

Due to the fact that OBL was found in Pakistan led to great suspicion from the U.S. side by intensifying tensions between the two governments. There was suspicion that the Pakistani government was protecting OBL and the belief that the ISI and military of Pakistan lost credibility since they were not capable of finding the al-Qaeda leader in their own country. However, the Pakistani government denied that its military or the ISI knew about OBL's hide-out.³⁵

Following this raid the American policy makers began to question the purpose and usefulness of military aid to Pakistan if some institutions or individuals were either aware or incapable of capturing OBL.³⁶ Yet although there were those whom wanted to reduce or cut aid to Pakistan, the administration wanted to avoid breaking relations with the country in order to not endanger the counterterrorism network the CIA was able to construct in Pakistan, and because Pakistan was necessary to end the war in Afghanistan.³⁷

U.S. Secretary of State stated that Pakistan had contributed greatly towards U.S. efforts to eliminate al-Qaeda and has cooperated with counterterrorism efforts throughout the years. She stated that in fact, such cooperation with Pakistan is what led the U.S. to finding OBL. The relationship was further deteriorated since the Pakistani government considered this raid as 'an unauthorized unilateral action' which violated its sovereignty. This operation also fueled anti-Americanism in the country. During the September 2011 testimony before the Senate, Admiral Mullen accused the ISI of supporting the insurgents who attacked the U.S. embassy in Kabul, also saying that the Haqqani network acts as a veritable arm of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Agency.³⁸

It can be said that such accusation was made as a part of the U.S. effort to put more pressure on Pakistan and perhaps to try and introduce more drone strikes or cross-border raids into Pakistan to eliminate militants from having a safe haven. This was considered the most serious accusation an Obama Administration official had made against Pakistan. He went on to say that the ISI was undermining U.S. efforts in Afghanistan. Such accusations continued to strain the U.S.-Pakistani relationship. For quite a while the U.S. suspected that the ISI was supporting the Haqqani network in order to help extend Pakistani influence in Afghanistan. However, Admiral Mullen made a further step in these claims, stating that he believed such support extended to high profile attacks in Afghanistan which were targeted at the U.S. Such attacks included a truck bombing at a NATO outpost in Kabul, killing five and wounding 77 coalition soldiers. Pakistan rejected such claims by the U.S. The government also stated that it would 'not allow' any U.S. operations in North Waziristan which were to be aimed at the Haqqani network. It argued that the Pakistani government was already cooperating with the Americans, yet they should respect the country's sovereignty. In November 2011, the United States of America and Pakistan, allies in the "war on terror" in Afghanistan, found themselves on yet another proverbial fork in the road. Raymond Davis, a CIA contractor who shot two Pakistani civilians in the city of Lahore in January 2011 and caused a severe crisis in U.S ties with Pakistan.³⁹

³⁵ Myers, S.L. &Perlez, J. (2011). '*Tensions Rise as U.S. Officials Press Pakistan for Answers.*'

³⁶ Zaidi, S.A. (2011). p.12.

³⁷ Myers, S.L. &Perlez, J. (2011).

³⁸Bumiller, E. &Perlez, J. (2011). '*Pakistan's Spy Agency Is Tied To Attack On U.S. Embassy.*'

³⁹"Raymond Davis is CIA Contractor, US Officials Say," *ABC News*, February 21, 2011

Bilateral relations continued to be strained following the November 2011 attacks by NATO airstrikes on two military check points in the Pakistani tribal areas, killing 24 Pakistani soldiers.⁴⁰ The relationship, already marked by deep mistrust due to the two earlier incidents that year and the cumulative burdens of the decade-long “war on terror” in Afghanistan, deteriorated even further as the Obama administration made significant changes in its security-related aid policy towards Pakistan. An amount of US\$440 to \$500 million in counterinsurgency training and equipment for Pakistan was suspended, including US\$300 million in planned FY2011 Coalition Support Fund reimbursements.⁴¹

Consequently, Pakistan responded by closing the Ground Lines of Communication, therefore stopping NATO’s access to Afghanistan and putting their relationship on hold.⁴² The U.S. was also asked to leave the Shamsi air base which was used for drone strikes aimed at militants in the tribal areas of Pakistan. Additionally, Pakistani government boycotted the international conference in Bonn regarding the future of Afghanistan.⁴³ Pakistani leaders and officials continued to seek apology from the United States if it wanted to put the bilateral relationship back on track. The US expressions of “deep regrets” and “sincere condolences” were out-rightly rejected, demanding instead a more formal and unconditional apology.⁴⁴

Though the US State Department officials advised President Obama in favor of issuing an apology which could have facilitated the reopening of the GLOCs, the Department of Defense saw it as a sign of weakness and a virtual admission of fault. Senator John Kerry, as well as the US Ambassador to Pakistan, Cameron Munter, advised their government in favor of an apology which, according to them, was the only way to move forward. Leon Panetta, the Secretary of Defense, on the other hand, suggested that regrets and condolences were enough.⁴⁵

Based on drone strikes capability and casualties, the official stance of the US government considered drones as a very little or no civilian life are taken from drone strikes; and moreover, the US government claimed that the strikes are “targeted” and “surgical,” and impact only those people who have been classified as high-level enemy combatants.⁴⁶

Despite the standoff, both countries did not entirely cut off their diplomatic and military channels of communication, as various officials in Pakistan and the United States continued to interact at various forums and meetings impressing upon each other the importance of resetting and putting the fractured relationship “back to business. “Perhaps the best indication of both countries wanting to resume their ties came in an interview to Pakistan State Television by the US Ambassador in Pakistan, Cameron Munter, who said that both sides wanted to decide on what was the best way to move forward on a policy which addressed counterterrorism cooperation,

⁴⁰Brulliard, K. & Partlow, J. (2011). ‘*NATO Airstrike Strains U.S.-Pakistan Relations.*’

⁴¹“Pakistan Orders US to Vacate Shamsi Airbase Within 15 Days,”

⁴²Kronstadt, K.A. & Epstein, S.B. (2012). p.3. - The Ground Lines of Communication were reopened in July 2012.

⁴³ Masood, S. (2011). ‘*C.I.A Leaves Base in Pakistan Used for Drone Strikes.*’

⁴⁴“New Pakistan Ambassador Brings Frank Talk to Washington Relations,” *Daily Beast*, February 21, 2012

⁴⁵“Pentagon Pressure May Have Delayed Obama Apology,” *OEN*, December 18, 2011

⁴⁶‘*Obama Administration Counterterrorism Strategy*’(2013)

reopening of NATO supplies and reconciliation according to the recommendations of Pakistani parliament.⁴⁷

Conclusion

Looking and observing the changing dynamics of the overall bilateral relationship between Pakistan and the United States. It is clearly analyzed that that both states have enjoyed a very strong relationship from time to time based on fulfilling the national interests of one country and the other. There has always been a significant approach applied by the American Administration when it comes to dealing with security, economy, foreign aid and various programs established by the various Presidents from time to time. Every president of the United States has its own perks and peril for the south Asia in general and Pakistan in particular. Despite the fact that, there has been a number of events that leads to ups and downs on the various major events occurred to deteriorate the relationship between the two countries but ultimately there comes a point of convergence and divergence to come up with expected results.

On the major front, terrorism is one of the fundamental issue faced jointly by both countries to make this South Asian region a very peaceful, stable and prosperous for the years to come. The significance of the level of counter terrorism cooperation by the President Obama's Administration possess a very important place in the foreign policy of Pakistan. A number of initiatives taken by President Obama witnessed a destructive blow for the militant organizations which were a source of causing infiltration not only on Pakistan but the world at large.

In the foreign policy statements of Both President Obama and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. The Prime Minister shared the Obama's perspective on effective counterterrorism cooperation between two countries to achieve the mutual objective of defeating terrorism. President Obama thanked Prime Minister Sharif for Pakistan's efforts to help defeat Al-Qaida, and both Leaders expressed their deep appreciation for the sacrifices of military personnel and civilians in the fight against terrorism and extremism. The two country's Leaders emphasized that no country's territory should be used to destabilize its neighbors. Further, the Leaders noted that extremism and terrorism represent a common challenge for humanity and that the solution lies in collaboration and joint efforts by the international community.⁴⁸

President Obama thanked the Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif for visiting the United States in joint meeting statements, and both Leaders committed themselves to remaining in close contact and to continuing their efforts to build a strong, broad-based, long-term, and enduring relationship between the United States and Pakistan that should serve as a foundation for the stability and prosperity of the region and around the globe.

⁴⁷Munter, 2012. "US Wants Realistic Discussion on Recommendations, Move Forward to Reset Ties", *Express Tribune*, April 20, 2012.,

⁴⁸Remarks by President Obama and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan after bilateral meeting (2013)

US security assistance programs were deeply appreciated by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif for the enhancing the capabilities of Pakistan's counter-terrorism, counterinsurgency, counter-narcotics and maritime security operational capabilities. President Obama also commended the gains made by the Pakistani armed forces during Operation Zarb-i-Azb and honored the sacrifices rendered by them. Concluding, both countries have been enjoying a very deep and strong strategic relations in the areas of security, economy, trade and investment and counterterrorism.⁴⁹

⁴⁹*Obama Sharif calls for resilient Pak-India talks* 'The Nation today (2015)

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