. The first reason is the merging of FATA with KP province, as now the attacks in these areas will be directly considered as violation of Pakistan sovereignty while the second reason is the US-Taliban Afghan peace talks facilitated by Pakistan (Yousaf, Rashid & Gul, 2018). However, it is analyzed that the US will not hesitate to take such action in future whenever it needs or thinks necessary.

## 2. Kerry-Lugar Bill

The Kerry-Lugar bill of \$7.5 billion aid package for five years to Pakistan was signed by Obama with some conditions and controversial clauses. The Enhanced Partnership Act approved in 2009, known as Kerry-Lugar bill was a major shift of US policy with Pakistan's civilian government. The bill required a check on military by civilian government even in matter of promotion and military budget. The US secretary state will assess and certify after every six months whether civilian government has control over military (Dawn, 2009). It was an attempt to make military answerable to civilians. The bill required Pakistani security forces to take actions against militants, Taliban and militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT). US doubted the role of Pakistan intelligence agencies to have links with militant organizations and therefore they are not acting effectively against them. These clauses infuriated military generals and created a storm of protests (Hippel & Shahid, 2009).

This non-military aid which United States aimed to support democratic institutions, promote long term stability by reducing military dominance and interference in politics, sparked resentment from Pakistan's military. It viewed the conditions of the bill as encroachment on its autonomy. On other side civilian leadership saw this as an opportunity to empower democratic institutions and limit the upper hand of the military. As result longstanding power struggle between these two sectors generated which intensified the existing tensions between them.

In a meeting with US officials at GHQ, military commanders expressed that the conditions of Kerry-Lugar bill are insulting and unacceptable and showed that aid package has serious national security implications for Pakistan. The parliament had already passed the bill but the corps commanders pressed the government to present it in the

parliament for national reaction which was a clear discouragement of government's act (Dawn, 2009). The Kerry-Lugar bill not only humiliated Pakistan but its approval brought tussle between military and civilian government and further weakened the position of Zardari. Due to increased military and public pressure the bill was readdressed however the bill had broader implications on Pak-US relationship. Shifting focus from security-based partnership to civilian development led to trust deficit as military felt sidelined. The divergent priorities of US foreign aid affected their diplomatic relations and aid negotiations in coming years.

### 3. Insurgency

While fighting the war on terror the insurgency was in full swing not only in Afghanistan but also in Pakistan. The insurgency had spread to the tribal region of Pakistan along the Afghan border, backed by the militants of Al-Qaeda. The Afghan war had completely poured into Pakistan by reaching close to the capital, Islamabad and the Pakistan army was fully busy to resist the insurgents. A wave of suicide attacks began in Pakistan when a mosque in the tribal region near Afghan border was destructed during Friday prayers. It was the deadliest attack leaving 50 people died. With passing years Pakistan became a battlefield for Al-Qaeda and its partner militant groups in Pakistan. A union of Pakistani Taliban under the name of Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP) emerged and started imposing their own version of Islamic laws in tribal region as well as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Taliban forces also increased their influence over Swat valley, restricted girls' schools calling them un-Islamic and put hundreds of government and security personnel to death (Hussain, 2010).

The US pressurized Pakistan to stretch its military operations in FATA agencies and North Waziristan (Imtiaz & Yousaf, 2011). However, the govt. of Zardari expressed his deep concern regarding imbalance in its relation between India and Pakistan (Young & Witte, 2009). The TTP chief Baitullah Mehsud escalated their attacks on Pakistan security forces in tribal regions and entrenched their rule along Afghan border. The situation of Pakistan worsened when the urban centers of major cities like Lahore, Islamabad and Army headquarters in Rawalpindi turned into battlefields by brutal suicide bombings. The troops from eastern border were moved to western border after the assurance of US from India side (Hussain, 2010). The commandos used heavy arms, helicopter gunships in the bloodiest fight in tribal regions of Pakistan. Millions of people displaced and took shelter in other districts while thousands of residents were trapped by militants and used as their shields (Hussain, 2010). The militants accused Pakistan army for fighting America's war at the expense of killing its own people.

The raid on GHQ led the way for military operation in South Waziristan where TTP had spread its web. This operation was of prime significance for US in the sense to take control over larger Afghanistan-Pakistan border. A close link between TTP and Al-Qaeda and their sanctuary in Pakistan was a constant tension for the US. The United States upgraded financial aid and increased pressure on Pakistan to take effective measures against Taliban and Afghan insurgents. The insurgency in Pakistan involving Taliban and other militants impacted US interests, in respect of security and regional stability. Various incidents have not only drawn the US attention but it also intervened directly or indirectly either diplomatically or militarily. One notable event of killing Osama bin Laden in Pakistan temporally broke their ties. The incident raised serious concerns over Pakistan's negligence. It was under high pressure to take aggressive actions against insurgents within its border. The incidence resulted further increase in drone strikes and shrinkage of aid to Pakistan in coming years. Even after hard efforts of Pakistan against insurgency with loss of army officers and civilians, it was pressurized with 'do more'.

#### **4. Raymond Davis Issue**

The United States convinced Pakistan in 2010 for liberal visa policy for US diplomats and aid workers, to help in the disbursement of aid under Kerry-Lugar bill (Rodriguez & Dilanian, 2011). Under this policy thousands of visas were issued to Americans without scrutiny from ISI. One of them was Raymond Davis who took advantage of this policy. Davis entered Pakistan on diplomatic passport. He was a US spy, working for CIA as a Blackwater contractor but he had not been verified to the ISI as designated diplomat. After landing in Islamabad Davis stayed in Peshawar for some time then moved to Lahore where the incident took place. Davis was on the target to trace various Pakistani militant groups including Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) (Mazzeti, 2013). He was arrested in Lahore in early 2011 after killing two men in a crowded place and claimed that they were trying to rob him (BBC, 2011a).

This incident deepened anti-US sentiments. Islamic parties, joined by some other popular political parties protested in streets, demanding for Davis's death hence changed the incident into political controversy. It was an extremely sensitive issue where Zardari's government was under US pressure to free the Davis under diplomatic immunity while public sentiment refrained the government to do so. Washington and CIA were not admitting any link between Davis and CIA and insisted to provide him diplomatic immunity under Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relation, as he entered the Pakistan on diplomatic passport (Mazzeti, 2013). The situation worsened when Pakistan decided to bring Davis before the bar.

Tension intensified when Lahore court indicted Davis for murder (Hussain, 2021). The ongoing crisis also demarcated divisions between Pakistan civil and military leadership. The US attitude was aggressive and blunt. It rarely happened that the US President has involved himself directly for protecting a spy who has committed murder.

Pakistan was more concerned about covert activities of Davis and a large network of American spies within Pakistan. It demanded the breakup of such networks operating in the country if US requires our cooperation. Several hundred American citizens including CIA officials and military personnel were informed to leave the country (Perlez & Khan, 2011). On other side Obama insisted on immediate release of Davis and negated the settlement through court. At last Obama administration was forced to accept out-of-court settlement by seeking apology and payment of blood money (diyat) to victim families to release Davis.

This incident was important by providing insight into American policy and exposed the clandestine spy network operating inside Pakistan. This incident not only affected their diplomatic ties but also had great impact on public opinion in Pakistan, making public opinion a key factor in its dealing with the US. It raised questions on sovereignty of a country and accountability and justice. Pakistanis felt that their government is incapable of taking independent decisions and America prioritizes its strategic interests ignoring Pakistan's sovereignty. The incident strained Pak-US relations making Pakistan more vigilant about foreign agents. It impacted counterterrorism cooperation by widening trust deficit.

### **5. The Death of Osama bin Laden**

The cooperation between US-Pakistan crashed completely in 2011 when the two allies became hostile on killing Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad, Pakistan just after the Davis issue was resolved. Only 40 minutes operation was carried out by American team of Navy SEALs, entering the Pakistan airspace through helicopters in midnight. The raid took place on compound of Al-Qaeda in a garrison city which is situated 40 miles away from country's capital. Their sanctuary at such a sensitive place was difficult to believe for US that Osama bin Laden could stay there without support within Pakistan (Hussain, 2021). The CIA director Leon Panetta said in his interview that the raid took place without informing Pakistan because they suspected that the terrorists can be alerted (Al Jazeera, 2011).

Initially, the feeling of embarrassment dominated the anger. The embarrassment of intelligence failure to detect asylum of world's most hunted man for more than six years near the Military Academy was more than that to react over the breach of Pakistan's territorial sovereignty by

the US. Soon the initial humiliation by the US assault transformed into anger within Pakistan army. The counterterror victory of United States achieved by killing Osama bin Laden at the cost of Pakistan America's relations, became the reason of humiliation for Pakistan's military. It arose not only anti-US sentiments but also questions regarding military inability, incompetence and negligence to detect bin Laden under their nose. It also originated the issues: how could the American forces infiltrated deep into Pakistan without being identified? Who was to be answerable for such failed duty of defending the borders of Pakistan? Could this raid be used for giving supremacy to civilian government over the military?

The event added to the already troublesome relationship between military and civilian government in Pakistan. The government faced criticism for lacking ability to control or take part in the decisions of military and was pressured to defend its stance and engage in negotiation with military for maintaining stability. On other hand military, who has always played a dominant role in politics felt that their credibility and authority is weakened with this raid. This situation created tensions not only with the US but between military and civilian leadership within country. Lack of cohesion between them affected governance and political matters.

General Kiyani told a retired General with disappointment that the American raid 'created a bad environment' (Hussain, 2021). He expressed his views that the raid spoiled the US-Pakistan relationship. The act of United States of violating Pakistan airspace and its territory was taken as betrayal. The military and government were under increased pressure to roll back Pakistan's cooperation with CIA. Consequently, General Kiyani vowed to lessen the dependency of Pakistan military on US military aid and trainings of Pakistani soldiers. He also ordered to strictly control US intelligence operations inside country (Dawn, 2011). The number of US forces present in Pakistan were drastically decreased and a commission was formed to investigate the intelligence failure and truth behind the Bin Laden disaster in Abbottabad.

#### **6. Salala Incident**

Another tragic event, the Salala incident occurred on 26 November, 2011 which damaged the US-Pak bilateral relation unprecedentedly. The tragedy occurred when the US NATO forces were making rounds and began heavy firing from the top of the hill on Pakistan's check post, closed to Pak- Afghanistan border. Although the check posts were inside the territory of Pakistan but US hold the explanation that the commanders were unaware of these mini army check posts of Pakistan and these check posts were in the area that faced massive



attack of NATO helicopters. Pakistani officials condemned this incident. Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani said the killings were an “attack on Pakistan’s sovereignty,” adding that “We will not let any harm come to Pakistan’s sovereignty and solidarity” (Momand, 2011).

It was an offensive act of NATO forces to attack Salala military bases. It was a national tragedy that killed 24 Pakistani soldiers and 13 seriously injured. Pakistan’s anger reached its height and raised its legitimate security concerns. It was an event when all political and military officials were on the same page. In response, Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani ordered an emergency meeting of the Cabinet. The Army Chief General Kayani also called a meeting of the senior army officers and decided to respond strongly to the United States and announce that the incident was unacceptable.

The US report of investigation on Salala, was released on December 22 which stated that Pakistani forces evoked the US reaction by opening the fire first which caused into a series of mistakes by both NATO forces and Pakistani troops and ended in this deadly incident. In response to the report, Pakistan released a detailed report consisting of 25 pages on 23rd January. It rejected every excuse included in the US report and argued that the investigation report of the 26th November 2011 incident is lacking facts. More importantly it reflects the mistrust of US towards Pakistan army. However, the transparency of the investigation process became highly objectionable when the US official repeatedly declared the incident as unintentional before even completing the investigation. Pakistan believes that the early stance of Washington has determined the findings of the report (Javaid & Butt, 2011). The US investigation report is designed on the argument of self-defense and proportional use of force which is opposite to facts hence the report is only justifying the brutal act of NATO forces.

In response to Salala incident the parliament passed a resolution and blocked the NATO supply to Afghanistan and refused to reopen until US offer an apology for killing its soldiers. Pakistan demanded to vacate Shamsi airbase in Baluchistan within 15 days. The airbase was upgraded and used by the US for its secret emergency landing and operating drones in the tribal areas of Pakistan. (Geo news, 2011). Further Pakistan boycotted the Bonn Conference which aimed to discuss the future of Afghanistan. Pakistan refused to take part in the investigation with United States. The investigation completed in December 2011. The Military General, responsible for the investigation, reported that “the U.S. forces primarily acted in self-defense and there was no intentional effort to target Pakistani army within its border” (Kronstadt, 2012). Pakistan rejected this report. Several negotiations were made to normalize the situation but the

things had gone wrong specially with the initial refusal of United States to seek apology. The issue finally resolved only when in July 2012 the Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton officially said 'sorry'. Post Salala Pak-US relations entered into a new partnership phase. Post 9/11, US Policy has been criticized for being unilateral and aggressive, specifically for Pakistan. For being a frontline ally of the US in the war on terror, Pakistan faced the damages, sufferings and disaster much more than the loss of the 9/11 tragedy to the United States.

### **7. Nuclear Issue**

Pakistan being a larger and more developed country as compared to other small states and particularly having nuclear capability, is enjoying the status equal with a handful of other countries including India and China, however to mount this roller-coaster was a challenging task. The decision of Pakistan to establish its nuclear setup despite America's objections and pressure cracked their ways specially in the 1990s when nuclear sanctions were applied and all kind of aid was cutoff. The delivery of 28 F-16 was also frozen and the top official leaders, president, prime minister and army chief were continuously under threat (Markey, 2013). On another side India and Israel had not to face similar conditions. This is the reason Pakistan claimed US for being hypocrite and inconstant friend who uses Pakistan at time of need and after achieving its objectives discards it like a piece of used tissue paper (Kux, 2001).

The current U.S President Joe Biden said, "Pakistan may be the best definition yet of a highly combustible threat that, if left unchecked, might lead to the nightmare of nightmares" (Kalb, 2021). Since the first nuclear weapon test of Pakistan in May 1998, American Presidents have the fear of falling these nukes in wrong hands. Nuclear weapons of Pakistan are considered vital threat and it is included in the list of major security concerns of the United States due to upsetting past of Pakistan as well as speculative future in this regard. The nuclear capability of Pakistan has been a challenge for United States foreign policy since it prevented France to deliver uranium reprocessing plant to Pakistan (Cronin, Kronstadt, & Squassoni, 2005). Pakistan was facing nuclear sanctions before the 9/11 terrorist attacks but these sanctions proved short-lived when US chose its regional security interests with Pakistan. Just like 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the status of Pakistan changed from a problematic state to a significant regional ally after 9/11. United States subordinated its nuclear non-proliferation policy to other immediate objectives. In that situation US focused on achieving a stable and supportive government in Pakistan, to become its war ally against Al-Qaeda and keeping its nuclear technology out of reach of terrorists. United

States favored Musharraf's regime and encouraged him to change a conservative Islamic state into a moderate and modern Islamic state.

Posing nuclear arsenal doesn't necessarily make a country trouble for the US, for example Britain and France are not seen as threat. On other hand Iran and North Korea can probably use nuclear weapons against US but there are very less chances in case of Pakistan. Furthermore, Pakistan's weapons are not handled so recklessly as to fall easily in terrorist hands (Goldberg & Ambinder, 2011). However, nuclear weapons are one of the reasons of conflict between US and Pakistan.

### **8. Preferential Treatment of India and China Factor**

From last many years the regional role of Pakistan is strictly connected to Afghanistan for which Pakistan is treated by the US as a channel to Afghanistan than as a friend. There are various reasons of mistrusting each other post 9/11 specifically during 2011 and 2012, but one of the immediate causes of mistrust is Afghanistan. Pakistan believed that America was insensitive to its concerns in Afghanistan. During Karzai government Afghanistan used the ethnic Pashtun card in different ways to destabilize Pakistan. Kabul was more inclined for enhancing the influence of India in Afghanistan (Tellis, 2011). Although since 2001 both Pakistan and United States tried to rebuild and redefine their cracked relationship of the post-cold war period. The US depended on Pakistan to eradicate the menace of terrorism but on other side United States saw China as the growing power of the region and to suppress its influence US adopted a two-pronged foreign policy. US saw great potential in India and believed that it can play its role as global balancer with China. Condoleezza Rice, the foreign policy advisor of Bush wrote "United States should pay closer attention to India's role in the regional balance. India is an element in China's calculation, and it should be in America's calculation too. India is not a great power yet, but it has the potential to emerge as one" (Rice, 2000). For attaining its plan US supported India to become an economic and military power of the region.

After the attacks of 9/11 when Pakistan became a frontline state in the war against terror and United States accepted the fact that to fight against Al-Qaeda Pakistan is more suitable option than India but US still advocated and focused on US-India partnership. The US-India growing ties with the consideration of China, raised more doubts for the US-Pakistan relationship. Pakistan already felt neglected, took US-India civil nuclear deal as its defeat. US-India civilian nuclear agreement of 2008 changed the status of India making it a strategic partner of the US, had profound security implications for Pakistan. US followed de-hyphenation policy as Pakistan demand same deal it failed to get itself nuclear

concessions from US and therefore it relied on China for its energy needs, which agreed to provide despite international pressure (Kessler, 2010). China served as point of convergence between US and India. To manage the rise of China US not only exempted India from rules of Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) also increased their bilateral trade from \$1 billion to \$15 billion since 2008 and from \$43 billion to \$74 billion by the end of 2017 (Noor, 2018).

US had a chance to play a bigger and neutral role between two countries but it has always played an impartial role by choosing India. The size, large population and a big market of India is more appealing to US. Moreover, ignoring the role of Pakistan with shifting priorities of the US in Afghanistan rather considering Pakistan a part of Afghanistan problem and elevating the role of India is of great concern for Pakistan. India is considered more suitable to fill the vacuum in Afghanistan after the withdrawal of US troops (Parveen & Shah, 2020). Indian consulates in Afghanistan are directed to operate destabilizing activities in Baluchistan through Afghanistan. One of its examples is the case of Kalbushan Jadev who was arrested for funding Baloch insurgents to carry out the task of killing Pakistani citizens (Hussain, 2012).

The US president Donald Trump in his speech while explaining his policy framework on Afghan and South Asia, encouraged the efforts of Afghan government and India. But his words for Pakistan were bitter and complaining. He condemned the role of Pakistan for harboring terrorists. He repeatedly asked Pakistan to 'do more' 'do better' (Yousufzai, 2017). The relation further embittered in 2018 when Trump accused Pakistan for delivering "lies and deceit" (Afzal, 2018) to United States and claimed that Pakistan received aid for no benefit to US in return. After his tweet \$1.3 billion in U.S. security assistance was ceased. On other hand US acknowledged India as 'Major Defense Partner' in 2016 and both are signatory of three defense cooperation agreements. United States is India's fourth largest arms provider and largest trading partner by reaching \$142bn in 2018 (Levesques & Solanki, 2020). United States treated India reputedly by serving its interests in the region and to accept Indian view that terrorism is originating from Pakistan, have greatly hurt Pakistan. The lean of United States towards superior partner created imbalance which forced Pakistan to make close relations with China and build military and strategic ties with Russia.

### **Recommendations**

To enhance cooperation between the US and Pakistan following initiatives could be taken:

1. Joint counterterrorism efforts should be continued to address regional terrorism threats by sharing intelligence and resources.
2. Economic partnership should be strengthened. Bilateral trade agreements should be negotiated in the sectors of agriculture, technology and energy. US can support Pakistan for economic development through aid and investment.
3. Collaboration on energy projects is needed to address the energy crises in Pakistan.
4. Educational and culture exchange programs should be promoted.
5. Mutual health initiatives can be taken to combat diseases and improve healthcare facilities in Pakistan. Joint research and trainings should be conducted.
6. Regular strategic dialogues to negotiate mutual concerns and coordination on regional and global challenges.

### Conclusion

The post 9/11 conflicts between Pakistan and the United States revolve around counterterrorism efforts, divergent strategic interests and regional stability. After 9/11 US found Pakistan a vital ally due to its geographic position and connection with Taliban. However soon tensions generated between them over different priorities and interests. Both countries are still important for each other and can renew their relationship based on mutual understanding.

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