

The Clinton Approach to Terrorism and the Role of President Musharraf (1999-2001): A Critical Analysis

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Received: September 1, 2014

Accepted: November 13, 2014

ABSTRACT

The relations between the United States and Pakistan (US-Pakistan relations) got strained in the wake of the collapse of the then Soviet Union over the dubious nature of the nuclear program of the later. A number of sanctions were imposed on Pakistan that affected both its economy and defense. However, in late 1990s, the American focus was more on terrorism than nuclear proliferation. Thus, the Clinton administration got closer to the then civilian government in Pakistan. On 12 October 1999 the military coup in Pakistan distanced the two states and Clinton administration looked at this development with strong resentment. This paper will take into account the causes and effects of the deteriorated relationship between these two allies of the past. It will also explore the repercussions of this severe estrangement on international peace and it will evaluate the cost and benefit ratio of this rift both for Pakistan and for the United States. The future prospects of US-Pakistan relationship will also be evaluated in the light of past.

KEYWORDS: Pakistan; US; relations; terrorism; sanctions; military

INTRODUCTION

Pakistan has been relying upon the US support from the very beginning of its history in late 1940s and, therefore, joined various US-backed pacts against the then Soviet Union. However, the decline of communism and the subsequent disintegration of the then Soviet Union caused a wider gulf in the US-Pakistan relationship. This cleavage resulted into strong disenchantment between them. On the one hand, this development unfolded a series of miseries for Pakistan and pushed it into severe political isolation at international level while, on the other hand, the US efforts to check terrorism bore no fruit without Pakistan's active support. Thus, not only the interests of both Pakistan and the US were put at stake but also threatened international peace.

Being suspicious about Pakistan's links with terrorist groups in the region and the vulnerability of her nuclear assets, the US considered Pakistan as a potential threat. But without Pakistan's support, no effort was effective to wipe out terrorism from the region. Solution to the nuclear proliferation also could not be possible in case of complete US estrangement with Pakistan. Therefore, it was not possible for the US administration to neglect Pakistan, for a long time, despite the presence of a military regime there. To accomplish the US agenda of counter-terrorism in Afghanistan, the Caspian basin, Middle East and South Asia, Pakistan was still an effective ally but was not the 'most allied ally'. Although a third layer of sanctions was imposed by the United States on 15 October 1999 as a resentment against the military takeover in Pakistan but access of the later to international monetary institutions was not impeded. No doubt, these coup-related sanctions against Pakistan added more to the agony of this economically backward country, which was already in the grip of a number of sanctions imposed by the United States and the Western countries after Pakistan's nuclear detonations in May 1998. This new wave of US-imposed sanctions made Pakistan ineligible for many kinds of US aid (Hagerty, The United States-Pakistan Entente: Third Time's a Charm?, 2005). Military aid dropped from US \$110.8 million (in 1999) to zero (in 2000). US-Economic assistance to Pakistan under Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) fell from \$61.8 million (in 1999) to \$3.8 million (in 2000) as Table 1 shows. Consequently, Pakistan went on the verge of bankruptcy. To save Pakistan from such a catastrophic situation, the military government desperately needed the US support on international monetary forums because of the fact that the new military government had inherited the fiscal disorder and a huge debt of \$38 billion beside the governance problems. To compensate the economic discrepancies arising from the US imposed sanctions, Pakistan was forced to go to the IMF and the World Bank. The role of the US was equivalently decisive in acquiring economic and technological aid from European countries, European Union, and international economic forums. Thus, to alienate Pakistan from the US aegis was not affordable for any government in Pakistan and the same was true for Musharraf-led military government. No one can deny that regardless the type of regime (civil or military) all governments in Pakistan have attempted to establish stable and long-term partnership with the United States. The new military government found itself

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on the same track. On the other hand, looking at the possible threats emanating from Pakistan's economic plight, the US decided not to block Pakistan's way to international monetary institutions for economic support. US trade links with Pakistan were also intact as Chart 7 and Table 2 show. The US administration was sure that in case of economic collapse, Pakistan would never hesitate to put her nuclear arsenal for sale in the black market and that was an antithesis to the US efforts for nuclear non-proliferation. Hence, fear of the terrorists' access to the nuclear devices would Pakistan (Pervez Musharraf) might be better for stability in the Indian subcontinent and its neighboring region. Preferring the general, he went on to say that the general was better than the corrupt and incompetent civilian government that the military ran off. Frank Anderson, former CIA chief of the Near East division and Milt Bearden, a former CIA chief in Pakistan suggested to President Clinton that the military takeover in Pakistan should be embraced and no effort should be made to isolate or sanction Pakistan for this coup as it was the best time to force Pakistan to comply with the US interests (Anderson & Bearden, 1999). However, this idea did not make Musharraf favorite to Clinton administration. Being subdued by her spirit for democracy, the US administration demanded from Musharraf a time frame for the restoration of democracy in Pakistan. On the other hand, the military ruler in Pakistan was reluctant to show his cards to the United States and he was shirking any share to any other party except Pakistan army of which he was a concomitant part. Some of the interests of the US and military dictator in Pakistan were incompatible but in the broad spectrum they were best to cater each other need. The divergence of interests led them to confrontation but not estrangement for a while. The period after the military coup in Pakistan (1999) until 9/11 (2001) was full of tension in the history of US-Pakistan relations. However, recognizing the strategic worth of Pakistan, the United States considered political stability in the former as an essential factor in the stability of the entire South Asian region and beyond. Karl Inderfurth, US Assistant Secretary of State, in a testimony at a hearing before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs (CFA) for Asia and Pacific subcommittee sated:

Pakistan is important because it can serve as an 'example' of a progressive Islamic democracy, because it is a link—both economic and political—between the Indian Ocean and Central Asia, because it has significant human and economic resources and because it has historically been a friend of the United State (Jain, 2007).

As stated earlier, nuclear proliferation was the longstanding US concern that had become one of the key objectives of US foreign policy in South Asia, especially in Pakistan. To check the nuclear proliferation, the US wanted to engage Pakistan. But in the late 1990s, the issue of nuclear non-proliferation and the A.Q. Khan dilemma were somehow divorced from the rest of the issues, at least, for some time (Levy & Scott-Clark, 2007). Checking terrorism had become the top most US priority as it was considered a direct threat to the US interests. A calm, peaceful and stable South Asia was a prerequisite for the US global agenda.

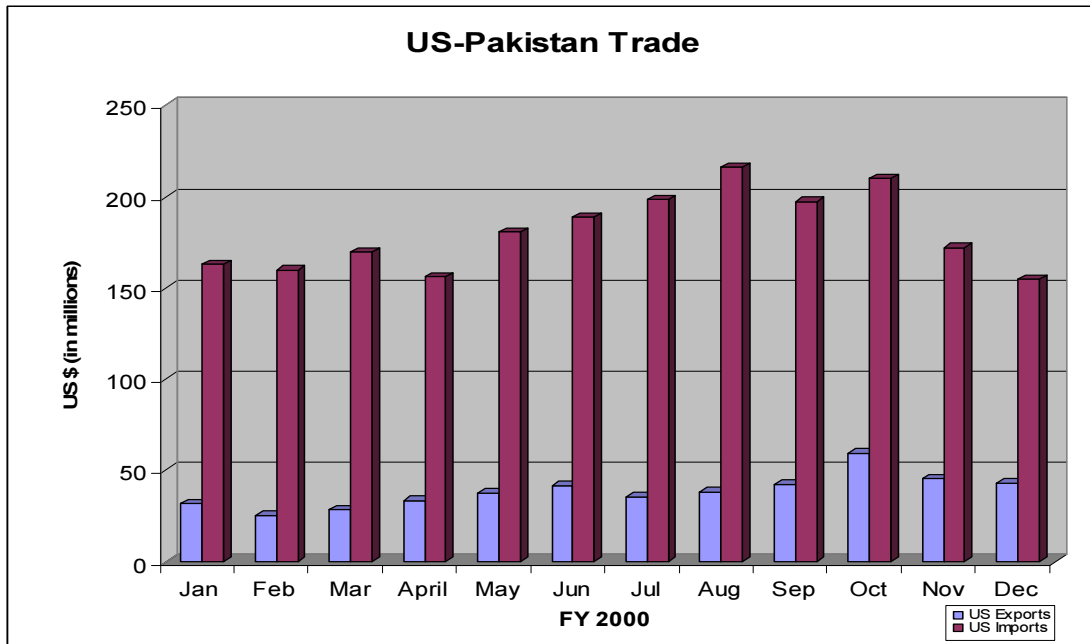
Meanwhile, the South Asian peace and stability had been greatly disturbed by the grim state of relations between Pakistan and India. Antagonism between India and Pakistan

Table 1. Fiscal Year 2002 U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants - Obligations and Loan Authorizations, in \$US millions

	Post-War Relief Period	Marshall Plan Period	Mutual Scty Act Period	Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) Period					Total FAA Period	Total Loans & Grants	Repayments & Forgiveness	Outstanding Loan Balances
	1946-48	1949-52	1953-61	1962-98	1999	2000	2001	2002	1962-02	1946-02	1946-02	1946-02
I. Total Economic Assistance	0.1	11.1	1,418.7	7,201.1	61.8	3.8	90.4	814.0	8,171.1	9,601.0	2,304.1	2,294.6
of which Grants	.	11.1	941.9	3,102.3	48.8	3.8	90.4	804.0	4,049.3	5,002.3	.	.
A. USAID and Predecessor	.	10.6	935.4	4,390.0	5.3	.	.	621.1	5,016.3	5,962.3	1,491.1	1,219.6
of which Security Support Assistance/Economic Support Fund	.	.	586.6	2,122.0	1.7	.	.	606.7	2,730.3	3,316.9	.	.
Loans	.	.	339.5	2,371.1	.	.	.	.	2,371.1	2,710.6	1,491.1	1,219.6
Grants	.	10.6	595.9	2,018.8	5.3	.	.	621.1	2,645.2	3,251.7	.	.
B. Food Aid	.	0.1	415.9	2,736.9	54.3	0.5	86.9	91.7	2,970.4	3,386.4	812.9	1,075.1
Loans	.	.	137.3	1,727.7	13.0	.	.	10.0	1,750.7	1,888.0	812.9	1,075.1
Grants	.	0.1	278.6	1,009.3	41.3	0.5	86.9	81.7	1,219.8	1,498.5	.	.
Title I	.	.	334.1	2,290.5	13.0	.	.	10.0	2,313.5	2,647.6	812.9	1,075.1
Title II	.	0.1	81.8	424.9	4.5	0.5	1.9	5.1	436.9	518.8	.	.
Title III
Section 416(b)/Commodity Credit Corporation Food for Progress	.	.	.	21.6	36.8	.	85.1	75.7	219.1	219.1	.	.
Food For Education	0.9	0.9	0.9	.	.
C. Other Economic Assistance	0.1	0.4	67.4	74.2	2.2	3.3	3.5	101.2	184.3	252.2	0.1	.
Loans	0.1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	0.1	0.1	.
Grants	.	0.4	67.4	74.2	2.2	3.3	3.5	101.2	184.3	252.1	.	.
Peace Corps	.	.	.	9.5	.	.	.	.	9.5	9.5	.	.
Narcotics Control	.	.	.	64.6	2.2	3.3	3.5	91.1	164.7	164.7	.	.
Other Active Grant Programs	0.0	10.1	10.1	10.1	.	.
Inactive Grant Programs	.	0.4	67.4	.	.	.	.	.	.	67.8	.	.
II. Total Military Assistance	.	.	508.1	2,398.4	111.0	.	.	306.0	2,815.4	3,323.5	1,732.8	126.6
Loans	.	.	.	1,748.5	110.8	.	.	.	1,859.4	1,859.4	1,732.8	126.6
Grants	.	.	508.1	649.9	0.2	.	.	306.0	956.0	1,464.1	.	.
III. Total Economic & Military Assistance	0.1	11.1	1,926.8	9,599.4	172.8	3.8	90.4	1,120.0	10,986.5	12,924.5	4,036.9	2,421.2
Loans	0.1	.	476.8	5,847.3	123.8	.	.	10.0	5,981.2	6,458.1	4,036.9	2,421.2
Grants	.	11.1	1,450.0	3,752.1	49.0	3.8	90.4	1,110.0	5,005.3	6,466.4	.	.
Non-Concessional U.S. Loans	.	.	12.9	447.8	.	.	.	.	447.8	460.7	272.3	188.4
Export-Import Bank Loans	.	.	12.9	446.5	.	.	.	.	446.5	459.4	271.0	188.4
Other Non-Concessional U.S. Loans	.	.	.	1.3	.	.	.	.	1.3	1.3	1.3	.
Overseas Private Investment Corporation

Source: USAID Greenbook 2000.

US Trade with Pakistan: FY 2000
Chart. 7



Source: Chart compiled on the basis of data given in the table 3.2.

Table: 2

NOTE: All figures are in millions of U.S. dollars, and not seasonally adjusted unless otherwise specified.

Month	Exports	Imports	Balance
January 2000	31.9	163.0	-131.1
February 2000	25.4	159.8	-134.4
March 2000	28.4	169.6	-141.2
April 2000	33.4	156.2	-122.8
May 2000	37.7	180.8	-143.1
June 2000	41.8	188.9	-147.1
July 2000	35.5	198.4	-162.9
August 2000	38.2	216.2	-178.0
September 2000	42.2	197.3	-155.1
October 2000	59.5	209.9	-150.4
November 2000	45.4	172.1	-126.7
December 2000	42.9	154.6	-111.7
TOTAL	462.3	2,166.8	-1,704.5

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Foreign Trade Division, Data Dissemination Branch, Washington, D.C. 20233

was greatly due to the long drawn Kashmir dispute and Indian hegemonic designs since 1947. In the changing strategic environment after the Soviet breakup, the US longed an economically sound and militarily strong India to check the influence of communist China into the rest of Asia. But the protracted rivalry between Pakistan and India was hindering the US goals in the region. On the other hand, without addressing the core issue of Kashmir, neither stability at the regional level nor elimination of terrorism at the global level was possible. This fact had become known to the United

States long before. The US was also aware that no solution to Kashmir was possible without foreign power involvement as taking advantage of her status India was unwilling to find a negotiated settlement of the Kashmir, the only Muslim majority province of India. But the US shunned any intervention in this dispute. The US was equally concerned about Indian antipathy to any outside involvement in her bilateral disputes with neighboring countries. Therefore, instead of responding to Pakistan's repeated calls for mediation, the US urged Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir issue through negotiations with India. The US wanted to put an end to terrorism but did not try to nip the evil in the bud – the Kashmir dispute. In fact, war prevention on the Indian subcontinent was the longstanding US objective but conflict resolution had never been taken up seriously. The right of self-determination promised to the Kashmiri people by the UN Security Council never got support from the United States. On the other hand, Indian allegation of Pakistani infiltration in Kashmir got prominence in the eyes of Clinton administration. Endorsing the Indian stance, the US administration denounced the alleged infiltration into the Indian-held Kashmir from Pakistan. The US repeatedly urged Pakistan to cease support to the infiltrators. Likewise, the US was more than sure that there were close ties between Pakistani ISI, *Al-Qaeda*, the Taliban and other *Jihadi* outfits present and operating from Pakistan and Afghanistan in Kashmir. All these groups were considered as close allies of Osama bin Laden. The Americans were made to believe that terrorism was the greatest threat to the US and that this potent threat was becoming more serious day by day. The US citizens were assured that the US was the most favorable target of terrorists. They were also told that most of the terrorism was caused by the extremist Islamic groups (Johnson, 2001). Therefore, a close relationship was considered to be there between Osama bin Laden and the Kashmiri militants who had taken up arms as a result of an indigenous political conflict with Indian government. The Kashmiri youth had taken up arms for their right of self-determination and it was not a rare phenomenon. Not only Kashmiri insurgents but also the other groups like the one in Colombia had taken up arms against the political injustices and economic exploitation. But ironically, the Kashmiri insurgence movement was not only misunderstood but also equated with a movement like that of *Al-Qaeda*. *Al-Qaeda* was also wrongly portrayed as a representative of the whole Muslim community and thus Islam and terrorism were identified as the two sides of the same coin. But all this was a malicious effort on the part of Western, especially the American media, to malign Islam as Eighty-two percent of the attacks in Colombia were against the management of the Colombian oil pipelines by the American and British companies. These attacks were launched as an instrument of violence but the attackers wanted to disrupt oil production that led to the undermining of Colombian economy (Johnson, 2001). These attacks had political motives and, therefore, human beings were not targeted. Even the Americans, who were abducted were, later on, released. Their abduction was due to their working relationship with American oil companies like Halliburton, Shell, Chevron, Mobil, Noble Drilling and Erickson Air-Crane (Johnson, 2001). The case of Kashmiri insurgency was also indebted to political rather than religious causes. Like Columbians, they were struggling to shun out the Indian exploitation. On the other hand, it was a renowned fact that neither the Taliban nor Osama bin Laden declared *jihad* (holy war) against India but the US intelligence agencies were out to find an abstract link between all the militant groups in the region. In fact, the bureaucracies in the Pentagon and in intelligence agencies desperately worked to find an enemy to justify the budget growth (Johnson, 2001). For this purpose, the US administration was forced to equate Kashmiri insurgency with *Al-Qaeda* network. With the disappearance of communist peril, the 'terrorist' threat took the place of the former. Later on, these efforts and some other US policy measures really brought bin Laden and Kashmiri militants in close collaboration with each other as the former provided training facilities to the latter in *Al-Qaeda* camps inside Afghanistan. Pakistan was considered by the US as a hub that joined these two militant movements together. The alleged nexus of bin Laden to Kashmiri militants was considered by the Americans as an axis detrimental to the US interests in the region. Thus, the spillover of bin Laden's influence in Kashmir prompted the US to insulate rest of South Asia through Pakistan and the Taliban. The American CIA was much vocal against bin Laden threat and demanded the US administration to conduct overt surgical strikes against *Al-Qaeda* and bin Laden inside Afghanistan. But until 9/11, despite CIA's strong recommendations the US did not want to land her forces into Afghanistan. To achieve this objective, diplomatic and non-violent channels and peaceful political instruments were employed by the United States. The US administration stressed upon diplomatic and economic encirclement of the Taliban regime by imposing sanctions through the UN Security Council resolutions. On 4 July 1999, Clinton administration imposed a ban on US trade with Afghanistan and blocked all the Taliban assets in the United States. The United States also convinced the United Nations' Security Council to impose sanctions against Afghanistan. On the US plea, the UN Security Council passed her first resolution to impose sanctions against the Taliban. Accordingly, all member states of the UN froze Taliban's assets. Afghanistan's national airline (*Ariana*) was banned to fly outside Afghan airspace (Malik, 2008). Through another

resolution, the UN Security Council called for a worldwide ban on the arms supply, a decrease in the diplomatic representation of Taliban and restricting foreign tours by senior Taliban officials (Malik, 2008). This resolution was particularly directed at Pakistan, which was then the sole supporter of Taliban. It was a signal for Pakistani policymakers to change their Afghan policy to ward off US pressure but Pakistan remained steadfast in her support to the Taliban. Consequently, US-Pakistan relations further deteriorated. The above-mentioned UN resolution was not only supported by the US but the Russian Federation also backed it to curb the ongoing 'Taliban movement' that was thought an obscurantist movement by them. Basically, these UN sanctions were aimed at pressing the Taliban government to extradite Osama bin Laden to some other country and to close the terrorist centers being run on the Afghan soil. Russia was accusing the Taliban for aiding separatists in Chechnya, a Russian part where Muslims had been demanding a separate state like all other Soviet units who came out of the Russian yolk after the evaporation of communist system. Russia was viewing Pakistan as the lifeline of the Taliban. Therefore, Russia tried to convince the international community to take strong action against Pakistan, too. In fact, neither the US nor Russian Federation was interested in bringing truce to the war-ravaged Afghanistan. They were forwarding their own interests only. According to *The New York Times*, the Human Rights Watch report titled: "Crisis of Impunity: The Role of Pakistan, Russia and Iran in Fueling the Civil War in Afghanistan," alleged that there was a considerable evidence of broad Iranian and Russian support for the anti-Taliban forces in Afghanistan. Further, the report said that some of the Central Asian countries were also augmenting the Russian efforts. With the active involvement of Russian government, military assistance was provided through the Tajikistan-Afghanistan border. The *New York Times* went on to disclose that UN resolutions proved counterproductive and self-defeating as the movers of these resolutions were themselves hectically involved in adding fuel to the protracted civil war in Afghanistan (Crossette, Rights Group Says Taliban Aren't Solely to Blame for the Afghan Disaster, 2001). According to the Human Rights Watch Report, backers of the above-mentioned UN resolutions on Afghanistan were engaged in providing military support to the Afghan parties that had committed gross violations of the laws of war. The report further disclosed that several members of the "six-plus-two group" -- the six nations bordering Afghanistan, plus Russia and the United States, were trying half-heartedly to reach a negotiated settlement to put an end to the war (Crossette, Rights Group Says Taliban Aren't Solely to Blame for the Afghan Disaster, 2001). But the whole brunt of the mischief in Afghanistan fell upon Pakistan and the latter was criticized for providing active support to the Taliban. Pakistan was constantly refuting this stance. Reacting to this allegation, General Musharraf strongly denied the impression that Pakistan was providing the Taliban with arms and ammunitions. He said, "We don't have the resources ...financial or military, especially now, to pass on to Afghanistan". Defending Pakistan's position for recognizing the Taliban as a legitimate government of Afghanistan, he said that the Taliban were in control of 90 percent of the Afghan territory and, therefore, there was no way around except recognizing them [as the legitimate ruler of Afghanistan] (*Dawn*, 8 December 1999). He expressed his determination to carry out Pakistan's Afghan policy. In other words, Pakistan was not ready to wash her hands off the Taliban support. Meanwhile, another resolution was passed by the UN Security Council to station monitors in Pakistan to observe the implementation of UN resolutions against the Taliban, especially to ensure the ban on arms supply.

Simultaneously, US pressure was mounting on Pakistan to make the Taliban regime to revisit their policies. Efforts were made to force the Taliban to form a broad based Afghan government representing all groups and sections of the Afghan society. Pakistan was the center of these efforts. Arrest or killing of Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan was the corner stone of the US policy. To convince the Taliban to hand over bin Laden to the US, the US administration kept on mounting pressure over the military junta in Pakistan. Bin Laden's network, *Al-Qaeda's* activities against the United States had made it most abominable for the latter. On the other hand, Taliban were asking the US to produce clear-cut evidence against bin Laden before his arrest. They were demanding a fair trial of him. But setting aside all the Taliban offers to hold a judicial trial of bin Laden in Afghanistan through Muslim jurists, the US clung to the expulsion of Osama bin Laden from Afghanistan. Instead of seeking a compromise with the Taliban, the course of confrontation was adopted. To achieve this objective, the American CIA did all her best to convince Pakistani ISI to help her in the eradication of bin Laden and his *Al-Qaeda*. Despite the absence of any anti-Indian reference by Osama bin Laden in his messages to his followers, Kashmiri insurgency was closely related with bin Laden's network by the United States to bring Pakistan under pressure.

Fretted by the instability in South Asia, the United States was much startled about the insurgency in Kashmir. Pakistan was alleged to facilitate all the militant movements in the region. But all this was done to gather storm against Pakistan (Perlez, 2001). *Madrassas* (religious seminaries) in Pakistan were thought by the United States to be the sanctuaries and recruitment centers of these militants. To cut off

the supply line of men to the militant groups, these religious schools in Pakistan were subjected to criticism by the United States. The United States asked Pakistan to close certain religious seminaries inside Pakistan in order to restrain militancy in Kashmir and to derail *Al-Qaeda* in Afghanistan. In order to check the spillover of *Al-Qaeda* activities in Kashmir, Pakistan was also asked to interdict travel of militants to and from camps in Afghanistan. To prevent militant groups from acquiring weapons and to block financial and logistic support to camps in Afghanistan, crackdown against them was demanded by the US from Pakistan (Jain, 2007). These were the US demands which she could not implement herself despite all her military might and physical presence in Afghanistan after 9/11.

Adding much to the US agony, another ironic incidence took place. An Indian Airlines plane was hijacked which was on her flight from Kathmandu (Nepal) to New Delhi on 24 December 1999. Both Pakistan and India condemned the hijacking but simultaneously accused each other for staging it (McFadden, 1999). The hijackers were Kashmiri militants or their supporters who demanded the release of a Muslim cleric Massoud Azhar and several other militants, who were in an Indian Jail for propagating and perpetrating *jihad* against Indian occupation of Kashmir. They put forward some other demands, too. Bowing before the hijackers' demands and the handing over of the militant was a humiliating option for India. Unwillingly India yielded before the hijackers to ensure the safety of passengers on the plane. But it was claimed by Indian leadership that these suspects had close connection with Pakistani ISI and a Kashmiri militant group (Hagerty, Kashmir and Nuclear Question Revisited, 2000). Adding fuel to the fire, the hijacking heightened the tension between the nuclear rivals of South Asia. To pressurize Pakistan and to divert the domestic fury, India reinforced troops along LoC. In the subsequent months, violence along LoC continued that invited diplomatic intervention from the United States. Looking at the possible involvement of Pakistan in the hijacking of the Indian plane, the US-Pakistan relations further aggravated. The Clinton administration issued a public warning to Pakistan that it could be put on the 'watch list' of the countries supporting terrorism. It was alleged that the Pakistan Army had backed the hijacking of an Indian Airlines (Shenon, 2000). This sardonic action of hijacking Indian plane had brought Pakistan on the verge to be declared a 'terrorist state' by the United States that meant winding up all the US aid to Pakistan (Hussain, 2007). Nevertheless, sanity prevailed on the part of US administration and ultimately the US officials ruled out the involvement of Pakistan in this plot (Jain, 2007). However, diplomatic pressure stepped up on Pakistan to ban a *Jihadi* outfit named *Harkatul Mujahideen* that actively operated in the Indian-held Kashmir. By these pressure tactics, Clinton administration intended to bully Pakistan to conform to the US demands regarding the crackdown against terrorists in the region.

It also must be noted that prior to the military coup in Pakistan, Pakistan's Prime Minister during his Washington visit, amid the Kargil crises (1999) had acceded to the US demand to support a CIA sponsored operation against Osama bin Laden. The military coup in Pakistan (12 October 1999) disrupted this planning of operation against bin Laden. Prompted by the desire to capture bin Laden, the US President had sent a letter to General Musharraf within three days after military coup (1999), urging him to establish a road map for the restoration of democracy in Pakistan and asked him to help the US in apprehending bin Laden. General Musharraf had ruled out any such operation. He advised the Clinton administration to engage the Taliban in talks, to seek their moderation, and to win the hearts and minds of Afghan people (Malik, 2008). In January, three high-ranking US officials Inderfurth, the US Assistant Secretary of State, Michael A. Sheehan, the State Department's coordinator for counterterrorism, and Donald Camp, the Director for South Asian Affairs at the National Security Council visited Islamabad and met General Musharraf. They were intended to lay out the administration's concerns about Pakistan on terrorism, the restoration of democracy, and to hear the response. Clinton's non-proliferation specialist, Robert Einhorn, was not accompanying the delegation. Explaining the absence of Robert Einhorn, Inderfurth told that Einhorn was not accompanying them because the immediate US agenda was counter-terrorism, *Al-Qaeda*, the Taliban, and democracy (Levy & Scott-Clark, 2007). At the beginning of the new millennium, Pakistan's nuclear program and A. Q. Khan network had become secondary issues for the United States. However, the very concept of possible access of *Al-Qaeda* to the weapons of mass destruction was the most horrific thing for the United States. Therefore, the disruption of *Al-Qaeda* was the top-most US priority that had relegated all other priorities. On the assertion of the US Assistant Secretary of State, Musharraf assured him that he would himself meet the Taliban leader to urge him to hand over bin Laden to the United States. However, the military ruler ruled out any action by Pakistani commando group inside Afghanistan. He did not act in accordance with US demand to ban a Kashmiri militant outfit. He was even unwilling to take action on the basis of the US intelligence report against *Al-Qaeda's* chief recruiter, Abu Zubaida. According to the CIA reports, Abu Zubaida was living in Peshawar, the capital city of Northwestern province of Pakistan. Later on, he sent the ISI chief to negotiate the US concerns regarding Osama bin Laden with Mullah Omar, the Taliban leader in Afghanistan. This meeting bore no fruit. In the US, the

ISI Chief was doubted as a good sympathizer of the Afghan Taliban, *Al-Qaeda* and Kashmiri militants. The US administration and the CIA were fully affirmed that *Al-Qaeda* and the Taliban were enjoying Pakistan's ISI information, technical and logistic support. Nevertheless, Pakistan repeatedly and strongly negated the notion that ISI was harboring *Al-Qaeda* or the Taliban or any other militant group. The CIA documents showed that *Al-Qaeda* network had presence in sixty countries. These documents also made it clear that *Al-Qaeda* was seeking chemical and biological weapons to use against the United States (Tenet, 2007). Against this backdrop, the CIA officials were constantly demanding from the US administration to launch a covert action against *Al-Qaeda* on the Afghan territory. For this purpose, they wanted support from the countries neighboring Afghanistan. George Tenet, the Director of CIA, was of the opinion that no covert or overt action against *Al-Qaeda* was possible without Pakistan's support. He said that it had been obvious that without Pakistan's cooperation, it would be almost impossible to root out *Al-Qaeda* from behind its Taliban protectors. The US administration was not giving sufficient weight to the view of direct physical involvement in Afghanistan (Tenet, 2007). An active involvement in Afghanistan was not on the agenda of Clinton administration due to the lessons emanated from military intervention in Vietnam, which resulted in the Vietnam War (1950). Clinton administration had become much concerned about terrorists' access to the lethal weapons, after the US intelligence reports showed a close relationship between the Pakistan military, Pakistani nuclear scientists and *Al-Qaeda* (Levy & Scott-Clark, 2007). According to the US intelligence reports, *Al-Qaeda* had a chief of Weapons for Mass Destruction (WMD), named as Abu Khabab al-Masri who had conducted crude chemical weapon experiments outside Jalalabad, an Afghan city. He was alleged for being in contact with Pakistani nuclear scientists to get nuclear bomb (Levy & Scott-Clark, 2007). In April 2000, The US tried hard to win the ISI chief General Mahmood Ahmad. The US Under-Secretary of State Thomas Pickering told him that the Taliban were harboring terrorists who killed Americans. He was warned that the people supporting the Taliban were the US enemies. He also threatened that if ISI did not abandon its support to the Taliban, the United States would deal it like bin Laden. He also made it clear that in case of non-compliance of the Taliban with the US demand of extradition of bin Laden, the US would support the anti-Taliban leader Massoud, a bitter critic of Pakistan (Malik, 2008). It was astonishing that instead of engaging the Taliban directly, the US was asking the Pakistani ISI chief and for this purpose the Massoud-card was used. But in fact, the US was more than sure that the real force behind the Taliban and bin Laden was Pakistan. This seems to be a deliberate US effort to take on Pakistan in the future. In the wake of US invasion of Afghanistan (2001), the US drone attacks in the tribal border of Pakistan with Afghanistan, under the pretext of the hot-pursuit of the Taliban, is an unambiguous evidence of this US planning. However, the ISI chief did not agree with the US Under-Secretary of State during that meeting. Thus, this move to change Pakistan's policy towards the Taliban had badly failed in those days. It was also believed by the United States that some of Pakistan's nuclear materials were being offered for sale in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The United States worried that sooner or later the terrorists might get their hand on WMD. Therefore, the American CIA was mulling over Pakistan as the top US-enemy (Levy & Scott-Clark, 2007). Being aware of the precarious economic conditions of Pakistan due to a number of US-imposed sanctions, the United States thought that Pakistan might have sought hard currency through nuclear proliferation. Therefore, in late 1990s, the US fears of nuclear proliferation by Pakistan got exacerbated. Planning against Pakistan's nuclear program, a joint training of the US and Israeli secret commando teams was underway in the United States for surprise attacks on Pakistan's nuclear installations (Wirsing, 2007). To brush aside the US reservation over Pakistan and the threat of nuclear proliferation from the latter, Musharraf took an initiative to set up a National Command Authority and chaired it himself. Still fingers were raised by Washington against Islamabad's nuclear program while Indian nuclear program was viewed by the former as if she was a legitimate nuclear weapons state like China or a US protégé like Israel, which remained outside the nonproliferation regime but seemed to be a responsible enough nuclear custodian. As stated earlier, in view of the US administration, the 'containment of China was possible through a nuclear India. This thinking made Indian program acceptable for the United States. The other factor was the role played by the Indian American community. During the Clinton's final year in office, there was a great divergence in the US and Pakistani interests while US-India relations enormously bettered due to strategic convergence on several points (Hagerty, *The United States-Pakistan Entente: Third Time's a Charm?*, 2005). The US administration viewed India as a global player in the US foreign policy. While on the other hand, Pakistan's role in eliminating terrorist groups and checking their terrorist activities was not considered up to the US demands. Pakistan was feeling discomfort over this US tilt towards India. Despite all Indian desire to keep any foreign power at bay from South Asian problems, the US could not allow the nuclear foes in the region to play havoc with the world peace by embarking into a conflict that could lead to nuclear exchange. Being aware of the catastrophic results of any armed-conflict between Pakistan and India, the US pressed both India and Pakistan to exercise

maximum restraint and not to escalate tension to a point that can trigger off a war. Such a war, in turn, could endanger the US corporate and strategic interests in South Asia. But to resolve the longstanding Kashmir dispute was also converse to the US interests in South Asia. Thus, it was a critical dilemma for the US administration to keep a balance in relations with all the stakeholders. On 14 March 2000, before Clinton's tour to South Asia, contrary to the essence of the Washington Declaration, the US Secretary of State, Madeline Albright, issued a statement that the US President was not going to mediate over the Kashmir dispute. She said:

Our interests include avoiding the threat of conflict in South Asia, fostering democracy in Pakistan, fighting terrorism, preventing proliferation, and doing what we can to help create an environment of regional peace and security, and reaching out to a people [Pakistani nation] whose history is one of friendship with the United States (Jain, 2007).

President Clinton also expressed the same reluctance on 21 March 2000 (Clinton, 2000). On the other hand, the alleged Pakistani support to insurgency in Kashmir was enough to dismay the already disgruntled Clinton administration. In an effort to isolate Pakistan, the Indian leadership and Indian lobbyist Stephen J. Solarz tried hard to convince the US President to bypass Pakistan during his South Asian tour in March 2000. A clear wedge in the US-Pakistan relations became more visible during the weeklong South Asian tour of the US President Bill Clinton. He spent five days in India while stopped only for five hours in Pakistan just to keep the communication channels open. These and some other factors widened the gulf in the US-Pakistan relations. The US President did not want to treat India and Pakistan even handedly. Even the decision to take the five-hour brief stopover was taken after weeks of infighting in his administration. This uneven approach towards India and Pakistan showed the desperate longing of Clinton administration for India while a complete divergence of interests between Pakistan and the United States. According to the US officials, the trip was not meant to give approval to the military coup, but the main purpose of this brief interaction was to urge the military ruler to restore democracy, ratchet down the tensions with India, and outlaw an Islamic fundamentalist group that the United States had accused of terrorism. According to the White House sources, "If Mr. Clinton had rebuffed Pakistan, he would strengthen the militant groups that threaten to push the country into a political and economic collapse and would dishearten advocates of a secular democracy" (*The New York Times*, 8 March 2000). Endorsing these remarks, Clinton asked General Musharraf to restrain militancy in Kashmir and to exert pressure on terrorist groups in Pakistan not to cross the border between Pakistan and the India-held Kashmir. But Pakistan denied any active involvement in insurgency inside Kashmir. Nevertheless, the chief purpose of his visit to Pakistan was to urge the military ruler to co-operate with the US on *Al-Qaeda* and bin Laden's issue, and to restore democracy in Pakistan. Reiterating the persistent US demand to apprehend Osama bin Laden from the Afghan soil, the US President asked General Musharraf to do this great job for the United States (Levy & Scott-Clark, 2007). In response to this US demand, Pervez Musharraf articulated his problem saying that it was quite difficult to deal with 'people who believe that God is on their side' (Kux, 2003). Differences between them on other issues also remained unresolved as both sides remained adamant to their positions. The striking contrast of opinion on these issues emanated from the speeches of the US and Pakistani presidents at the end of their meeting. Ironically, the US president did not even bother to mention the Kashmir issue in his speech to the Indian parliament, before coming to Pakistan. The US President addressed Pakistani people through television. Endorsing the Indian stance during the address, he stressed both India and Pakistan to resolve their differences over Kashmir through bilateral talks. Negating the possibility of any US involvement in the issue he declared, "We cannot and will not mediate or resolve the dispute in Kashmir. Only you and India can do that through dialogue" (Hagerty, *The United States-Pakistan Entente: Third Time's a Charm?*, 2005). It was a great Indian victory to keep the US away from any direct involvement in the Kashmir dispute. The US was in no mood to perturb the rising India for the sake of a Cold War ally, Pakistan. However, the military government continued to pull out all the stops to address the US concerns and by putting in plain words various constraints and compulsions on its part. Throughout 1990s, the Indian efforts had intensified to keep Pakistan isolated through propaganda and actions. The Indian government along with the Indian-American community left no stone unturned in putting Pakistan on the US State Department's 'Terrorist Countries List'. But to prevent Pakistan from becoming a true rogue state the US administration declined to comply with the Indian views. The reason for not honoring the Indian demand was the US apprehension that such a step might turn Pakistan into another Afghanistan that

would not only jeopardize the US interests in the region but would also disrupt the Indian security and so that was not acceptable to the Clinton administration (Jain, 2007).

To distant US from Pakistan, another ironic incidence took place in Kashmir while Clinton was still in India. Thirty-six Sikhs were killed in Kashmir. Reacting immediately, India blamed Pakistan and Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (LeT), a militant organization in Kashmir, for this onslaught. Over a long course of time, it did not become clear as to who was behind that plot but the target was indeed the US-Pakistan relationship. This happening further damaged Pakistan's image. Clinton's concern over infiltration of militants from Pakistan echoed in his interviews. Answering a question, on ABC World News, President Clinton expressed his concern over a third party involvement in Kashmir violence. On inquiring about the third party's identity, he ambiguously replied that the propagators of violence were neither Kashmiri people nor Pakistani government but he did not rule out the possibility of some Pakistani elements in Kashmir (Clinton, 2000). The spiraling tension between Pakistan and India, after the Kargil episode, continued throughout the year 2000. Cross border firing, shelling and blame game continued between the two countries. This hostile trend in the Indo-Pak relations was multiplying the menace of the eruption of a catastrophic conflict between the two South Asian nuclear powers. But the more horrific was the credibility gap between these two powers. Their mistrust could lead to some very disastrous results. Feared by the unpredictable South Asian security situation, the United States repeatedly emphasized for the resumption of bilateral peace talks between India and Pakistan according to the spirit of Lahore Declaration. Convinced by the Indian propaganda of cross-border terrorism (infiltration) in Kashmir, the United States urged both India and Pakistan to ensure the sanctity of LoC. The US call for not violating LoC was much applauded by Indian government, as India was much interested in declaring LoC as an international border. However, Clinton's advice on Indian nuclear build up fell flat on Indian leadership. His call for stopping excessive use of force in Kashmir was also not taken seriously. Indian president rejected the US analysis that South Asia had turned into the most perilous region in the world due to the Kashmir dispute *The New York Times*, (23 March 2000). The de-escalation of tension between these two nuclear powers was the most important US agenda in the post-Kargil era. Owing to the Indian resentment to the third party involvement in Kashmir and the US policy, the US administration paid no heed to find out a permanent efficacy to the Kashmir dispute even through peaceful means. Clinton's advice to hold talks was only to pacify Pakistan's calls for mediation. To keep the prospects of US importance in South Asia intact, the United States was in no mood to find a sustainable solution to the long drawn rivalry between Pakistan and India. After the settlement of Kashmir dispute, Pakistan would have no more fears of Indian aggression. The driving force behind the US-Pakistan relations was the feeling of insecurity against Indian hostilities. Any permanent thaw in relations between these two strong-headed neighbors could surely put an end to the US involvement in the region. However, greatly perturbed by the possible extension of *Al-Qaeda* activities into Kashmir, the US President strongly voiced against the involvement of an outside militant group like *Al-Qaeda* in Kashmir. The US administration doubted the ISI role in bringing *Al-Qaeda* and Kashmiri militants in close alliance with each other. On 30 April 2000, the US State Department's Annual Report on Terrorism leveled the same kind of allegations. This report stated, "While it has arrested and extradited several terrorists, it had refused to end support to groups that train terrorists in neighboring Afghanistan and in Pakistan itself and has declined to close certain religious schools that serve as a conduit for terrorism"(Jain, 2007). Neglecting the limited resources and geo-strategic compulsion of Pakistan, the United States was demanding so much from Pakistan, which was not even possible for the US herself despite all the resourcefulness. During a press conference, Thomas Pickering, the US Under Secretary of State, stressed: "Pakistan can and must play a role to convince Afghanistan's ruling Taliban to hand over Osama bin Laden to face trial"(Jain, 2007). On 12 July 2000, the US State Department's Coordinator for Counter Terrorism clearly stated that Pakistan had allowed certain terrorist to live there and they had been freely moving everywhere in the country. He raised fingers over Pakistan's policy in her East and West especially the role played by ISI (Jain, 2007). In a statement before House International Relations Committee, the US Coordinator for Counterterrorism Michael A. Sheehan stated, "Pakistan has a mixed record on terrorism." Although he admitted the cooperation rendered by Pakistan in curbing terrorism but showed his discontent over the results and demanded to 'do more'. He elaborated Pakistan's generous cooperation with the United States and other countries in apprehending and extradition of some top 'terrorists' but he further said, "Pakistan has tolerated terrorists living and moving freely within its territory." He even admitted that Pakistan was itself a victim of terrorism, but remarked, "Pakistan bears some responsibility for the current growth of terrorism in South Asia. That we are allies makes it all the more important that we cooperate to rid the area of terrorism" ('A Special Report on Pakistan and Terrorists Link', December 2000). To ward off the US pressure, *Hizbul Mujahideen*, the dominant militant group operating in the Indian-held Kashmir, made an offer of an unconditional dialogue with Indian government on 24 July 2000. But it

was asserted by the *HizbulMujahideen* that the proposed talks would be out of Indian Constitution. This offer of dialogue by the militants was thought to be tactical move on the part of Pakistani government who was alleged to be the supporter of that militant outfit against India *The New York Times*, (31 July 2000). Ever since Kargil conflict, Pakistan was seen as an aggressor in the western capitals and to wash out this stigma Pakistan took this initiative. Despite Pakistan's refusal of any link with the aforesaid militant group, no one endorsed this stance. On the other hand, turning a blind eye to Indian use of force was also not possible for international community. Indian revulsion to any outside role in Kashmir dispute kept the major powers at bay from direct involvement but the US back channel diplomacy was in vogue. To appease the world's concern over human rights violation and to keep Pakistan off the talks table, India responded positively to the proposed negotiations with militants. Indian army operations against *HizbulMujahideen* were stopped but other militant groups were not awarded with the same concession. It was a deliberate Indian move to divide militants. It is to be noted here that despite General Musharraf's persistent offer for talks with India 'anywhere, anytime and at any level' was bluntly rejected by India under the pretext of infiltration in Kashmir. The truce between Indian government and Kashmiri militants could not last long. *Hizbul Mujahideen's* insistence to include Pakistan in negotiation broke up the peace process between India and the aforementioned militant group. On the other hand, despite unrelenting Indian intransigence to avoid Pakistan, the latter did not give up efforts to resume talks with India. Stressing about the centrality of Kashmir dispute, Gen. Musharraf reiterated in a press conference that there could be no peace without the solution of Kashmir problem (McNeil, 2006).

Struggling hard to resume the stalled peace process and bring India to the talks-table, Pakistan repeatedly asked the United States to use her influence to make the Indian leadership realize the gravity of Kashmir problem and open a dialogue between India and Pakistan. Highlighting the importance of foreign mediation on Kashmir dispute, General Musharraf unequivocally said, "Unless there is mediation, strong mediation, justice cannot come about." Quoting the example of East Timor he said, "Mediation is definitely required, and East Timor provides an excellent example of how the situation can be solved if the world community shows the will." Further, he said, "The United Nations never recognized Kashmir as part of India, just as East Timor was never recognized as Indonesian" (Crossette, Summit in New York: Kashmir; Pakistani Leader Voices Little Hope for India Talks, 2000). As mentioned earlier the Indian aversion to the foreign powers' intervention in South Asian affairs was the main hurdle that restricted the way of US direct mediation in Kashmir. But insulation of Kashmiri militants from *Al-Qaeda* was one of the US policy objectives and India was happy with the US diplomatic onslaught on *Al-Qaeda* and Kashmiri militant groups. To keep the situation in control and not to let the South Asia to go in the grip of serious instability, the US administration used secret diplomatic channels to persuade India to cease her brutal military operations during the holy month of Ramadan in November 2000. Taking pause in the military operations against militants in Kashmir, India announced a one-month truce during the 9th lunar month of the Islamic calendar, Ramadan. It was really a tactical Indian move to gather support from Muslim population in Kashmir and the rest of India. Replying to this Indian move, Pakistan unilaterally declared in December 2000 that Pakistani forces would observe "maximum restraint" along the LoC in Kashmir. Simultaneously, without pressing for Pakistan's participation in talks, Pakistan's foreign minister urged India to negotiate the Kashmir issue with All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC), a conglomeration of separatist political parties in the Indian-held Kashmir (Hagerty, The United States-Pakistan Entente: Third Time's a Charm?, 2005). In the given circumstances, Pakistan's policy was; 1) to diffuse tension along the LoC and international borders with India, 2) offer dialogue on Kashmir, 3) offer CBMs along LoC, 4) let Indian forces be engaged with militants inside Kashmir, and 5) ask international community to mediate. To carry out this agenda, a slight reduction in the number of troops on LoC was announced by Pakistan. Giving a goodwill gesture, Indian forces extended the ceasefire even after Ramadan. Looking at the reduction in skirmishes between Indian and Pakistani armies and a visible decline in Kashmiri *intifada* made the Indian Prime Minister to offer an extension in the cease-fire until the end of May 2001. Pakistan complied with the proposed extension but Indian army intensified its operations against Kashmiri people inside the Indian-held Kashmir. Despite all these Confidence Building Measures (CBMs), the US tilt towards India was a clear indication of endorsing the Indian stance over Kashmir. The US used her diplomatic channels to push Pakistan for stopping cross-border infiltration as was alleged by India.

Amid the entire grim situation in Kashmir, the US nonproliferation sword was hanging over the nuclear assets of Pakistan. Pounding frictions between the US and Pakistan over nuclear and missile programs were still dominating the course of relations between them. To ward off the US pressure and sooth the European anger over the nuclear program of Pakistan, the then military government in Pakistan decided to differentiate between signing and ratification of CTBT. Emboldened by the US Senatorial rejection of the CTBT, Pakistani government started deliberation over signing the treaty but

not ratifying it like the United States. Pakistan thought that mere signing would incur no cost as this act would not bring the treaty into effect because of the US non-ratification and Indian refusal to become even a signatory. Getting an edged over Indian stance, this idea floated in Pakistan. Optimistic about reaping other benefits from signing, Pakistani officials thought that it would not only give high moral ground to Pakistan over India but also isolate the latter. But sensing about this idea, some political parties threatened the military ruler of the use of street power against the government. The military government was in no mood to instigate these parties and, therefore, dropped the idea of putting signature to the treaty. Despite failure of the US Senate to ratify the treaty, the US administration was determined to bring Pakistan and India into the fold of the CTBT. Meanwhile, in mid-2000, US intelligence agencies detected some flow of missile technology from China to Pakistan, which alarmed the US Senate. Owing to the tense US-Pakistan relations, the last gift extended to Pakistan by the outgoing Clinton administration was the imposition of missile related sanctions against Pakistan in November 2000 (Hagerty, *The United States-Pakistan Entente: Third Time's a Charm?*, 2005). These sanctions were imposed under the pretext of the transfer of *M-11* Chinese missile from China to Pakistan. Clinton's non-proliferation advisor Robert Einhorn flew to Islamabad and warned the Director of Strategic Plan Division in Pakistan against the possible repercussions of the transfer of *M-11* missiles from China. Later on, the United States alleged that this deal was a gross violation of MTCR. But both Pakistan and China refuted any violation of MTCR by declaring that these missiles range was quite under the MTCR parameters. Not only Pakistan's Ministry of Defense and Pakistan's Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Council came under the storm of US-imposed sanctions but Iran was also brought in the ambit of these sanctions under the pretext of past Chinese assistance in the Iranian missile program. Despite the strong refusal by China and Pakistan, the US administration could not be convinced. These sanctions could not alter the steadfast flow of technology. China remained undissuaded in supporting Pakistan's defense capability. China augmented Pakistan's defense potential due to the strategic compulsions of the former. To get rid of other constraints, peace at the South Asian level was also necessary. But the long-drawn-out issue of Kashmir was the stumbling block in achieving peace in South Asian region. Therefore, through back channel diplomacy a 'friendly pressure' was put by the US over India to start a dialogue process between India and Pakistan. Beside the political motives the US corporate interests were the driving force behind the US move to bring both Pakistan and India to the talk-table. Meanwhile, a change of administration took place in Washington. George Walker Bush carried the day in the polls at the end of Clinton's second tenure but after winning weeks-long legal battle.

Conclusion

US-Pakistan relationship during 1999-2001 was mainly strained due to the cross purpose strategy of both the Clinton administration and Musharraf government in Pakistan. The US agenda was to eliminate terrorist threats emanating from Afghanistan and Pakistan and, considered Pakistan responsible for checking the Taliban who provided refuge to the top *Al-Qaeda* leadership. On the other hand, Pakistan wanted to win over Afghanistan through the Taliban and deemed Afghanistan as strategic-depth that was longed by Pakistan. Ironically, the US was not trying to address the main causes of militancy and left Pakistan alone to coup with the menace. Despite direct engagement of the Taliban, the American administration relied only on Pakistan. Economically weaker and heavily sanctioned Pakistan could not handle the Afghan issue properly and, thus, terrorism grew day by day that resulted in 9/11. On the other hand, Pakistan wrongly took Afghanistan and the Taliban as strategic asset that turned into liability and pushed Pakistan on the verge to be declared a terrorist state.

Similarly, the militancy and Kashmir not only destabilized region but also posed serious threat to international peace. The nature of Kashmiri freedom struggle was much different from the *Al-Qaeda* or the Taliban movement but the US administration wrongly equated both and this added more to the instability and nuclearization of the South Asian region. Actually, both Pakistan and the US were dealing with the militants halfheartedly.

Looking at the fatal repercussion of the US-Pakistan strained relationship it can safely be predicted that if the same is repeated in Afghanistan or around the Pak-Afghan porous border after the US-led NATO withdrawal in 2014 the results may be more catastrophic not only for region but also for the United States and even for international peace.

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