

## Reassessing Pakistan's Geopolitical Orientation from the Post-Cold War Era to 9/11

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### Abstract

The end of Cold War, with the demise of Soviet Union, has led to the restructuring of superpower priorities in the international system. It was due to Pakistan's geo-strategic position during the Cold War that its foreign policy direction was shaped by the binary geography of Cold War in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). However, with the dawn of the Post -Cold War, Pakistan has gained much importance in geographical as well as geopolitical conditions of the world. Thus, the new decade of the 1990s began with Islamabad's losing their chief strategic allies. The U.S.-Pakistan differences were expressed in Pressler amendment with the United States. Whereas, with the emergence of Central Asian Republics (CARs), it was supposed to offer Pakistan the opportunity of new strategic alliances. The New War on global terrorism especially after 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001, radically transformed geopolitical and geostrategic environment of the IOR and significance of Pakistan has increased. It is against this backdrop that research article intends to explore the strategic dimensions of Pakistan in the post -Cold War period with its relations to emerging states of CARs and the U.S., especially in the last decade of twentieth century.

**Keywords:** Central Asia, Geopolitics, New War on Terrorism, Pakistan, Post-Cold War, America.

### Introduction

The collapse of Soviet Union has led to alter the global geopolitical chessboard in the post-Cold war order. The foreign policy of a state during the cold war was very much influenced or shaped by the ideological division of Cold war. However, with the dawn of the post-Cold War era, the constraint and opportunities for Pakistan has changed. During in the Cold War, Pakistan has gained much importance in geographical as well as geopolitical conditions of the world. In the Post -Cold War period, Pakistan's geostrategic importance is highlighted by its strategic placement in contiguity with three powerful states, namely people Republic of China, Russia and India... Like Iran Pakistan provides a back door to step in vital oil rich areas when desired, particularly with the emergence of new Central Asian Republics (CARs) in the IOR. (Aziz,1984,13-17)

In an interesting statement, while elaborating the geostrategic location of Pakistan made by Herbert Feldman states that a cursory glance at the map that present Pakistan, lies solidly along the bank of Middle-East separated from CARs by a narrow tongue of Afghan territory and stands watching over the trade routes of the Arabian Sea. Simultaneously, Pakistan is greatly concerned with the Chinese active entry in the Asian Affairs (emphasis added) (Feldman,1978,196)

Thus, it is believed that Islamabad suffered tremendous loss due to this international change, Pakistan's close relationship with the U. S. China and supportive Muslim states were all for re-

calculation after the Soviet pull-out from Afghanistan as well with the dismemberment of Soviet Union. The Islamabad was no longer needed to funnel the arms and financial support to militants battling Soviet forces in Afghanistan. The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and its dismemberment had reduced the value of the U.S.-Pakistan strategic partnership (Chari et.al.2003,17). However, the new decade of the 1990's started with a paradigm shift with Islamabad's moving away from its main strategic partner the U.S. with the differences cropped due to Pressler amendment (Ibid,2003,19). However, the New War on terrorism especially after 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001, radically transformed geopolitical and geostrategic environment of the IOR and brought Islamabad at the forefront with the U.S. choosing the strategic partner in new global war against terrorism. It is against this backdrop that chapter intends to explore the nature, role and implications of Pakistan's location on the post-Cold War geopolitical chessboard

### **Objectives of the Study:**

1. To study in brief history of Cold war during the binary division of world.
2. To examine and analyse Pakistan's strategic perspective, particularly in relation to CARs and OIC in the Post-Cold war period.
3. To understand in brief America's New War against global terrorism in Post 9/11 and role and response from Pakistan.

### **Methodology**

The present study will be based on the data and sources collected both from the primary and secondary sources pertaining to relevant policy documents and policy reports, debates and speeches, books, articles and journals. Further, to inquire into the strategic approach of Pakistan in the last decade of twentieth century, in the Post-Cold War period up to role and response of Pakistan in America's global war on terrorism.

### **Results and Discussion**

#### ***Pakistan after Post-Cold War: Emerging Strategic Perspective***

Pakistan seemed to ride the tide of history when on 18<sup>th</sup> December 1991 beaming Sardar Assef Ahmed Ali, Minister of the State for Economic Affairs proudly reported to the Pakistani press about establishing diplomatic relations and formal contacts with the five CARs of the Soviet Union. Just after he had completed a three-week tour of the region, two weeks before the Soviet Union formally ceases to exist (The Dawn News, 1992) Pakistan's initiative for strategic concerns got the limelight of the first official visit by a delegation to Central Asia in December 1991. The emergence of Bangladesh has vastly enhanced military and strategic imbalances in favour of India. The tough task before Pakistan was to create a critical mass to neutralize India or even to fill the loss of East Pakistan. It was Zia who believed that the 'strategic depth' his country needed in its confrontation with India was best achieved by building an Islamic block between the Arabian Sea and the Urals (Dietrich,1993,30). Pakistan then must have decided to go on the offensive to get the most out of its Central Asian initiative in terms of its equation with India and the U.S.

Now with the emergence of CARs, it was supposed to offer Pakistan the opportunity of new strategic alliances. This geopolitical imagination was further elaborated by Ahmed Rashid in a leading article for the semi-official newspaper supplement in following words:

*The military preoccupation with 'Strategic depth' vis-à-vis India can also be met by expanding ties with the Muslim heartland of Asia. The Central Asia is a natural ally for Pakistan if*

*Islamabad is prepared to offer it the right conditions and the new republics are also the natural allies of the new regional bloc that could join the present Regional Cooperation Organization (RCO) between Turkey, Iran and Pakistan (Rashid,1992,1)*

Similar concerning argument was made by another member Naeem Sarfraz of the delegation to CARs, to put it as:

*It was particularly the SLOCs to Karachi which seemed to be indefensible by the gallant but hopelessly inadequate Pakistani fleet (Ibid, 1992, 5)*

Furthermore, in his write up on the visit to new strategic space, he reassured that at least \$2 billion were required in equipment alone to create a fleet that can keep sea lanes open and to give country the ability to bring the oil necessary to keep its military moving beyond its exhaustion point of its three weeks oil reserves (Dietrich, 1992, 36). During the visit of Assef Ali in December 1991, several avenues of cooperation were explored. Pakistan signed MOU and joint declaration on exchange in culture, education and economy, also getting the trade rolling by offering CARs with long term credits between \$10 million and \$ 30 million each (Ibid,1993,37). It was after the visit of this delegation that a stream of delegation followed thereafter from Central Asia to Pakistan.

#### ***Pakistan's Geopolitical Perception towards CARs and Afghanistan***

The rhetoric that prevailed on Pakistan in the aftermath of the post-Soviet collapse was the increasing geopolitical, geo-economic and geostrategic depth of the region. Nonetheless the concern was raised over the ideological dimension that Pakistan could expand the jihad culture beyond Afghanistan into the newly born CARs, which is inhibited by large number of Muslims.

**Table-1.Delegations from Central Asia and Azerbaijan Visiting Pakistan (December 1991-May 1993)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Delegation</b>
13/15-2-92	Uzbekistan	Civil Aviation Delegation – Civil Aviation Agreement, Air Link
22/24-2-92	Kazakhstan	President Nazarbayev
17-4-92	Tajikistan	Energy Authority – Power Export Agreement
1/4-7-92	Tajikistan	President Nabiyeu – Protocol on Joint Ministerial Commission
9-7-92	Afghanistan	Minister of Planning Sayed Mohammad Ali Javed - MOU on Joint Ministerial Commission
14/20-7-92	Uzbekistan, Afghanistan	Transport And Communications Delegations – Tripartite Agreement on Highways
2/6-8-92	Iran	Minister of Roads and Transportation Mohammad Saedi Kya – Joint Ministerial Commission Meeting
13/14-8-92	Uzbekistan	President Karimov
12/15-8-92	Afghanistan	President Rabbani
7/8-9-92	Iran	President Rafsanjani
24/25-10-92	Turkey	Prime Minister Demirel
6-1-93	Kazakhstan	Transport Delegation – Joint Ministerial Commission
7/14-1-93	Kazakhstan	Judicial Delegation – Protocol on Co-operation

(Ibid, 1993, 38-39)

**Table-2. Delegations from Pakistan Visiting Central Asia and Azerbaijan (Dec. 91-May 93)**

Date	Country	Delegation
24-11/14-12-91	CARs, Russia, Azerbaijan	Minister of State for Economic Affairs Sardar Assef Ahmad Ali
16/17-2-92	Turkmenia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan	Tehran Meetings with President Ghulam Ishaq Khan – ECO Summit
28-3-92	Tazikistan	Finance Minister Sartaj Aziz – Agreements on Electricity Export, on Banking and on Training of Officials
9/10-5-92	Turkmenia	Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif – ECO Summit
27/28-6-92	Uzbekistan	Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif – Opening Pakistan's Embassy
29-9/1-10-92	Turkey	President Ghulam Ishaq Khan

(Ibid, 1993, 38-39)

There is a belief that culturally Islam has been adopted in Sindh, Baluchistan and Western Punjab through the land routes originating in Afghanistan, Khorasan and Maverannahr (i.e., Central Asia) rather than via the sea route connecting the Arabian Sea coast with Makkah and Baghdad. Further it is argued historically as well that both regions have many common links right from the invasion of Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi and other Turkic warlords of Afghanistan, who had political links or direct control over portion of Central Asia (Malik, 1980, 9-15).

There is another belief in Pakistan that peculiar link exists between its population with a claim that their ancestor resided in Central Asia (Belokrenitsky, 1995, 32) Beside these factors the physical geography of the area promotes close relationship between the two regions. The Central Asia is best summed up by S. Akhtar in the following words;

*“High mountains and huge deserts separate Pakistan with its heart, the Indus valley from the Central Asian Mesopotamia. The two Centre's of ancient civilizations remained for centuries far apart due to the distances and natural obstacles. Now that technological progress has caused the distances to shrink the air routes, which are quite short. It takes less time to reach Tashkent from Islamabad and Peshawar than Karachi.”* (Akhter, 1992, 49-50).

Pakistan articulated the events resulting from the collapse of Soviet Union in favour of its own strategic gains. It strongly perceived that the centre of gravity in Asia will now shift towards Pakistan. This is because of the geostrategic location that will inevitably allow Pakistan to act as central axis of new configuration in the Indian Ocean.

It is against this background, Pakistan along with Iran felt the need to institutionalize its relation with the Central Asia, when it tried to give new life to the defunct association of the ECO in February 1992 at Tehran. As a part of the Pakistan's geopolitical imagination the thrust of the ECO has been, not only to admit the new states of Central Asia as members but to provide them a benevolent political cover and economic back up in the post-Cold War order (Stobdan, 1993, 110-1111). As ECO is a convenient bridge head for central Asia. For Pakistan ideological dimensions of ECO would make the organisation much stronger as well as cohesive bloc. (Ibid, 1998)

Although the tradition of geopolitical theory represents the struggle in Central Asia as repetition of 'great game' played in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century between Britain and Russia with U.S. now taking the place of Britain. In this context the seminal work done by Ahmed Rashid 'Taliban, Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia' has become a subject of avid reading by intellectuals

of statecraft and the others especially after 9/11 and the U.S. attack on the Al-Qaeda network operating from Afghanistan and the Pakistan. There are several assumptions that require scrutiny.

In a similar fashion Ahmed Rashid made thought-provoking observation in the form of on-going civilizational struggle between Islam and Christianity that was reflected in the struggle of Bosnia and in Palestine between Muslim and Jews. The future of Islam is in Central Asia and is linked to Taliban and the America, the leader of the Western world. Thus, the struggle for the mastery of the extensive oil and gas pipeline is a part of the 'New Great Game'. (Rashid, 2001). Although Russia may no longer be in a position to pursue its objective of access to warm waters of the Indian Ocean, the new CARs have clear interests in such access. Though Islamabad is keen to provide access to Indian Ocean through its ports.

Pakistan's quest for forging close relations with the Central Asia began as soon as these republics became independent. Even though some headway was made but the civil war in Afghanistan followed by Taliban rule installed any meaningful interaction with these republics. Since the U.S. New War on terrorism that led to the ouster of the Taliban regime and formation of new government at Kabul, a new chapter seems to be opening up between Pakistan and Central Asia. However, the degree of the new post-Taliban developments since the New War on terrorism would be real harbinger of future course of relation between the two, is yet to be seen.

In addition to this it is pointed out by a Scholar like Gunder Frank, who has tried to study history as a world system and has written on 'the centrality of Central Asia', calls central Asia as a black hole in the astronomical sense...Further, he goes on to say that Central Asia is also central to any attempt at systematic analysis of the world system" (Frank,1992, 44-121). The removal of Taliban government and the renewed international interests in rehabilitation and rebuilding of Afghanistan offers yet another window of opportunity to and from Central Asia. The geopolitical imagination of Pakistan runs against this backdrop as General Musharraf looks at Gwadar port in the Arabian Sea as corridor to Afghanistan and Central Asian. In a ground breaking ceremony of Gwadar deep sea port on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2002 Musharraf pointed out in his address:

*"If we see this whole region, it is like a funnel. Top of the funnel is this wide area of Central Asia and also China's western region and this funnel gets narrowed on through Afghanistan and in Pakistan northern areas into Pakistan and goes through Pakistan and end of this funnel is Gwadar port. So, this funnel, futuristically, is the future economic funnel of this whole region. All the top of this funnel, the broad top of the funnel, anything going into it or out of it, Pakistan and Gwadar port provides the real input, the inlet and the outlet into it... We intend to build an export processing Zone and a free trade area to maximize the potential of Gwadar port (The Pakistan Government, 2002)".*

Henceforth, one can draw out certain inferences from the above context that Gwadar port will acquire geostrategic advantages and port will become more important and commercially active in years to come. Further Pakistan view that port will play the role of regional hub for trade and commercial activity. Since the independence of CARs, Pakistan is trying its best to make frequent exchanges of delegation to these republics. It is also learnt that certain special assistance programme is being implemented in Pakistan to train personnel from CARs in diplomacy, commercial banking, railways, communication, information, audit and accounts and limited training in postal, banking, foreign and military academics (The Spotlight, 2002).

Besides this the external presence in the Indian Ocean particularly of the U.S. role in the Arabian Sea after the New War on terrorism is equally important. According to a well-known columnist M.B. Naqvi, the U.S. policy of 'unilateralism' and 'exceptionalism' is not by default but

by design and quite well intended. Fighting against New War on terrorism in his view, the key intention of U.S. is to contain the influence of all possible rivals. Especially in the two key spheres of production, marketing of oil and gas. Another issue is the modernization of the ill-equipped CARs armed forces, whose major contract would be most likely monopolized by the U.S. business corporates and groups (Naqvi, 2002, 46). Pakistan is trying hard to make its diplomatic relations with Afghanistan. After the establishment of new government, General Musharraf all the same, in response to President Hamid Karzai's visit to Pakistan on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2002, made a return visit to Afghanistan on 2<sup>nd</sup> April in the same year. This was the first visit by a foreign head of the state to the post-Taliban Afghanistan (The Spotlight, 2002).

The visit also marked vows to fight terrorism and start air traffic between the two countries, certain agreements were signed and a joint ministerial commission to promote trade, economic activity and coordinate in Afghanistan was set up. It is said that, besides all above a \$10 million cheque as a part of the \$100 million package was delivered to the Afghan government for its reconstruction (The News, 2002, 16). Consequently, Pakistan started playing an important role in the region though with certain liabilities and limitations.

#### ***Pakistan: The Muslim World***

The emergence of Pakistan can be described as an important milestone in the history of new Pan-Islamism. Since independence it made serious efforts to bring the entire Muslim world closer by hosting several Islamic conferences. So, from the very outset Pakistan had to maintain a kind of special relationship with the rest of the Muslim world as against India with which it otherwise shared a common past. In fact, Pakistan was born with a commitment to the Muslim in cause (Gupta, 1994, 234).

This thinking was reinforced when after its creation Pakistan found itself diplomatically in a relatively disadvantageous position vis-à-vis India. Pakistan could find no single country which could be counted as an unfailing friend and ally willing to lend aid and comfort in the time of need (Callard, 1957, 303). In such a situation it started identifying itself with the rest of the Islamic world in the specific common ideological basis of Islam, in whose name it could appeal for support (Gupta, 1994, 237). Thus, since its origin Pakistan started with a missionary spirit working for Islamic solidarity, with a plea that all problems facing the Muslim world could only be solved with greater cohesion and cooperation among Muslim world. Such a position to have a leading role among Muslim world could give it some kind of leverage diplomatically in dealing with its immediate adversary.

Followed up by this desire, Pakistan organized Islamic World Congress (IWC) at Karachi in 1949, with a sequel in 1951, Pakistan has come a long way from facing outright hostility, ridicule, or suspicion by one Muslim state or the other (Ahmed Baba, 1994, 31). There is a reported incident when King Farooq of Egypt have ridiculed Pakistan's commitment to the Islamic cause by saying his courtiers: "*Don't you know Islam was born on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1947?*" (Burke and Ziring, 1990, 67). During early fifties to a position, in 1980, the Islamic Foreign Minister Conference decided to nominate the President of Pakistan to address the thirty-fifth session of U.N. General Assembly on behalf of the member states of the OIC (Irfani, 1987, 198-199). According to Islamic scholar S. Irfani this decision was considered as a recognition of the services Pakistan had rendered for Muslim cohesion since its inception (Ibid, 1987). Also, it was for the first time in history of U.N. that a group of nations, on the basis of a common ideological bond, had singled out one of their members to articulate their views on a wide range of issues facing the Muslims and expressed their political cohesion on matters related to Muslim cause (Ibid, 1987, 199).

Besides Zia's speech at the U.N. General Assembly in October 1980, reflected the fact that despite the twists and turns in domestic front, the country followed a policy whose direction had been clearly spelled out by its first Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan. While addressing an Islamic Conference at Karachi in 1951 Ali Khan said that Pakistan came into being as a result of the urge felt by the Muslims of the subcontinent to secure a territory, however limited, where Islamic ideology and way of life could be practiced and demonstrated to the world. A cordial feature of this ideology is to make Muslim brotherhood a living reality. It is part of the mission to promote closer friendship and cooperation between Muslim countries (Burke, 1973, 65). Pakistan's neutral stand on the Iran-Iraq War, that it views as a fratricidal war between two Muslim states and its avowedly pro-Arab stand in the Muslim-Zionist conflict, are direct expression of its ideology (Irfani, 1987, 198).

Since its beginning in 1969, OIC has made significant headway in establishing a number of subsidiary organs and institutions that coordinate the activities of the member states in certain areas of their common concern. Though the approach of the Pakistani Muslims in achieving the solidarity of Islam is now less naïve than it was in the initial years. Nevertheless, they have increasingly begun to realize that there are important differences of outlook between them and fellow Muslims of other nation but their desire to serve the cause of Islam is as ardent as ever (Burke & Ziring, 1990, 66).

Recalling the 2<sup>nd</sup> Islamic conference of Foreign Ministers held at Karachi from 26-28<sup>th</sup> December 1970, convinced them that their common belief constitutes a strong factor for a rapprochement and solidarity between Islamic people (Ahmed Baba, 1994, 273). There are eminent scholars like Burke and Ziring, who argues that Muslim of other countries, for their part, have also learnt with the passage of time, to view Indo-Pak problem with greater understanding and Pakistan's genuine concern for their welfare with increasing appreciation (Burke & Ziring, 1990, 66). In the post-1971 period, Pakistan's relations with the Muslim states, particularly with the Middle East touched new heights of cordiality and trust. The states of the Middle East, especially of the Gulf region, extended economic assistance (investment, grants, and loans on soft terms) and diplomatic support to Pakistan. They accommodated human- power that brought a financial bonanza for Pakistan (Rizvi, 2004, 18).

Pakistan's lead role in OIC could be gauged through a reported incident in Islamic summit at Rabbat where India was asked to withdraw from a conference to which it has secured a belated invitation only after persistent times pathetic beleaguering. The very idea of secular India to go to conference of Islamic state was open to serious objection (Burke & Ziring, 1990, 374). The exclusion from the conference was being done on Pakistan's initiative (Raja, 1997, 101).

Pakistan's role in OIC as a founding member was to play an important role in strengthening cooperation among Muslim States by its active participation in the programmes and activities. The Special Sessions of the OIC Foreign Ministers conference in 1980 and in 1994 were also held in Pakistan. To commemorate fifty years of the independence of Pakistan an extra-ordinary Session of the Islamic Summit was held in Islamabad on 23rd March 1997 (The Slideshare, 2011). Pakistan is the Chairman of the OIC Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMS-TECH), having its Headquarters at Islamabad. It also hosts the Secretariat of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) (Ibid).

The discreet efforts by Pakistan have received due acknowledgment in the OIC signified by extending its support of the inalienable right of people of J&K for self-determination in accordance with the U.N. resolutions. In a declaration issued by the two-day summit of the grouping in Mecca attended among other by General Musharraf, OIC also called for respect of the human rights of

Kashmiri people and agreed to provide all possible political and diplomatic support to representatives of Kashmir people (The Tribune News, 2005, 11). A major problem faced by Pakistan in its relations with the Muslim world was that it got identified with conservative, monarchical and pro-U.S. regimes in the Middle East and its relations cooled off with radical and nationalist Muslim states like Libya, Syria and Iraq (Rizvi, 2004, 19). Though, in the absence of a stable self-reliant economy and given its persistent security concerns, there was little it could offer to others fledging Muslim states in terms of development and mutual defence.

#### ***Pakistan's Role in America's New War on Terrorism***

The events of 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001 changed the whole context in which the developments in Pakistan were taking place. The terrorist's attack of 9/11 made General Musharraf face unprecedented pressure from the U.S. forcing him to announce total about turn in his country's Afghan policy. Despite denials by General Musharraf and his aides Inter Service Intelligence (ISI) continued to provide military and financial assistance to Taliban in Afghanistan even after 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001 (Hadar, 2002). In 12<sup>th</sup> January 2002 television address to its people, a confident Musharraf seemed to be taking more dramatic step in the direction of once again aligning his country with the U.S. The day of reckoning has come, 'he announced'. Do we want Pakistan to become a theocratic state? Do we believe that religious education is enough for governance? Or do we want Pakistan to emerge as a progressive and dynamic Islamic State? He added that the radical Islamist did nothing but contribute to bloodshed in Afghanistan, leading to disruption and sowing the seeds of hatred. He asked, "*Does Islam preach this*"? (Eckholm, 2002). This much analysed address was hailed by officials as an indication that, after reorienting his foreign policy towards the U.S., General Musharraf was now going to take dramatic steps to modernise and secularize Pakistan à la` Turkey. Indeed, several academicians and policy analysts went so far as to compare Musharraf to modern Turkey's founder, Kemal Ataturk (The Economist News, 2002). To argue further his address 'set a new course for the Muslim World' (Nordland & Hussain, 2002:18). However, at a minimum Musharraf proved to be an opportunistic politician advancing his interests vis-à-vis the Americans as they took the first steps in their war on terrorism (Hadar, 2002, 14).

In this context Musharraf can be described as a new improved Zia adapting an ambitious agenda to changing circumstances (Ibid, 2002, 12).

Most of the Musharraf's predecessors were aware that Islamabad's ties with Washington were directed by specific political-military interests and lacked any deep historical and ideological roots. Like Musharraf, those leaders were always more candid than the Americans in evaluating their country's ties with Washington in realpolitik terms that stressed the limitations of the relationship. Certainly, at the height of the Cold War, when U.S. officials, lawmakers and commentators were hailing (and some conservatives were even romanticising) U.S.-Pak cooperation in providing support to the Muslim freedom fighters in Afghanistan (including one named Osama bin Laden) at that time Pakistan was the recipient of large amount of the U.S. aid. The Pakistani leaders seemed to have no illusion about their relationship with Washington. They recognized the partnership in Afghanistan was a marriage of convenience. It was almost two decades before General Musharraf, U.S. embraced another Pakistani military dictator, General Mohammed Zia ul-haq.

The ensuing U.S. led New War on terrorism has given Musharraf, an opportunity to improve the relationship between Islamabad and Washington. The relationship had experienced steep decline in the 1990's, at the end of both the Cold War and the common struggle against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan eroded the perception of strategic interest. Since 9/11 General Musharraf, whose regime had been the main source of diplomatic and military support for the Taliban ruling neigh-

bouring Afghanistan, has portrayed his regime an ally of Washington in its New War on terrorism. The General Musharraf though headed a military clique that brought an end to his nation's short democratic experience, assisted radical Islamic terrorist groups in Afghanistan and Kashmir that pressed for war in India. Despite that record he was hailed by the Bush administration as a 'courageous' and 'visionary' leader who was ready to reorient his country towards pro-American position and adopt major political and economic reforms.

Having said that, in this context a well-known expert on South Asia, Stephen Cohen put his views across that Pakistan has become a strategically important state both criticized as a rogue power and praised as being on the frontline state in new war on terrorism (Cohen, 2005, 1). Soon after the terrorist attack in New York and Washington, President Bush praised General Musharraf at a press conference with sitting at his side as 'ever greater courage, vision and leadership' in supporting the U.S. war against terrorism. Bush fully supported that Islamabad's efforts against terror are benefiting the entire world (Lochhead, 2001).

Similar comments were made by British Prime Minister Tony Blair on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2001, during his visit to Islamabad complimenting Musharraf for 'his courage and leadership in commenting his country to support the 'war on terrorism'(Bellaigue,2001, 44). Indeed, in various statements, Musharraf emphasized Pakistan's role as an ally of the U.S. and pledge his nation's fullest support in the fight against terrorism. During his meeting with U.S. ambassador Wendy Chamberlin, Musharraf committed to support the American led war on terror (Stratfor Commentary, 2005). At the same time General Musharraf expressed his confidence about the dawn of a new era of relationship by offering U.S. with sharing of its intelligence, air space and ground facilities to dislodge terror network and to capture Osama bin Laden and his associates (The U.S. Department of State, 2001). Therefore, it was not surprising, when Islamabad's actions were rewarded with an aid package of nearly \$1 billion for border control, refugee assistance and poverty alleviation (Hadar, 2002, 1-22). Further as a part of debt relief and financial assistance, an agreement was formally signed on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2004, waving a \$ 495.3 million loan owned by Pakistan to U.S. (Rashid, 2004). Due to all these initiatives Islamabad was crowned with new frontline status.

Taking the cognizance of the developments, U.S. Secretary of the State Mr. Colin Powell, during his visit to Pakistan granted the status of non-NATO member ally (Ibid, 2004). In similar manner the Chairman of the Joint Chief of the U.S. army General Richard B. Myers appreciated Islamabad for its role in war against terrorism and called it 'very significant'(Myers, 2003). Over the period since New War on terror the U.S. has significantly expanded its assistance to Pakistan to strengthen its bilateral cooperation in the war against terror.

In spite of U.S. decision to assign a priority to Pakistan, the troubled track record of their past would continue to cast doubts about the endurance of the current relations. The anti-U.S. rhetoric of many political parties in Pakistan, especially the Islamic parties known for the linkages with the Taliban and sympathies for Al-Qaeda, reinforces misgivings about the credibility of U.S.-Pak relations.

In pursuit of the U.S. objectives in South Asia, the existing phase of U.S.-Pak bilateral relation has a greater strategic depth than in the past. The new geo-strategic realities like nuclear South Asia, energy security, counter-terrorism regime and economic pursuits (especially trade liberalism) cannot abate the significance of Pakistan in the regional and global politics (Safdar, 2011). Since 2001, the U.S. has provided Pakistan with more than \$11 billion in military aid, mainly intended to combat terrorism (Banerji, 2011). The Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act (EPPA), popularly known as the Kerry-Lugar-Berman Bill (KLB) after its sponsors in the U.S. Senate, was signed into

law by President Obama in October 2009. The EPPA was designed to triple the amount of U.S. aid to Pakistan to \$1.5 billion per year for five years. The purpose was to align that aid, more closely with U.S. and Pakistani priorities and impose new accountability mechanisms to reduce the chances that aid might be diverted from its intended use (Lamb, 2011).

The Pak-U.S. relationship has entered into an extremely complex stage after the operation Neptune Spear (the killing of Osama bin Laden), the case of Raymond Davis and other events of the same nature have deepened the apparent trust deficit between the two. Though, changes to U.S. policy particularly on security cooperation and foreign aid, have aligned the U.S. activities and programs more closely with strategic imperatives and local realities than they had been before 2009. However, these new policies and programmes are at their initial stages of implementation, and progress is expected to be subtle. For instance, it's unlikely that the U.S. can play anything more than a catalytic role in improving Pakistan's capacity for stabilization. Similarly, EPPA programmes have a chance of making small but effective contributions to both Pakistan's governance capacity and the U.S.-Pak relationship. Regardless of the complexity the benefits of continuing the relationship (through renewed measures) definitely outweigh the consequences of disengagement at this juncture (Ibid, 2011).

After 2001, the lowest ebb of U.S.-Pak relations could be marked after the operation Neptune Spear. The already problematic relationship between two has been further strained by a series of developments. Pakistan's reported arrest of several citizens for allegedly assisting the May 2011 raid by U.S. forces that killed Osama bin Laden and a surge in U.S. drone attacks that have killed suspected militants in Pakistan. It is against this backdrop Prime Minister Yousef Raza Gillani's visit to Beijing in May 2011 was viewed by many as an implicit response to a recent deterioration in U.S.-Pakistan ties (Bodeen, 2011).

### **Conclusion**

In the end we can conclude by saying that, the new decade of 1990's began with Islamabad's losing their chief strategic allies Washington. Pakistan seemed to ride the tide of history when minister of the state for economic affairs proudly reported to the press in 1991 about establishing diplomatic relations and formal contacts with the five CARs. The rhetoric that prevailed on the aftermath of post-Soviet collapse was the increasing geopolitical, geo-economic and geostrategic depth of CARs. Therefore, the key intention of Islamabad is to look avenues for cooperation in Afghan corridor as a transit route from CARs to its territorial sea as an ideological Islamic root. It is against this background Pakistan is visualizing its due role to play with certain liabilities and limitations considering it as of vital 'strategic depth' in the present century. The events of 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001 changed the whole context in which the developments in Pakistan were taking place. Despite the U.S. decision to assign a priority to its relations with Pakistan, the troubled track record of their relations in the past would continue to cast doubts about the endurance of the current Pakistan-U.S. relations. The anti-U.S. rhetoric of many political parties in Pakistan, especially the Islamic parties known for the linkages with the Taliban and sympathies for Al-Qaeda, reinforces misgivings about the credibility of Pakistan-U.S. relations. Pakistan's policy makers preferences for balance of power approach in inter-state relations has led them to seek and provide, military and political support from/to those countries that can serve as counter weights to Islamabad's perceived enemies and rivals. Whereas, the present condition of bilateral relations between India and Pakistan is one of suspicion, mistrust and hostility. Pakistan's geopolitical ambitions have also altered in view of the changing world order with China-Pakistan nexus in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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