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India's Role as a Determinant in Pakistan-US Relations (2005-2015)

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ABSTRACT

The United States adopted a policy of de-hyphenation in its relations with India and Pakistan in the post-09/11 period which continued to be operational in the period 2005-2015. This policy apparently meant that the United States would deal each of the two South Asian adversaries, India and Pakistan. The main reason for this phenomenon was that the policy-makers in the US saw India as a heavy-weight to counter the rising economic, political and military power of China in Asia. Pakistan could not be fitted in this strategic calculus. The United States changed its previous position on Kashmir and instead of calling for resolving this issue according to the United Nations resolutions, it stressed on bilateral negotiations. Similarly, the United States endorsed Indian stance that Pakistan was backing terrorist outfits that perpetrated acts of terrorism in India. Strategic partnership between The US and India extended cooperation in civil nuclear technology, missile defense, space technology and defense production. No such cooperation could be extended to Pakistan. Permanent membership in the UN Security Council for India was endorsed despite Pakistan's objections.

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1. Introduction

The end of the Cold War saw an upward thrust in relations between the United States and India. This was in marked contrast to the Cold War era when relations between the two countries were suffering from mutual suspicions and mistrusts. The United States was the architect and leading member of the Western-dominated alliance of the capitalist countries against the Soviet-dominated Communist bloc. India was, during that period, the foremost member of the Non-aligned countries with a clear tilt towards the Soviet Union. The two countries, India and the United States, had divergent views and policies on various international issues and rarely saw eye to eye with each other. Pakistan was an important member of the US-led alliance system and a recipient of the US' economic and military assistance which further widened the already existing gulf between the United States and India. Throughout the Cold War period, the United States endeavored to woo India

so as to prevent it from being too much dependent upon the Soviet Union despite the fact that India was, in technical sense, a non-aligned country. But the main problem was that Pakistan, a close ally in South Asia, viewed any warmth in relations between India and the United States with resentment which the United States could not afford to alienate.

The dynamics of the post-Cold War era removed compulsions and hurdles in establishing relationship between India and the United States based on mutual trust and benefits. The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the prospects of the emergence of China as the strategic competitor of the United States along with liberalization of Indian economy offered both opportunities and challenges towards which responses of India and the United States converged. Both had strategic interest in checking the upward rise of China as dominant power in Asia. On the other hand, Pakistan lost its importance for the United States; it did not have the Cold War era appeal for the United States. The only interest the United States had in Pakistan in the 1990s was, first, to get her to roll-back and finally eliminate its nuclear program, and second, to get its assistance in persuading the Afghan Taliban to hand Osama bin Laden over to the United States for his alleged involvement in multiple terrorist activities. Pakistan, mostly, remained under economic and military sanctions of the United States which the latter had clamped against the former in reaction to its nuclear program.

2. Literature Review

Although the United States imposed sanctions against both India and Pakistan subsequent to the conduct of nuclear blasts by the two South Asian states in May 1999, but soon a high-level dialogue was started between India and the US which paved the way for greater understanding between the two countries (Talbot, 2004). During the Kargil Crisis, the United States, instead of urging India to come to some sort of negotiation over the Kashmir issue as expected by Pakistan, pressed Pakistan for unilateral withdrawal of its forces from the posts which it had occupied from India. President Clinton's visit to India in 2000 reflected his preference for India over Pakistan in which he clearly stated that the United States would not mediate between Pakistan and India on the Kashmir issue which was for the two adversaries to decide (Washington, 2000). The process of furthering relations between India and the United States acquired heightened momentum after 09/11. The Bush-Vajpayee joint statement of November 2001 brought relations between the two states to new heights. The two leaders agreed to enhance cooperation between the two countries to cover such important issues as counter-terrorism, regional security, space and civil nuclear technology etc (Alan, 2005). The two countries initiated a sustained two-year dialogue that culminated in the Next Step in Strategic Partnership (NSSP) in January 2004 which proved to be a strategic shift in relations between the two states. Under the NSSP the two signatories made commitments to collaborate in the fields of civil nuclear energy, civilian space programme, high-technology trade, and missile defense (Ashley, 2008). Indian strategists regarded cooperation between the two countries in the three vitally important areas of dual-use high-technology, civil nuclear energy and space as a concrete proof of the new level of relationship between them (Alan, 2005).

The available literature on relations between Pakistan and the United States covers various aspects of these relations but the impact of India as a catalyst and determinant in these relations have not been explored. Malik Qasim Mustafa has discussed the nature, direction and prospects of a civil nuclear deal between Pakistan and the United States. Mehraj Uddin Gojree has briefly discussed how US policy towards South Asia in the post-Cold War era has been shaped by its strategic

perceptions (Uddin, (2015). Syed Shahid Hussain Bukhari has given a theoretical impact of the Indo-US strategic partnership on the balance of power in South Asia (Shahid, 2015). Daniel (2013) has explored the intricate nature of and hurdles in relations between Pakistan and the United States. Abdul Qadir Khan has discussed security structure of South Asia and challenges for the US in maintaining a balance in its partnership with India and Pakistan (Qadir, 2014). This article will be helpful in understanding the role of India as a determinant in the evolution of Pakistan's policy towards the US during 2005-2015.

The main aim of this paper is to analyze relations between the United States and India during the period 2005-2015 and assess the impact of the new trend in these relations upon the course of relations between Pakistan and the United States. The main argument, here, is that relations between Pakistan and the United States were adversely affected by the rapidly growing ties between India and the United States. The research is descriptive and analytical and based on primary and secondary data available on internet and in libraries. The arguments are based on the principles of classical realism which hold that relations among states are based on the shifting nature of the convergences and divergences of their national interests as perceived by their policy-makers.

3. Methodology

This study is both descriptive and analytical and apply empirical methods. It is descriptive in the sense that it will narrate facts and analyze them in the light of the material obtained from primary and secondary sources. As it is a qualitative research, it mostly depends on primary and secondary sources obtained from libraries, archives, and internet. Interviews, both published and personally conducted, of the actors involved and experts of the field will be relied upon. Analytical methods is used for comparison, authentication, interpretation and reinterpretation of the facts related to the fluctuating trends in the Pakistan-US relationship.

4. Theoretical Framework

From perspective of the international law and concept of sovereignty, all states, great or small, are equal. But politically they are far from being equal. There are categories of states with regard to their power, that is, great powers, middle powers, and small states. There are different models for categorization of states. Here, for the purpose of our study, we adopt the model developed by Iver B. Neumann and Sieglinde Gstöhl. According to them, small states are "those states that were not great powers and that were not insisting on being referred to as middle powers (Australia, Canada, also regionally dominant powers such as South Africa)." Small states are different from micro-states "whose claim to maintain effective sovereignty on a territory is sometimes questioned by other states and that cannot maintain what larger states at given time define as the minimum required presence in the international society of states...because of perceived lack of resources." Small states lack capabilities and are not able to have their will against a Great Power. A Great Power with superior capabilities, on the other hand, is able to have its will against a small state. Great Powers are managers of the international national system at a given time and assume great responsibilities in the international institutions such as the UN Security Council. "Being recognized as a great power means that decision-makers in other polities will take what they consider to be your interests into concern. The Great Power is thus present even when absent; it exerts power in settings that it even does not know exists. Other Great Powers will recognize, at least in principle, its rightful interests". The stability of this bilateral relationship depends upon the similarity of perceptions of their mutual adversary. "If, from the very beginning of a working relationship between the small power and the great power, the individual perceptions of the main

adversary are different from each other, the relationship between the two tends to be tenuous and may fluctuate depending upon the perception of the individual crises faced by them.” The systemic factors which were responsible for the establishment of close relationship between the two states might undergo changes which, in turn, might bring about diminution in their relative geo-strategic importance for each other. The result is that the small power loses its importance for the great power. According to this theory, people (and group of people) in their mutual relationships perceives themselves and others as a parent, child or an adult. This analysis helps understand inequitable relationship between states with large differences of status, culture, power and resources.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 US Policy of De-hyphenation of India and Pakistan

After the end of the Cold War, some circles in the United States began to argue that relations with India, the most important and emerging power in the region, could not be kept hostage to relations of the US with other countries of the region. They pointed out that India would be a critical factor in the regional peace and overall stability of Asia and that divergence on strategic and nuclear issues should not be permitted to become an impediment in enhancement of relations in other fields. G. W. Bush and his foreign policy team had indicated during election campaign that they would bring relations with India to a new strategic paradigm to make India a “force for stability and security in Asia (George W. Bush, 1999).” The Clinton administration was criticized for its tendency to tie India with Pakistan and to think of Indo-US relations in terms of only Kashmir or the nuclear factor in South Asia. It was pointed out that “China is an element in China’s calculation, and it should be in America’s too (Condoleezza, 2000).” Pakistan received scant attention in the strategic calculations of the newly-installed Bush administration. After the 9/11 incident, the only importance of Pakistan for the strategists and policy-makers of the US was in terms of its role in the short-term goal of fighting the war against terror. The main focus of the new administration was on India (Ashley 2007).

The policy of the Bush administration towards South-Asia was based on recommendations of a study of the Rand Corporation that stressed a de-hyphenated policy towards India and Pakistan. These recommendations asked the US to govern its relations with India and Pakistan by an objective assessment of inherent value of each country to US interests rather than by fears about how US relations with one would affect relations with the other. The report asserted that India was on its way to become a major power of Asia that deserved US engagement (Ashley, 2001). The recommendations of the report were implemented by the Bush and successive administrations in letter and spirit. The Bush administration accorded special treatment to India and carried relations with India to heights unprecedented in their past by concluding the Indo-US nuclear deal, and effecting cooperation in the fields of general defense, space, missile defense and transfer of dual-use technology. The resultant Indo-US strategic partnership was far wider and broader in scope than the Pakistan-United States strategic partnership during that period. India was accorded a preferential treatment in complete disregard of the unsettling effect of such treatment on the balance of power in South Asia against Pakistan (Sadia, 2008).

The election of President Obama initially worried Indians that the new administration would revert back to the old policy of treating India as a regional, instead of, an Asian power, and once again hyphenates it with Pakistan. Indians had also apprehensions about Obama’s non-proliferation proclivities and his attitude towards Indo-US Nuclear Deal. The new president’s announcement to start withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan in August 2011 had also set alarms ringing in the Indians’ minds with regard to the future of Afghanistan (Christine, 2010). These apprehensions of

the Indians were allayed soon when the Obama administration inaugurated the Indo-US Strategic Dialogue in May 2010. The Indians were also relieved by the fact that by 2010 the United States had got disgusted in its efforts to bring congruence in its policy towards China.

Pakistanis felt that the United States could no longer be relied upon as main partner in their country's competition with India. They knew that in the post-09/11 period the already existing gulf between India and Pakistan would further get widened as a result of the US proclivities towards India instead of promoting parity between the two South Asian competitors as was Pakistan's strategic objective and US policy during the Cold War. The United States looked India as a friendly and strategic partner in its global competition with India and as one of the twenty-first century's centers of influence in the world. Pakistan's concerns, in this respect, were aptly conveyed to the US by Sartaj Aziz, adviser to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Security and Foreign Affairs in January 2014, during his official visit to Washington in connection with the first strategic dialogue in the last three years. He made it clear, although in polite diplomatic words, that the United States put a lot of pressure on Pakistan on issues of worry for India but exerted very little pressure on India on matters of concern for Pakistan. President Obama's preferential treatment for India was also manifested by the fact that, during his presidency, he paid two visits to India but did not pay even a short single visit to Pakistan. The unstable situation in Pakistan was given as an excuse for his not visiting Pakistan in 2015 January 2015 (Ravi, 2004). US policy towards South Asia had its impact on all issues of concern for Pakistan.

5.2 The United States and Kashmir Issue

The United States never adopted a conclusive policy stand on the Kashmir dispute between Pakistan and India. It changed its position on this issue from time to time, keeping in view its security interests in the region in the changing international scenario. Kashmir, in itself, did not have any strategic importance for the United States except for the fact that the two parties involved in the dispute, being principal powers of the region, were strategically very important for the United States (Ahmad, 2016). During the Cold war, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, the United States supported Pakistan's stand that the issue be resolved in accordance with the United Nations Security Council resolutions with the tacit understanding that the USSR would veto any tangible move towards any solution of the dispute unacceptable to India. At that time any support for the UNSC resolutions for the solution of the Kashmir issue was inconsequential for India, so long as it had the backing of the Soviet Union (Karamatullah, 2014). After the Simla Accord of 1972, the US stopped mentioning UNSC resolutions on the Kashmir issue. The end of the Cold War, the disintegration of the Soviet Union and emergence of the United States as the Supreme power of the world changed entire security calculus of the US policy-makers. China was designated as the new security and foreign policy challenge in the twenty-first century. The Kashmir dispute was the first victim of the ensuing warm ties between the United States and India in which the US lost all its interest. Instead of mediating or resolving the Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan, the US urged the two parties to resolve it through dialogue which was an endorsement of the Indian position on the issue that it be resolved by the two parties through bilateral negotiations in accordance with the Simla Agreement (Robert, 2002).

Pakistan expected the United States to persuade India to enter into a meaningful dialogue with Pakistan for finding a solution to the Kashmir dispute. But the US would not play this role. President Bush had categorically said that the United States would play the role of a facilitator on the Kashmir issue only if both India and Pakistan expressed the desire in this respect, otherwise not.

During his official visit to Pakistan in February 2006, President Bush said that the United States could not force India and Pakistan on the Kashmir question. Pakistan wanted Kashmir issue to be in the regional mandate of the US envoy, and was naturally perturbed by this backtracking of the United States. President Obama, like his predecessor, was not prepared to exert any pressure on India for resolution of the Kashmir entangle. He said that the United States would not impose a solution of its own upon the two countries against their own free will.

5.3 Islamic Militancy in India: Impact on Pakistan-US Relations

Closely related to the Kashmir issue and having direct bearing on United States relations with India and Pakistan and the overall balance of power in South Asia was the problem of terrorism in India and the United States' response to it. India skillfully exploited the anti-terrorism wave of the post-09/11 period to its advantage by equating the Kashmiris' struggle for liberation as terrorism and by showing to the world, with however ridiculous proofs, that the perpetrators of acts of militancy in India had their handlers in the intelligence and security agencies of Pakistan. Pakistan was blamed by India of involvement in the terrorist attacks on the Kashmir state. India deployed large number of troops along with its border with Pakistan to intimidate the latter. On that occasion the United States closely remained in touch with both the South Asian adversaries and tried to diffuse the tension in the region. Secretary of State Collin Powel and President Bush talked to Gen. Musharraf on phone and urged him to take stern measures against the militants that were bent on harming India (Robert, and Naresh, 2011).

The United States began to endorse Indians' accusation of Pakistan sponsored terrorism in Indian occupied Kashmir and openly criticize Pakistan of supporting militancy in the Indian held Kashmir. Pressure was built up on Pakistan to stop this infiltration. India was provided by the United States with sophisticated US-made electronic ground sensors with the aim of helping in stemming the tide of militants' infiltration into the Indian Occupied Kashmir. The United States believed that the Pakistan-based Kashmiri militants had links with international terrorist incidents. Therefore, Pakistan was urged to adopt zero-tolerance policy towards extremist militants. It was believed by strategists in the United States that Pakistan used terrorism as an "instrument of low intensity conflict to press New Delhi into concessions on Kashmir." Pakistan, according to the US strategists, pursued this policy with the belief that India would not carry out conventional attack against Pakistan in response to cross-border operations of the militants due to fear of escalation of the conflict into a nuclear war (Robert, and Naresh, 2011).

The Mumbai terrorist incident, on November 26, 2008, which resulted in the killing of 164 people and wounding of 308, strained relations between Pakistan and India because the Lashkar-e-Taiba, a Pakistani militant organization, was accused of involvement in the incident. Pakistan launched a crack-down against the accused individuals. Up to 100 operatives of Lashkar-e-Taiba were arrested including Zaki-ur-Rahman Lakhvi, chief of operations of the Lashkar, and more than 100 were put under surveillance. Hafiz Mohammad Saeed, chief of the LeT, was kept under house arrest and bank accounts of the LeT and JuD were frozen. Despite these actions the United States fully endorsed India's position on the Mumbai terrorist incident (Raashi, 2014).

5.4 Indo-US Strategic Cooperation

The end of the Cold War changed strategic priorities of both the United States and India. The US no longer needed Pakistan in the post-Cold War era when China, not Russia, was fixed as global competitor by the American strategists. India jettisoned its old policy of neutralism and evolved a

strategic partnership with the United States in order to cope with the challenge of rising power of China in Asia. China was the center of gravity of the Asian policy of both India and the United States. Thus India became a major element in the post-Cold War policy of the United States that aimed at retaining its position in Asia and checking the increasing clout of China. Both countries felt an urge to take the level of their relationship to high pedals. It was with this end in view that, in January 2004, both countries started a process known as Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP). The main object of the NSSP was to remove phase-wise restrictions for India to get access to advanced US technology in important areas of dual-use items, civilian nuclear applications, civilian space cooperation, and ballistic missile defense. This was a strategic shift in the orientation of the US policy towards India. The most important step in the strategic partnership between the two countries was the Indo-US Nuclear Deal of 2005. The United States committed itself to lead efforts to adjust international regimes with a view to facilitate civil nuclear energy cooperation and trade with India (Devin, 2006).

The Indo-US Nuclear deal required India to separate its civilian and military installations and place the civilian installations under the IAEA safeguards. India was free to decide which facilities to be placed under the IAEA safeguards in the light of its own national security considerations. A considerable space was left to India to continue a parallel nuclear weapons programme beyond the scope of the IAEA. India achieved a status at par with other nuclear weapons states without ensuring the non-proliferation obligations attached with the NPT. This was done by the United States with a view to sustain its paramount position in the world and to check the rising power of China. The main goal of the US was to preclude China from dominating Asia and establishing its hold over the seas. India's role was crucial in realization of these objectives (Lisa and Dean, 2011).

The Indo-US nuclear deal was seen by Pakistan as a threat to strategic stability and a harbinger of arms race in South Asia. Pakistan's ambassador to the United States, General Jahangir Karamat expressing his dissatisfaction over the deal, demanded an equal treatment for both India and Pakistan on a subject as critical as nuclear technology (Muralidhar, 2006). The worrying factor for Pakistan was that the nuclear deal and any provision of advanced weapons to India would disturb the balance of power in the region which was already heavily tilted in favor of India. Pakistanis felt that India got favorable treatment from the US while Pakistan did not receive the treatment it deserved due to its sacrifices in the war against terror. Pakistan demanded that it be treated as a partner, not a target, of the global non-proliferation regime. The deal was in variance with the stated US policy of establishing a nuclear restraint regime in the Subcontinent. Pakistan could protect itself from Indian nuclear challenge and restore balance of power in the region only by taking its own effective steps. Pakistanis rightly believed that the United States endangered strategic stability in the region just to bring economic and business benefits to the military-industrial complex of the United States (Feroz and Nick, 2012).

With a view to enhance defense cooperation between them, the US and India signed a Defense Pact on June 28, 2005 in Washington DC. The main object of this agreement was to facilitate joint weapons production, the transfer of civil nuclear and military technology to India, and cooperation in the missile defense. Pakistan was critical over the Indo-US Defense Pact, especially over the induction of the new defense systems into the Indian arsenal such as the missile defense systems that would prompt nuclear arms race in South Asia. In 2010 the United States removed Indian entities from the US Department of Commerce "Entity List" to which they had been put after India's nuclear blasts in 1998 and realigned India in US export control regulations. In 2011, the two

countries clinched a deal of about \$4 billion under which India would receive from the US plenty C-17 aircrafts that would make India the second largest fleet of this jet fighter in the world (Lisa, and Dean, 2011). Although the US provided military assistance to both India and Pakistan after 09/11, Pakistan, as a whole, received a discriminatory treatment at the hands of the US. Pakistan received “aid” and “military assistance” which was unpredictable and subject to Congressional review. As against this, joint defense production and technology transfer were integral parts of military cooperation with India which would augment India’s indigenous defense production (Sadia, 2008). Pakistan believed that the transfer of high-technology military equipment and missile technology to India by the US would further tilt the conventional balance of power in South Asia in favor of India with adverse security implications for Pakistan. Obama’s administration’s reassurances that the US military assistance to India would not adversely affect security equation between the two South Asian adversaries could not convince policy-makers of Pakistan (Sadia, 2008).

6. Conclusion

The United States maintained close relations between India and Pakistan during the period from 2005 to 2015. But the nature and dimensions of relationship with the two countries were markedly different from each other. Relations between the United States and India reflected their long-term interests and shared strategic goals which rested on preventing the rise of China as the most dominant economic and military power of Asia and the world in the foreseeable future. A militarily strong and stable India most suitably fitted in this paradigm of strategic goals of the US policy-makers. Pakistan was needed by the US just as a tool in fighting the war against terror and no more. Only such kind of assistance was provided to Pakistan which was deemed essential by the US for effectively fighting the war against terror. Pakistan did not have a place in the long-term China-centric strategic perspectives of the US. That is why the United States’ relations with India were broader, all-encompassing and strategic in nature as compared to relations between The United States and Pakistan which were short-term and tactical in nature with no long-term and broad-based shared objectives. The United States provided all sort of assistance to India and supported it on all major issues in disregard of Pakistan’s susceptibilities.

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