

FROM PARTNERSHIP TO MISTRUST: THE TRUMP PRESIDENCY AND THE
DECLINE OF PAK-US RELATIONS

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Abstract

Pakistan is a key ally of in the war of Afghanistan. This research paper is aim to analyze the fundamental change in the US policy towards Pakistan during the President Donald Trump era. After the US presidential elections in 2016, the policy makers in US changed their objectives towards Pakistan. The sixteen years struggle of US and NATO forces on the Afghan land was crashed by the Taliban and other militants groups. After 2016 the US changed its policies of Afghan issue and made Pakistan as the scapegoat. The allegations on Pakistan for the help of militants were installed on Pakistan to hide down the US mistaken ambition to control over the Afghan land. The US mission to search the Russian motives from Afghanistan was failed down. The US policy makers and other stake-holders of Afghan war wanted to escape from the war region as soon as it possible. All the war irresponsibility and irregularities were ignored at once and alone Pakistan was criticized to help the militants of Haqqani network and Talibanism. After the analysis, this paper has showed all the US steps against Pakistan during the Trump era. The aid and other reimbursements payments and all the policy of USA are critically examined in this paper during the president Trump period against the fundamental objectives and sovereignty of Pakistan.

Key Words: Haqqani network, India's influence, Pakistan struggles, Trump administration, Taliban, USAID, war on terror

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INTRODUCTION

Pakistan is a key ally of US in the war on terror. The role of Pakistan is vital to the peace in Afghanistan and south Asia. The zigzag policy of US towards Pakistan is very questionable towards the afghan issue. After the incident of 9/11, the USA changed its policy towards Pakistan. In the administration of President G.W. Bush and president Obama, the US policy has provided opportunity for Pakistan to compensate its war losses to some range. But in the duration of President Donald Trump, the US policy makers turned their policy towards Pakistan in the negative mode. The allegations on Pakistan to facilitate the militants and the blocking of aid and reimbursement funds to Pakistan have deteriorated the relations of both countries. The Trump style of tweets to Pakistan was criticized by the responsible authorities of Pakistan. This new emerging policy of the US administration has paralyzed the war operations against the militants by the armed forces of Pakistan. This new era of US- Pak relations under the Donald Trump administration can be considered as the pro- Indian approach against the interests of Pakistan by the US government.

Pakistan and USA have facilitated to each other in the past since after the 9/11 incident. The US president G.W Bush and President Obama remained very close to the war strategies of Pakistan. After the Presidential elections of 2016, Donald Trump was elected as the new President of USA. In his electoral campaign he said that he will be happy to play a role as a mediator in Indo- Pak relations. But after the appointment as the US president he turned his mode on the policy formations towards Pakistan. He said that Pakistan should “Do More” to overcome the terrorist actors with in the territory of Pakistan. Moreover he blamed on Pakistan to facilitate the Haqqani network and many other militants’ wings on the behalf of India. The strict agenda of US to Pakistan was consisted on the following key point. First, reduced the aid packages to Pakistan and all the reimbursement schemes of USA to Pakistan. Second to re-start the Drone attacks and targeted the Militant’s hideaways in the territory of Pakistan. Third to suspend the non-NATO status and marked Pakistan as the terrorist sponsored state in the region. Fourth the major step of us was the engagement with the civilian leadership of the country rather than the military leadership. Fifth Many other sanctions were imposed on the military officers and ISI due to their support to the terrorist elements.(haqqani,2016,9-10)

During the war on terror Pakistan was helped by USA with arms supply and cash distribution to patch up its losses in the result of terrorist attacks. Obama administration had admired the vital role of Pakistan in the Afghan war. The Trump administration banned the reimbursement aid package by saying that Pakistan is playing a “Double Game” and assisting the criminals of FATA. Hussain Haqqani the ambassador of Pakistan to USA said “Their support makes hardliners in Pakistan believe they are too important to US, and they can do anything they please. The US support does not change behavior in Pakistan (Haqqani, May 10, 2016)After the reports by the state department of USA the president Donald Trump stand hurdles on Pakistan and stopped the aid delivery to Pakistan. The reimbursement fund of \$ 2.6 billion in 2013 was cut down into the sum of \$ 1.6 billion in the year of 2015 and was decreased in 2018 by \$ 350 million. (US house of Representative, 2018, 4).

After July 2017, the Trump government also suspended the reimbursement fund of \$300 million by saying that “Pakistan was failed to eliminate the safe havens to the militants of Haqqani network in the region of FATA”. Pakistan also rejected the US allegations on Pakistan on the eve of weekly press conference in Islamabad, the foreign office spokesman Nafees Zakriya said “We have taken the indiscriminate steps and all out

actions against the terrorist” the Trump allegations were merely to suspend the aid and reimbursement schemes of Pakistan. (McLeary, 2017). On August 30, 2017 USA also stopped the supply of F-16 jets and put the conditionality on CSF (Coalition Support Fund) of \$ 255 million that Islamabad is responsible to crack down the Haqqani network otherwise the amount will not be issued. The spokesman of pentagon Lt. Col. Michael Andrews also warned Pakistan that the amount of \$ 400 million for the counter terrorism purpose for the year of 2017 and the \$ 600 million another payment to Islamabad will also be stopped if Pakistan will not comply with the instructions of Trump administration (Rabbi et al 2022). The US- Pak relations are also considered in the light of FATF sanctions on Pakistan. According to the US administration during Trump period that Islamabad is responsible in the terrorist financing in FATA and across the Afghan border. Pakistan faced the challenge of FATF when Pakistan was undermining the grey list of this institution. That was an already pressure by US over Pakistan to take steps against the Haqqani network to control over the terrorist activities (Hassan, 2020). Pakistan was asked to act over 40 point’s agenda by the FATF. The main points were the control over the money laundering and terrorist financing among them. The joint partnership of US- India was a main concern for the policy makers in Pakistan. India has considered the war in Jammu and Kashmir as the terrorist activity and put pressure on Pakistan to withdraw as the assistance from the Lashkar-e-Tayyaba , Jaish-e- Muhammad and Falah-e- Insaniyat foundation. (Hassan, 2020) The US-India role in the FATF against Pakistan provided opportunity to Pakistan to recognize the true face of US foreign policy against Pakistan. Pakistan feels that U.S. is not serious with the challenges of Pakistan despite the sacrifices by Pakistan in the war on terror. The US- India joint adventure against Pakistan is also a point of concern for them. The remarks over the jihad movement in Jammu and Kashmir by Trump administration is also a point of mutual mistrust for both the countries.

The tweeter policy of Donald Trump against the interests of Pakistan was also a main point of Trump pro- Indian agenda. After his appointment in 2017, Trump has showed his concerns over the role of Pakistan in Afghan issue by the tweeter policy. On August 2017 he said that “Pakistan must either do more to have control over the militants” this statement was the low ebb of US- Pak confidential relationship against the militants. On the eve of new year US policy in 2018 Trump said that “Foolishly given Pakistan more than 33 billion dollars in aid over the last 15 years, with the little in return, promising no more” in his address he showed another time that Pakistan is not doing with the instructions of US and on misleading the US over the war issues (Afzal, 2018). In his reply the foreign minister of Pakistan Khawaja Muhammad Asif said “ we have already told the US that we would not do more, so Trump holds no any importance” moreover he said that the US president wants to make responsible Pakistan for the mistakes of US. USA used many strategies to overcome the psychology of Pakistan like the pressure by FATF, the pro-Indian policies and pressure by the Arab countries like UAE and Saudi Arabia on Pakistan (Taliaferro, 2001).

Pakistan and India are the key rival countries and have many points of mutual discomfort to one another. The issue of Kashmir is a main in this regards, meanwhile the influence of Indian policies over the US decisions is a true concern of Pakistan. During the whole Trump era many key positions in the US offices were designated by the Indian nationalities. These people put the

US policies against the interests of Pakistan and facilitated US against the arguments of Pakistan about all the policy decisions of Pakistan. In this sense the main personalities are Nikky Haley- Nimrata Randhawa (The US ambassador to United Nations), Krishna Raj Urs (US ambassador to Paru), Manisha Singh (assistant secretary of state for economic affairs), Neil Chatter gee (member of the federal energy regulatory commission), Raj Shah (white house principal deputy secretary), Ajit Varandaraj pai (chairman of the federal communication commission), Vishal Amin IPEC coordinator, Seema Verma (administrator of the center for Medicare and medicated services) and Neomi Rao (administrator of ORIA). This top advisory and administrated class of US followed by the Indian nationality always undermined Pakistan interests. The closeness of US- India in many fields of life is also due to these key positions of Indian nationality in the US executive body (Khan, 2016) CPEC (China Pakistan Economic Corridor) is a major opportunity for the people of Pakistan and China. This project is responsible in the way of smooth trade from China and CARs (Central Asian Republics) to the other countries of the world through Pakistan. This trade route also provides the main stream of trading facilities to the neighboring courtiers of Pakistan like Iran and India. Due to the US-China rivalry and the US air basis in Pakistan is a major obstacle in the working of CPEC. During the Trump administration US openly criticized over the CPEC route and its objectives. The US-India joint partnership and Sino-India border clashes further increased the difficulties for this project. James Mattis the US secretary of Defense in his speech to the US senate showed the US concerns over the CPEC, he said.

“One belt one road (OBOR) which is passes through the disputed territory of India and President Trump is opposed to the idea of OBOR” (Chandio, 2018). The trump allegations and the strong ally with the India also promoted new thinking areas for Pakistan to observe and change its foreign policy towards US. The Trump electoral slogan “America first” is also a main focus point of US policy. He said that US should want to overcome its internal problems and stopped all its economic and strategic assistance to the other countries like Pakistan. This corner policy of US showed no further interests from Islamabad and hence left Pakistan alone among the terrorist elements which were created by US.

Over the 70 years of the US-Pak relations the factor of aid always remained as a center point between the relationships of both countries. US always relay on this theory and compelled Pakistan to comply with the US instructions. After the 9/11 Pakistan is facilitated with the billions of US dollars which made Pakistan dependent and all its social and political institutions are influenced by the US policies. After the appointment of Trump as the new president of US, he perused this policy and ignored all the sacrifices and struggles of Pakistan. In his speech to the congress he said that US will no longer pay any money to Pakistan, because Pakistan is involved in the anti US interests. The dependence of Pakistan on US aid is responsible for the low counter arguments against the Trump allegations. According to this theory the US has a core Status and coins the new policies for its interests and Pakistan is peripheral country and always obeys the instructions of US. Hence the Core- peripheral theory has two main points. First Core countries are the wealthy and economically strong countries in the world and always formulate the basic principles for the other nations in the world. Most of the European countries are regarded in this list. Second The peripheral countries are the developing or the under developed countries and have no vast rang interests. Pakistan and other third level countries are listed in the list of peripheral countries. The US president Trump in his whole tenure treated

Pakistan according to this thinking that Pakistan is dependent on the US aid and can be compelled easily on doing anything according to US desires.

Pakistan is remained a key ally of US in the Afghan war. The previous US presidents like President Bush and Obama had admired these sacrifices of Pakistan. Now the case was diverted and the role of Indian importance in the south Asian affairs was highlighted. President Trump as a business man and a real estate owner considered the war in Afghanistan in the terms of financial loss and benefits. In his address to the people of US he assured to withdraw all the troops from Afghanistan. He ignored the role of Pakistan in this war and put his focus to the China's issue. On the eastern border of Pakistan he committed to make strong the Indian position against the communist China. The idea to make the India strong against the china's progress was full adopted in the government of Trump (Robert etal 2019). The divergence in the policies of US from Pakistan to India put a negative stance on the position of Pakistan like,

- The strong position of India on the eastern border of Pakistan is security risk for Pakistan. The US strategic ties with India especially the US- India nuclear deal was an imbalance in the powers of Pakistan and India.
- Pakistan and China have close relations in many fields of life, the Indian aggression against China has exerted the direct effect on all the policy parameters of Pakistan as a neighbor country
- CPEC is major Pak- china project in the manners of trade partnership of both countries. The president trump statements against the CPEC in the favor of India put this project on the ways of risk and danger.

Another major thing which can see as the major policy shift of Trump administration against the position of Pakistan was the allegations of US on Pakistan, related to the terrorist based activities in India in the account of Pakistan. That was a critical issue for Pakistan to show the well- balanced relations with US on all the fronts. The white house speech titled "United States and India: Prosperity through partnership" emphasized Pakistan to make the necessary arrangements to cut down the element of terrorism from its land and make sure to not use Pakistan territory against the Indian interests in the region. This direct attack on Pakistan by the US in the favor of India and the strong blames on Pakistan to facilitate the terrorist elements against India put the negative impression on Pakistan stance against the terrorist activities. Pakistan was blamed the Mumbai and pulwama attacks by the terrorist attacks based in Pakistan. Pakistan showed its great concerns over these remarks and said "the statement aggravates the already tense situation" and in another encounter statement the PM of Pakistan Imran Khan said Trump- Modi statement has removed fig leaf of morality and justice in the US foreign policy which is only based on arms sales and financial gains" (Khan, 2017).

The relationship of Pakistan and US was considered as a necessary element to eliminate the terrorism from the Afghan land. But after the appointment of Trump as the US president, the US administration increased pressure on Pakistan and demanded to do more to fight against the militant factors. The top US official warned Pakistan on different occasion like,

- The US senator John McCain in his visit to Afghanistan on July, 2017 said that Pakistan should change its behavior otherwise US as a nation will change it according to the need of the time. Moreover he said "Pakistan should stop the cross border infiltration and make the border security parameters strong" he also warned Pakistan to stop the Coalition Support Fund if Pakistan will not be able to comply with the US demands.

- The meeting of Chief of Army Staff Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa with the Gen. John W. Nicholson, the commander of Resolute Support Mission (RSM). Pakistan showed its concerns over the US official statements against the stance of Pakistan, the US commander stressed that Pakistan also should do more to eradicate the terrorist with in the territory of Pakistan and that is a key agenda of Trump administration otherwise US will stop all the assistance to Pakistan.
- The speech of President Trump at Fort Myer also showed that Pakistan is not doing enough to fight against the terrorism and also financing the Taliban and Haqqani network. These all the statements show that the US became ineligible to defeat the Taliban due to the poor collaboration of Pakistan (Shamail).

Pakistan and United States have the close relationship after the incident of 9/11 on all the war fronts. Pakistan has counted its costs,

- 75000 casualties and the loss of \$123 billion in this war on terror by the Pakistan people.
- The FATA region of Pakistan has devastated and the matter of internally displaced persons was fully paralyzed the KP province in especially and the whole Pakistan in commonly.
- The terrorist wave throughout the country is also a main yield of this war on Pakistan security.

Despite these efforts and sacrifices of Pakistan the President Donald Trump adopted a full divergent scale policy towards Pakistan. In his addresses, speeches and tweeter, it is said that Pakistan is not doing well and gaining much from US. On Nov 19, 2018 he said,

“We no longer pay Pakistan the \$ billion because they would take our money and nothing for us, bin laden being a prime example, Afghanistan being another. They were one of many countries that take from the United States without giving anything in return. That’s ending” (Donald Trump tweet Nov 19, 2018). Due to the Trump policy of such blaming on Pakistan was responsible to create hurdles for Pakistan in many ways i.e,

- Pakistan faced the worst type of conditions in the IMF bailout package of \$6 Billion. That was an important package of IMF for Pakistan to minimize the current deficit and for the balance of payment.
- Pakistan also faced complications on the platform of FATF; Pakistan was put in the grey list due to the negative indicators provided by US and India with the joint collaboration.
- In the Trump era, the US showed a ruthless face of Pakistan to the other world despite the sacrifices of Pakistan on the behalf of USA.(Amin , 2019).

After the three year successful collaboration of Pakistan to the world community and US, Pakistan was designated the status of a Non- NATO state and a key ally of US in the Afghan war in 2004. With this status Pakistan has gained about \$14.5 billion for the purpose of military aid and about the sum of \$18.8 billion for the economic assistance aid and humanitarian based facilities for the people of Pakistan.(Chandio,2018).

When the Donald Trump was appointed as the new US president of US he criticized the status of Pakistan. Under the US policy of president Trump Pakistan was deprived from the reimbursement aid package of \$300 million and another time \$400 million. This Trump policy of disregarding Pakistan was fully criticized by the opposition parties in the US congress. Thomas

F. Lynch said that, “It remains unwise for the Trump administration to completely eliminate the US- Pakistan counterterrorism military support framework” (Chandio, 2018).

The aid suspension to Pakistan made much hurdles for Pakistan, the policy makers of Pakistan has counted the loss of suspension in aid to Pakistan by the US as,

- The military operations of Pakistan against the militants became weak and the security risk in the country also increased.
- The reimbursement fund also has an importance for the common people of FATA who were ruthlessly targeted by the militant factors. The delaying in this fund has provided the long rang negative impacts on these people.
- The obstacles in the humanitarian aid by the US has also impacted negatively the social sectors of Pakistan like education, health etc.

Pakistan and China have common relationship in trade parameters in the form of CPEC. On the other hand India has a tie with US to control over the Pacific sea routs and also on the strait of Hormuz (Khan,2015). The US is keen to develop the Indian influence to check the independent movement of China in this ocean. This counter policy of US against China has made the imbalance of powers in the South Asian region. Moreover the active role of US and India in the

Central Asian Republics is also a point of concern for Pakistan. After the 9/11 the influence of India on the Afghan policy and its projects in Afghanistan are also a danger for Pakistan China altogether.(Pant, 2010).

U.S wants to curtail the active role of Pakistan and fill this space by the India to control over the Beijing policies over the South Asia region. This new policy of US is harmful and can destabilize whole the region strategically and economically. One thing that is important to see that how US and India are trying to destroy all the trade projects of Pakistan and China by their secret agencies of CIA and RAW?. The capturing of Indian spy from the province of Baluchistan is a best example of this scenario. The economic stability of India and the face of Pakistan as a terrorist state by the US administration is part of geo-strategic policy of United States (Constable, 2017).

CONCLUSION

Since after the independence, Pakistan has the close relations with United States. Both the countries remained the members of SEATO and CENTO agreements. During the afghan war of 1979-1988 both the countries collaborated with mujahedeen against the invasion of USSR in the Afghan land. Another time the incidence of 9/11 brought the opportunity for the mutual understandings of Pakistan and United States. During the government of President G.W. Bush and President Obama, the relations of both countries remained on the peaks. But since the appointment of the Donald Trump as the new executive head, the United States showed its mistrust on Pakistan about all the policy matters towards Pakistan. This new pro- Indian approach of US president has demolished the relationship of both countries. The allegations on Pakistan in the misusing of USAID and the terrorist financing by the Pakistan military has further deteriorated the atmosphere of confidence between the Pakistan and USA. Moreover the US stance against the CPEC during Trump administration further increased the space and provided a chance of lobbying for India against the interests of Pakistan. Now, it is time for Pakistan to know about the zigzag foreign policy of USA, its interests in the South Asian regions and the new demands of 21st century.

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