



ROLE OF OBAMA'S ADMINISTRATION COUNTER-TERRORISM STRATEGIES TOWARDS PAKISTAN

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to examine and evaluate the overall counterterrorism cooperation during Obama Administration towards Pakistan. It aims and focuses on the performances and measures taken by United States of America during President Obama in office in order to eradicate terrorism from Pakistan. Being a grave national security threat, terrorism played a disastrous role in the domestic peace and stability of both countries. President Obama's Administration formulated policies when he came to office in 2009 by looking at the already efforts done by Bush Administration to counterterrorism from Pakistan. Despite many ups and downs in the bilateral relations on various domestic and international issues, both countries didn't compromise the elimination of terrorist phenomena from Pakistan which was indeed a great success of the Obama administration's counterterrorism and counterinsurgency strategies in the long run.

Keywords: Pakistan-US Relations, Obama Administration, Counterterrorism Cooperation, National Security

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Introduction

After the 11 September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre and Pentagon, the United States has launched the Global War on terrorism or simply called War on Terror (WOT). It was a military campaign with the support of international community led by the U.S against the terrorist organizations like Al-Qaeda and other militant groups, which the US considering a severe threat to American security.¹ Terrorism has been a top national security threat for the U.S. following the attacks of 11 September 2001. The 9/11 attacks on twin tower and pentagon were the serious national security failure in American history. As a consequence, combating terrorism has been one of the main focal point of U.S President Security priorities starting from Bush, Obama and now Trump Administration. For over a decade and half, American foreign policy gave serious priority to counter terrorism, in order to avoid future attacks on the American soil.²

Soon after 9/11 attacks on the American land, US policymakers under the Bush Administration came up with Counterterrorism Strategy to eliminate the terrorists and their sanctuaries wherever they are located and positioned. Looking at a very critical state and sufferings of United States citizen and economy, the United States under President Bush Administration initiated an international effort and strategies to eradicate Al Qaeda, the transnational terrorist organization responsible for planning and conducting the 9/11 attacks on American soil.

The global fight against al-Qaeda and the related war in Afghanistan compelled the United States to start reassessing its counterterrorism strategy towards Pakistan. The exigencies of counterterrorism and counterinsurgency became the core reasons of Washington's primary goals to specify policies towards Pakistan.³ Pakistan was the only country who recognized the Taliban government in Afghanistan in 1996. Pakistan's geostrategic location and engagements with US from time to time compelled the United States to focus her attention more form security and counterterrorism perspectives.⁴

For Obama Administration, it was clear that a hostile or violently unstable Pakistan would compromise the broader United States grand strategy and agendas in Asia but a cooperative and stable Pakistan would help further in its advancement.⁵ By looking at the current combination of massive population growth in Pakistan, abysmal education, and the gradual weakening of traditional institutions (both state and non-state) makes it easier to imagine for US that Pakistan couldn't be able to play a positive role in its region as a net contributor to peace and security. There was somehow a significant belief that, Pakistan is not doomed to a downward slide; improvements in leadership and governance would enable the country to play a more constructive role over time in South Asian region.⁶

¹ Muscat Caroline. University of Malta Library, accessed on June 2018
<https://www.um.edu.mt/library/oar/handle/123456789/9156>

² ibid

³ Markey S, Daniel, *Reorienting US Pakistan Strategy*, Council on Foreign Relations (January 2014)

⁴ Fatima Qamar, Javed Umbreen, 2012 'US Foreign Policy Parameters towards Pakistan and India' (2001-2008) *Journal of Political Science* Vol.19

⁵ Markey, Daniel S. 'Reorienting U.S. Pakistan Strategy. *From Af-Pak to Asia*' *Council On Foreign Relations*

⁶ Stefan Andrew Furgas, University of Durham E-thesis <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/3345/>

From the foreign policy of perspectives, Bush government and the Obama Administration knew that Pakistan was a serious node for the United States in the War on Terror due to its important geo-strategic location. Because of this, Pakistan was very important to offer much sophisticated any kind of support to the United States in the form of military, diplomatic of logistical support. After all, American strategist estimated that cooperation with Pakistan has been key in meeting its objectives to Counterterrorism.

In the past, the relations between Pakistan and U.S. were not always stable. It has been marked by periodic ups and down, with both countries cooperating at the time when they needed each other and when they have mutual interests and walking away when such interests were fulfilled or the other country was no longer of importance. This was obvious once again following the attacks of 9/11. Soon after the attack, the U.S.-Pakistan relations were not stable, however U.S. convinced Pakistan to support war against terrorism in Afghanistan.⁷

Major Foreign policy shift from Bush to Obama

In 2008, Obama's presidential campaign was built around the idea of 'change', especially when it came to the foreign policy of his predecessor. A serious attention was given to American grand strategy and policy following the elections, there has been continuity to a certain extent. Both the Bush and Obama Administration emphasized on American leadership as a part of their grand strategy. In the Bush Administration's 2006 National Security Strategy NSS was a key theme.

This strategy put an effective action totally depended on American leadership since the international community is most engaged in such action when the United States leads.⁸ The Obama Administration in its 2010 NSS mentions America's 'global leadership' by stating that global security depends upon strong and responsible American leadership.⁹ Both administrations focused on cooperating with allies and working with others in order to address the challenges which the world is facing.

The focus of the Bush Administration was to strengthen alliances to defeat global terrorism and work to prevent attacks against us and our friends' and was to also develop agendas for cooperative action with the other main centers of global power. The Obama Administration included 'comprehensive engagement' as a part of its strategy. The Bush Administration was prepared to act alone if necessary. The Obama Administration was also ready to work alone which was evident in the case of Pakistan and the killing of Osama Bin Laden. U.S. Secretary of Defense under the Bush Administration-Robert Gates, was also kept at the same post during the Obama Administration in foreign policy decision making circles. This was a sign of continuity amongst Obama's promise for change. This implied that defense policies would remain consistent, especially in areas where both Gates and President Obama would agree.¹⁰

The Bush Doctrine was greatly based on realist beliefs. The administration's foreign policy was focused on the idea of American exceptionalism and the idea of the predominance of

⁷<https://www.um.edu.mt/library/oar/handle/123456789/9156>

⁸ National Security Strategy (2006). p.22.

⁹ National Security Strategy (2010). p.17 & 7.

¹⁰Baker, P. &Shanker, T., (2008). 'Obama Plans to Retain Gates at Defense Department.'

American power, especially hard power, based on military and economic might. Such a 'self-centered' foreign policy led to the deterioration of U.S. image abroad and brought a rise to anti-American sentiment. In contrast to the Bush Doctrine, Obama's foreign policy strategy aimed at reaffirming U.S. leadership in a world where America's power has been challenged by new actors.¹¹ Smart Power had become the core principle of Obama's foreign policy and was used in order to improve the country's image, therefore attracting others and permitting the U.S. to continue to lead. Smart Power is a combination of soft and hard power, i.e. the U.S. trying to find a balance between defense and diplomacy (as well as development aid) in order to achieve foreign policy goals.¹²

The Bush Administration responded to the 9/11 attacks by declaring a GWOT which came to dominate its foreign policy. Iraq and Terrorism became two of its top priorities. When it came to the terrorist threat, the administration did not make a distinction as to which terrorists he was after, focusing on the global threat of terrorism. In Obama's presidential campaign, he made it evident that he wanted to shed away from the Bush Doctrine. Right from the beginning he neglected the term WOT, yet this did not mean that the U.S. was to no longer be at war. To the contrary, the Obama Administration continued the war. However, the administration refocused the war to be a fight against some terrorist organizations, i.e. al-Qaeda and its partners.

The Obama Administration also attempted to reframe the war by giving it a lower profile since it did not want counterterrorism to dominate its foreign policy. It wanted to give more priority to foreign policy areas such as nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. However, although the WOT dominated the Bush Administration's foreign policy, by its second term there had already began a shift in foreign policy priorities, taking a more liberal approach. Democracy promotion became a leading goal of U.S. foreign policy although it was a change in priority, it was still part of a long-term solution for winning the WOT.¹³

From here we can see that although there was a change coming from the Obama Administration, change was already taking place during the final years under Bush. When it came to fighting the war, both administrations considered Pakistan as of vital importance, especially when it came to their objectives in Afghanistan. However, their strategy towards the country differed. It can be said that the Bush Administration lacked a clear strategy for Pakistan. Bush got distracted with Iraq, therefore losing focus on the threat in Pakistan. This allowed the Taliban and al-Qaeda to find sanctuary and rebuild itself in the tribal areas of Pakistan after they were chased out of Afghanistan. In contrast, the Obama government were knowing that the real threat to the U.S. was found in Pakistan and Afghanistan. As a result, it reoriented the war back to where it believed it belonged, resultantly leading to the creation of the AfPak strategy. This meant putting more focus on Pakistan when compared to the Bush Administration¹⁴

As part of this strategy, it also appointed a Special Envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan, showing the importance it was giving to the region. The Pakistani's were not too keen on the

¹¹Dimitrova, A. 'Obama's Foreign Policy: Between Pragmatic Realism and Smart Diplomacy?'

¹²Baker, P. (2010)

¹³Lindsay, J.M. (2011). 'George W. Bush, Barack Obama and the Future of US Global Leadership'. p.770

¹⁴General Jone, J. (2009). 'President Obama's Afghanistan-Pakistan AfPakStrategy.'

AfPak strategy. They especially resented the term since it put them on the same level with Afghanistan. They disagreed with this since according to them Afghanistan is a smaller country with a destabilized government, unlike itself. Certain Bush Administration strategic principles have been embraced by the Obama Administration in the case of Pakistan. This includes the Administration's campaign of drone strikes against terrorists in the tribal areas and Afghan border region of Pakistan. Under both administrations this strategic doctrine was considered as the pre-emptive use of force. Yet one can say that such a campaign was greatly increased and intensified under Obama. Drone strikes under the Obama Administrations' first term were six times more than those which were done under Bush's two terms.¹⁵ Both administrations emphasized the use of aid and assistance as a part of its foreign policy since they both strived to have a stable Pakistan in order to be able to cooperate in the war.

Obama Administration's counterterrorism strategy

During the crucial time of War on Terror Barack Obama was the elected as president of the United States. From the very beginning, he expected and infuses the belief for hope and change to the people of America and for the international community throughout his presidential campaign. Though, he and his administration had faced many challenges and among others one challenge was related to Pakistan. In order to evaluate his performances in counterterrorism cooperation with Pakistan and has been the purpose of this chapter is to explore U.S. foreign policy towards Pakistan during Obama Administration. It will first look at the Obama's strategy to counterterrorism and its objectives in Pakistan. It will then look at the America foreign policy, strategy from 2009 to the end of the 2nd term of Obama. The National Strategy for Counterterrorism is one part of the Obama Administration's larger NSS, outlining the country's approach to fighting terrorism. This National Strategy was built upon the progress which had been made under the Bush administration, but apparently didn't prove much significant as expected.¹⁶

The Obama government recognized that the threat which US is facing was largely related to Al-Qaeda and its affiliates and followers. He made it clear, that the United States was at war and was always ready to fight against the enemy and defeat them. In order to crush al-Qaeda, the administration outlined its precise goals which includes; Prevent terrorist development, acquisition and use of WMD, to dismantle the safe havens, to enhance the partnership and capabilities to counter terrorists, demean the links of Al Qaeda with other groups, counteract the ideology of al-Qaeda and to stop the financial and other support of communication of the terrorist's organization Al-Qaeda.¹⁷

For Obama Administration, Afghanistan and Pakistan remained the major front at War on terror; therefore, the government felt the need to change the U.S strategy towards them. Though, they are two different countries, the administration knew that they cannot be successful in either country without the stable environment in both states, recognizing to resolve the problem in one state he must tackle what is happening in the other. Therefore, to counter terrorism, Pakistan

¹⁵ 'Obama 2013 Pakistan Drone Strikes' the Bureau of Investigative Journalism (2013)

¹⁶ *Fact Sheet: National Strategy for Counterterrorism.* June (2011)

¹⁷ *ibid*

remains the main focus area for Obama administration.¹⁸ In order to change their policies an orientation, Obama's administration has started a new version of strategy known as AfPak Strategy. Under this strategy, the United States has to treat two countries as a part of a single arena of war. The main objective of this strategy was to eliminate Al-Qaeda from having safe havens in Pakistan and preventing them from returning to Afghanistan from where they will be able to design attacks against the US¹⁹

The Obama Administration outlined two major objectives for Pakistan which included to eradicate the terrorist networks inside Pakistan (and Afghanistan) and launch the attacks with the support of International community and can improve civilian control and stable government in Pakistan. To achieve such objectives in Pakistan, the Obama Administration was to use diplomatic, military and other tools which were accessible to it.²⁰ The US was aimed at strengthening its relations with Pakistan which was based on mutual interest and mutual respect. To achieve the first and foremost objective in Pakistan, was to defeat networks of the terrorists, the U.S was to build up Pakistan's capabilities to hit such militants and provide security backing to support such efforts. The administration was to offer help which would respond to the needs of the people with regards to the second objective to make stronger Pakistan's development and democracy.²¹

Although the Obama government wanted to have cooperation with Pakistan based on shared interests, respect and trust, Obama made it clear that "even before that if the U.S. had OBL or al-Qaeda in their sights and Pakistan was not willing or unable to act and would do it by themselves because this was their foremost national security main concern".²² "Whether Pakistan was willing to cooperate or not, but Obama was ready to take the war to Osama bin Laden's cave door".²³

Obama administration appointed a particular Envoy for Pakistan and Afghanistan. He was given the task to ensure the diplomatic and political efforts for winning the US led war on terror in the territory of Pakistan and Afghanistan.²⁴ The appointment of a special Envoy was an approach of that Obama Administration was giving significance to the region. According to the Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, "its challenge would be to coordinate US efforts in the region, including those of the Pentagon".²⁵

The first envoy which was appointed was Ambassador Richard Holbrooke but after his death in 2010 he was succeeded by Marc Grossman whom then resigned in December 2012. Grossman's deputy, David Pearce was appointed as the acting Special Envoy.²⁶ The Obama Administration

¹⁸ Blake Jr, R.O., (2009).

¹⁹ Mazhar, M.S. & Goraya, N.S. (2009). 'Changing Trends in American Policy Towards Pakistan and Afghanistan.' p.26-27.

²⁰ Blake Jr, R.O., (2009).

²¹ National Security Strategy (2010). p.21.

²² The New York Times. (September 26, 2008). 'The Second Presidential Debate: Transcript.'

²³ Azam, O., (2008). 'Obama, McCain Differ Over Policy Towards Pakistan.'

²⁴ Special Envoy for Afghanistan, Pakistan Named: Hillary Clinton Calls Zardari.', Dawn News. (23 January 2009)

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Dormandy, X. (2013). 'The Next Chapter: President Obama's Second-Term Foreign Policy.'

had given a munificent aid and assistance program in order to build more cordial relations with Pakistan. In fact, Pakistan has been a primary beneficiary of U.S. aid and assistance. In 2010, Pakistan was considered as the 2nd largest receiver of U.S. aid with \$4.3 billion, and in 2012, it ranked 3rd with around \$2.1 billion.²⁷ This assistance included in the form of economic, security and non-military aid in order to help Pakistan defeat terrorism with counter-insurgency capabilities and to restore its fragile economy.²⁸

It was widely known as that in Pakistan some militants are receiving support from the Pakistan's side therefore the Obama Administration found, Pakistan as an untrustworthy partner in U.S. counterterrorism campaign.²⁹ This led the U.S. to ask questioning about the amount of aid being given by US as an aid. Finally, they made some changes in the terms and condition on the assistance for Pakistan. Its first step was the creation of the Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act EPPA.³⁰ This was a main part of the administration's approach to Pakistan, to give nonmilitary aid in order to improve the living lives of the people of Pakistan. Moreover, she also increased military aid for Pakistan but under a condition to fight their terrorist's organizations inside the country and to further increase the progress of democracy. This legislation is also known as the Kerry Lugar-Berman bill.³¹

Challenges and Obstacles for Obama Administration

United States' relations with Pakistan are an important part of its foreign policy. However, even at the height of its relations with the Obama Administration, there have been underlying irritants and misgivings that have led both countries into "a tormented relationship," each believing that it has been sinned against, yet both have been condemned to work with each other.³²

As a matter of fact, 2011 was a difficult year for the relations between the two countries as a result of various developments and events took place during that year. According to Anwar Iqbal, 'the year 2011 was like 2001 – 'a game changer.' He compares the two by stating that 'while the September 11, 2001 terrorists' attacks brought Pakistan back into the game, events happening in 2011 are pushing Pakistan out of the game of War on Terror.³³ As mentioned previously, the Obama Administration was ready to act unilaterally if they had any information of Osama Bin Laden and al-Qaeda. In May 2011, the U.S. Navy Seals Special Operations team carried out a unilateral operation against OBL who was hiding in Abbottabad in which the Pakistani military base and the military academy of the Pakistani government were situated.³⁴

²⁷Kronstadt, K.A. & Epstein, S.B. (2012). 'Pakistan: U.S. Foreign Assistance.' p.7.

²⁸ Blake Jr, R.O., (2009).

²⁹Kronstadt, K.A. & Epstein, S.B. (2012). p.1.

³⁰ Zaidi, S.A. (2011). 'Who Benefits from U.S. Aid to Pakistan?' p.8.

³¹Kronstadt, K.A. & Epstein, S.B. (2012). p.8-9. - According to the Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, this legislation was to be 'a historic chapter' in U.S. bilateral relations with Pakistan which would strengthen the cooperation and friendship between the two.

³²Daniel S. Markey, *No Exit from Pakistan: America's Tortured Relationship with Islamabad* (Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2013)

³³ Iqbal, A. (2011). 'The Washington Diary.' Dawn News.

³⁴ Baker, P., Cooper, H. & Mazzetti, M. (2011). 'Bin Laden is Dead, Obama Says.'

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).

³⁸ Bumiller, 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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