

## Theoretical Conceptions on Inter-State Relationships: A Case Study of Us-Pakistan Counter-Terror Alliance

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### ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes broader theoretical paradigms of inter-state relationship with special reference to US-Pakistan relationship after 9/11, 2001. Various theories and patterns of inter-state relationship are explored in the context of the US-Pakistan relationship after 9/11, 2001. After analyzing several patterns of inter-state relationship, it identifies bargaining as the most suitable model for the post 9/11 US-Pakistan relationship.

**KEY WORDS:** Realism, patron-client, dependency, influence, bargaining

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The incident of 9/11 and the nature of international environment was a major dynamic transforming the cold US-Pakistan relationship into a more dynamic relationship. The terrorist attacks on World Trade Centre (WTC) and Pentagon brought about a revolutionary change in the world politics, perhaps much more than that caused by the end of Cold War. It had serious repercussion for world politics and economy. The US, the sole hegemony after the end of Cold War seriously felt the scourge of terrorist activities on its land. Its homeland security was at stake and therefore took immediate steps to handle the situation and renew its policies especially towards South Asia, the region most affected by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.[1]

The US negative policy towards Pakistan which was shaped by Pakistan affiliations with the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, the nuclear tests of 1998 and the perceived nuclear proliferation, changed dramatically in the favor of Pakistan. The new US policy towards South Asia was not confined to the war on terrorism but addressed several issues like, “national and global security, terrorism, and nuclear proliferation, economic and strategic opportunities in South Asia, promotion of democracy and anti-Americanism in the Muslim world”. [2]

On the eve of 9/11, Pakistan was facing great setback in its external relations and domestic politics. Its failing economy, political instability and nuclear weapons and the perceived links with the terrorists and the Taliban was a point of concern for the US policy makers. On the other hand, India had an advancing economy and well developed political and administrative institutions.[3] Thus, on Pakistani side, the national security imperatives played vital role in shaping Pakistan’s decision to join US in the war on terror. President Musharraf highlighted the national interests of Pakistan in his address to the nation on September 19 (2001): to ensure economic development; to ensure security at the face of India; to safeguard its strategic nuclear and missile assets and to get international support on the Kashmir issue.[4]

### 2. Theoretical Conception

The theoretical conception of this study is based on the broader tradition of political realism which stresses the importance of power acquisition and maximization as a dynamic of foreign policy decision making in the anarchical international system. From Thucydides to Waltz and Carr, the realists believe that states behavior is determined by the anarchical nature of international system. As the primary goal of each state is the promotion of national interests for which it needs power, thus the acquisition of power and the dominance of stronger over weaker shapes the external policies of states in the anarchical international environment.[5] Realism disregards ethical principles and the social and material cost of state’s military expeditions.

Neo-realism, an off-shoot of realism, giving the explanation at the global level of analysis, stresses the importance of the structure of international system on the behavior of the states. In this structure, the states act as rational actors pursuing their own vital national interests of survival, security and development.[6] Neo-realism argues that the international system is formed by the interaction of the states which when established, dictates the behavior of states. In this system, the position of states is determined by difference in their capabilities and the relative distribution of capabilities determines the structure of system and states’ behavior.[7] Neo-realism ignores the internal dynamics of states’ behavior like the nature of regime, ideology, power capacity and leadership etc.[8]

Neo-classical realism overcomes the shortcomings of neo-realism and analyzes states’ behavior in terms of both state and individual levels of analysis. It takes into account the state level factors like domestic politics,

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power capacity and the perceptions of leaders and foreign policy makers as determinant of foreign policy decision making.[9]

Since independence, Pakistan's foreign policy outlook has been greatly determined by security and power maximization in the region. Traditionally, the main dimension of security revolves around survival and territorial integrity. However, in modern times it encompasses all the internal and external threats to the national interests of the state. Barry Buzan in his sectoral approach towards security identified five major sectors of security: political, military, economic, societal and environmental. These sectors are interwoven and cannot work in isolation.[10] The inter linkage of political, military and economic sectors determine Pakistan's foreign policy decision making and its relationship with regional actors in South Asia. In this context, US-Pakistan relationship in the post 9/11 era can be studied under the broader realist paradigm with its neo-realist and neo-classical realist amendments that the national interests of states coupled with domestic factors and the anarchical international system provide the rationale for change in foreign policies of the states and their interaction with each other in the international system.

### **3. Patterns of Relationship**

Inter-state alliances may be systematic or non-systematic. In systematic model of alliance formation, there is state inequality in terms of state's power, ability, capacity and resources. There is no conflict of interests among the allying states. Survival and maximizing the chances of survival is the main virtue behind alliance formation. In Contrast, the non-systematic alliances are based on the strength inequalities of the allying partners. The allying states pay off their differences for maximum benefits and minimum cost. Benefits are in terms of security and economic growth while the cost is the terms of autonomy sacrificed.[11] Based on strength inequality, alliances have several patterns.

#### **3.1. The Patron-Client Relationship**

A patron-client relationship exists between a strong and a weak state. To determine which state is stronger and the other is weaker, Handel has made a categorization of states into super powers, great powers, middle powers, weak states and mini states on the basis of their relative strength.[12] The total strength of a state depends on the combination of internal and external sources of power. Internal sources include: geographical conditions, material conditions, human resources and organizational capabilities while the external sources of power include the relationship of state within alliances, international organizations and within a patron-client relationship.[13] Minor powers [weak states] can be defined as "states whose diplomatic and material resources are so limited that their leaders focus mostly on the protection of their territorial integrity rather than on the pursuit of more far-reaching global objectives".[14] A weak state has small population, small area, low GNP and GDP, little industrialization, limited scope of interests, little capability of defending itself against external threats, can be easily penetrated, dependent on external economic and military aid and have little role in international politics. A patron-client relationship is characterized by greater difference in military and bargaining power of the patron, a vital role of client in patron's global competition, increased strategic and military transaction to the client and complexity of the patron's goals in relation to the client.[15]

The US-Pakistan relationship does not fit well into the category of patron-client relationship. Though Pakistan has shown little progress in terms of human resources and the socio-economic indicators are not showing a good sign. Pakistan has a large population divided on cultural, lingual and ethnic lines seriously jeopardizing national unity and integration. Moreover, it has weak political institutions and there is a wide gap in the military capability of US and Pakistan. Pakistan has played a significant role in the US competition at global level during the Cold War. However, it is wrong to conclude that Pakistan is serving as a client of US. Pakistan has been able to influence US policy in its favor due to its geo-strategic importance in the region linking the land-lock Central Asian states to the warm water of Indian Ocean and providing a safe and easy root for merchandize to these states.

Moreover, Pakistan is rich in natural resources and its economy is growing. Pakistan holds the position of 44<sup>th</sup> largest economy in terms of GDP and 28<sup>th</sup> in terms purchasing power parity (PPP).[16] Growth in industrial sector during 1995-2000 was 3.22 percent.[17] The nuclear tests of 1998 gave Pakistan increased military strength, maximum ability to deter the Indian threat and greater influence to bargain. In the post 9/11 era, Pakistan geographical proximity with Afghanistan and the knowledge of its territory and intelligence and its nuclear ability contributed to influence the US administration to change its policy towards Pakistan.

#### **3.2. Dependency Relationship**

Dependency theories encompass the economic aspect of the patron-client relationship. Dependency theories argue that in the international system states are dependent on each other for their economies. Dependency theorists divide the world into core and periphery i.e. the developed and developing states. The core being highly advanced need raw materials from the periphery. The states on the periphery lack integration among the different sectors of economy, proper industries and technical know-how for converting raw materials

into manufactured goods and lack of proper investment into research and development.[18] This leads to greater dependence of periphery on the core. There is a flow of capital and goods between the core and periphery. The developed states or the core greatly influence and dominate the periphery. Peter Evans describes the general characteristic of dependency relationship that in the dependency relationship, the economy of the periphery is internationalized and incorporated into the global economy.[19]

Dependency theories deal with the complex economic relations among the state. It fails to address political and strategic aspects of inter-state relations, which form a significant part of the current US-Pakistan relationship. US-Pakistan relationship is multifaceted having strategic, military and economic dimensions. It is based on Pakistan's security and economic interests and the US' political and strategic interests. Moreover, Pakistan is not altogether dependent on US for aid and assistance. Pakistan has close relationship with other western states and the international financial institutions like IMF, Paris Club and World Bank etc.

### 3.3. Influence Relationship

In order to determine whether the US-Pakistan relationship is an example of influence relationship, it is necessary to analyze the various propositions of influence relationship in the context of US-Pakistan relationship. Coulombis identified several proposition for an influence relationship. To him the value of influence depends upon several factors: the need of one state to influence and the acceptance of that influence by another state; greater the coincidence of threat perception, greater will be the receptivity of influence; personality and behavior of the leaders; economic growth and stability; dependency for weaponry; diplomatic services; role of military regimes; internal cohesiveness and foreign policy consensus; public attitude and the image of influencing power; strategic location of receptive power and the number of powerful states in the international arena.[20]

To Liam Collins, it was the coercive diplomacy of the US which forced Pakistan into the anti-terror alliance despite of its domestic antagonism.[21] Coercive diplomacy, according to Alexander George in his book *Force and Statecraft* is "the attempts to reverse actions that are already occurring or have been undertaken by an adversary and tries to initiate behavior by fear of the consequences".[22]

Soon after the incident of 9/11 (2001), President Bush gave a single handed choice to the nations in the world and Pakistan, "either you are with us or with the terrorists".[23] After an unsuccessful mediation attempt, Pakistan under extreme US pressure decided to cooperate with the US-led international community in the war against Al-Qaeda and Taliban. Pakistan took a U-turn on its policy towards Taliban regime in Afghanistan and took serious steps to normalize its relationship with India. At the international level, Pakistan has entered into cooperation with a number of countries to jointly fight the menace of terrorism. Examples of such arrangements include signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Britain, Saudi Arabia, China, Tajikistan, Laos, Brunei, Singapore, Thailand and Cambodia.[24] On domestic front, efforts were made to amend the education structure and curricula through Education Sector Reforms.[25] Pakistan also took military actions against factions responsible for the terrorist activities.

However, it is wrong to conclude that Pakistan was heavily influenced by the US to join the War on Terror. Pakistan holds very significant geo-strategic position in the region. Its geographical location, comprehensive engagement with the Taliban military and the links with the Pashtun population of Afghanistan made Pakistan the most vital ally for success of US in the entire region. Moreover, in this alliance Pakistan was able to get huge economic influx from the US and debt relation from the international financial organization. Musharraf decision to cooperate in the war on terror made it possible to secure economic assistance and US weaponry.[26] So, there was influence from both sides driving both states into an anti-terror coalition.

### 4. Bargaining

Keohane identifies that in the alliance system; despite of the US military and economic superiority, the weak states can act independently and can even affect a change in the US policy in their favor. US' intensive involvement in small states under the perceived threat from communism during Cold War provided the opportunity of bargaining to the small allies.[27] In the post 9/11 era, the war on terror and the important position of Pakistan vis-à-vis Afghanistan provided the rationale for the change in US policy towards Pakistan. Pakistan was in a better position to bargain with the US. Alliance bargaining according to Snyder: "takes place as a two-person game. Other persons are present in the background, or on the sidelines, as alternative partners or as enemies or neutrals but the statesman's attention is mostly focused on single state with which he is trying to negotiate alliance".[28]

In general form, the anarchic structure of international system, the strength inequalities of allying states, their conflicting and common interests and the bargaining process between the allying states for dividing the net benefits of alliance among the states determine the nature of an alliance. The division of benefits is greatly affected by the structure of system, level of relationship and the bargaining process.[29]

In bargaining, the proto-partners share some common and conflicting interests. They perceive that they can increase their security by allying. Bargaining power of states is determinant of two factors: the evaluation of the

alliance depending on the need of alliance. which depends upon the perceived threat from the adversary, the capacity and will of the ally to satisfy that need and the perceived value of autonomy to be sacrificed; and the comparative availability of other alliances and non-alliance alternatives.[30] Bargaining can be done through state to state negotiations, negotiations with separate elements of US government like the armed forces, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Criminal Investigation Department (CID) etc. or the small ally may influence the domestic public opinion and interests groups for its advantage.[31] Keohane identifies the conditions for bargaining state that: “it must have high degree of maneuverability with domestic politics and the need to avoid being regarded hostile to US; the ability to count on active American policy; have good working relations with American governmental agencies; and must try to build close ties with US”.[32]

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### Conclusion

The post 9/11, 2001 US-Pakistan relationship is a good example of bargaining between US and Pakistan. Both states have common interest of eliminating terrorism and bringing peace and stability in the region. Though Pakistan has some observations regarding the policies of US towards India and Afghanistan, the evolving Indo-US relationship and the changing US policy towards Afghanistan may be detrimental to Pakistan’s national interests in the region. US in the post 9/11 era emerged as the most powerful hegemony manipulating world politics. Pakistan had its own perceptions of security and survival. The geo-strategic importance of Pakistan in the region influenced the US to change its hostile policy towards Pakistan and form friendly cooperation in the war on terror in Afghanistan. Pakistan on the other hand, was seeking its national interests of security and economic development. As a result of this bargain Pakistan got economic benefits from the US. However, this relationship gave rise to domestic insurgency and terrorism in Pakistan. It also increased US influence in Pakistan domestic and foreign affairs.

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