US-PAKISTAN RELATIONS

AWAY FROM THE SHADOW OF GEOPOLITICS

Edited by
Sadia Sulaiman



US-Pakistan Relations

The US-Pakistan ties have historically fluctuated due to third-party involvement. A significant trust deficit has resulted from the lack of bilateral push in the relationships. Both the countries attempted to change the direction of their interaction after understanding this major issue in their relationship, particularly following the US pullout from Afghanistan in 2021. The book traces the troubled history of the US-Pakistan relationship and projects its future with an emphasis on issues beyond security that will bring the two countries' people closer together and bridge the trust gap.

Sadia Sulaiman is Assistant Professor at the Area Study Centre for Africa, North, and South America, at Quaid-i-Azam University in Islamabad, Pakistan. She earned her PhD from the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. Her areas of interest include post-conflict reconstruction, counter-terrorism, countering violent extremism, US Foreign Policy, diplomatic history, state fragility and governance reforms. She is the author of *Post-Conflict Reconstruction: From Extremism to Peaceful Co-Existence* and *CPEC and SDGs in Pakistan: Measuring Impact on Common Lives*. Dr. Sulaiman has wide experience of working as research consultant with UNDP, GIZ, DFID and King's College London.

This book is a deep dive into the multifaceted relationship between the US and Pakistan through the past seven decades. It traces its journey from its historical beginnings to the current times, tracing the turbulent realities, as also the geopolitical, social, and cultural factors that have shaped its interactions over the decades. The chapters offer well-researched, nuanced insights into soft issues such as cultural diplomacy, and the role of diaspora and academia among other issues. The volume will be of great interest to scholars and researchers of the US foreign policy, South Asian politics and international relations.

Lieutenant General, Khalid Ahmed Kidwai, *Founding Director General, Strategic Plans Division, Rawalpindi, Pakistan*

Sadia Sulaiman deserves to be congratulated for editing this excellent collection of Pakistani and American experts discussing relations between the two countries. Considering the political importance of Pakistan and the current tension inside and outside the country a collection like this which brings together such wise heads could not be more important.

Akbar Ahmed, *Distinguished Professor and Chair of Islamic Studies, American University and Global Fellow of the Wilson Center, Washington D.C.*

This book is not only timely but provides a totally fresh and engaging perspective on the US-Pakistan relations. The discussion in the book moves forward from short-term security interests under the complex geopolitical settings of the South Asian region that has historically marked the engagement between the two countries. It provides an insight into the possible future arenas of cooperation in areas such as climate change, health security, knowledge economy and entrepreneurial ecosystem between Washington and Islamabad – indeed a missed aspect of this relationship thoroughly explained in this book.

Zahid Hussain, *is an award-winning journalist and author of No-Win War: The Paradox of US-Pakistan Relations in Afghanistan's Shadow*

US-Pakistan Relations

Away from the Shadow of Geopolitics

Edited by Sadia Sulaiman

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Preface

In the era of globalization, very few bilateral relationships are as significant but complex as the US-Pakistan relationship. Their diplomatic ties span over more than seven decades that are characterized by regional dynamics, strategic imperatives and lack of bilateral thrust. The relationship is unique as its foundations are laid in the geopolitical priorities of both Washington and Islamabad rather than having a bilateral focus. This resulted in several highs and lows.

This edited volume seeks to delve into the multifaceted dimensions of US-Pakistan relations, analyzing their historical evolution, contemporary challenges, and future prospects. It is a collection of diverse perspectives and rigorous analyses of various aspects of the Islamabad – Washington interactions with each other. The volume starts with the analysis of the historical geopolitical complexities affecting the bilateral ties. It further goes deep down into geopolitics of China, India and Afghanistan's straps with the two countries. The volume, subsequently, explores key themes such as cooperation in the field of health security, climate change, knowledge economy, diversified economic ties, cultural exchanges, and the role of Pakistani diaspora in increasing people-to-people contact and affecting bilateral dynamics between Pakistan and the US. The book provides a comprehensive analysis and understanding of the navigation of their relationship in an increasingly complex global and regional landscape marred by traditional and non-traditional security concerns. From exploring the role of regional geopolitics and abundant influence of China, India and Afghanistan in shaping strategic interests to analyzing the implications of economic partnerships, each chapter contributes a unique lens to the broader tapestry of the US-Pakistan relations.

A unique feature of this volume is the combination of viewpoints of both the US and Pakistani academics and policy makers on this subject of utmost importance and hence maintaining a fair balance while projecting the future trajectory of the ties. Another unique feature of the book is to highlight some important features of the American polity that might interest the Pakistani academia and policy makers alike in assessing how the US models of democracy, human rights and diversity are relevant in the context of Pakistan's economic and political governance structures. This fresh analysis while

considering the limitations of geopolitics, identifies new areas of cooperation between the two countries.

It is anticipated that this book will serve as a valuable resource for academics, policymakers, and anyone interested in comprehending the intricacies of US-Pakistan relations, especially after President Donald Trump took office in January 2025. This book may help identify and resolve the US-Pakistan relationship's uncertainties. Most importantly, the book gives a timely guide to navigating this partnership despite geopolitical difficulties and hurdles for both the US and Pakistan. Finally, I wish to promote informed dialogue and international relations studies by highlighting the problems and opportunities of this vital cooperation.

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All the participants of the Conference and especially the authors deserve a special thanks. Your insightful essays, thorough research, and engaging writing have been the cornerstone of this book. Each chapter reflects your dedication and expertise. This book would not have been possible without your commitment and intellectual rigor. Thank you for bringing your unique perspectives and expertise to this work.

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Abbreviations

ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union
ALOC	Air Lines of Control
AR	Augmented Reality
ATX+PAK	Austin-Pakistan Entrepreneurship and Innovation Initiative
BHUs	Basic Health Units
B3W	Build Back Better World
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
CCAP	Community College Administrative Program
CCIP	Community College Initiative Program
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CENTO	Central Treaty Organization
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CMD	Chocolate Milk and Donuts
COO	Country of Origin
COR	Country of Residence
CPEC	China-Pakistan Economic Corridor
C/PVE	Countering/Preventing Violent Extremism
CPC	Communist Party of China
CSF	Coalition Support Fund
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
ECP	Election Commission of Pakistan
ETIM	East Turkestan Islamic Movement
EU	European Union
ESTWG	Education, Science and Technology Working Group
FANG	Facebook, Amazon, Netflix, Google (refers to the high-performing technology stocks)
FATF	Financial Action Task Force
FDA	Food and Drug Administration
FFIs	Foreign Financial Institutions
FLTA	Foreign Language Teaching Assistant
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
GAACC	Greater Austin Asian Chamber of Commerce
GDP	Gross Domestic Product

GKI	Global Knowledge Index
GLOC	Ground Lines of Communication
GHSA	Global Health Security Agenda
HE	Higher Education
HEC	Higher Education Commission
HEI	Higher Education Institute
IAC	Institute for Art and Culture
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMU	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence
ISKP	Islamic State Khorasan Province
IT	Information Technology
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
ISP	Internet Service Provider
JPMC	Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre
KE	Knowledge-Economy
KLB	Kerry-Lugar-Berman Act
LUMS	Lahore University of Management Sciences
LeT	Lashkar-e-Taiba
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCD	Non-communicable disease
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of nuclear weapons
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPIC	Overseas Private Investment Corporation
PECA	Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act
PDM	People's Democratic Movement
PITB	Punjab Information Technology Board
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PRC	People's Republic of China
QUAD	Quadrilateral Security Dialogue
R&D	Research and Development
RAW	Research and Analysis Wing
ROC	Republic of China (Taiwan)
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
SAPM	Special Assistant to the Prime Minister
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEATO	Southeast Asia Treaty Organization
SIGAR	Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction
SRAPS	Sindh Rural Access Project
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
SXSW	South by Southwest

TTP	Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan
TEA	Teaching Excellence and Achievement Program
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States
USEF	United States Educational Foundation in Pakistan
USIP	United States Institute of Peace
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WHO	World Health Organization

Introduction

Sadia Sulaiman

It has been more than seven decades that the United States (US) and Pakistan embarked on the journey of diplomatic ties. However, their relationship was often marred with uncertainty and a lack of trust, preventing it from remaining smooth. The major reason for the intense highs and lows in their ties was the unavoidable impact of the complex geopolitical dynamics in the South Asian region. Islamabad and Washington struggled to maintain a bilateral focus in their ties while balancing their respective relationship with India, China and Afghanistan at the same time. Pakistan's troubled neighborhood especially its strained relationship with India on the East and Afghanistan on the West greatly influenced Pakistan-US diplomatic ties. Pakistan's tilt toward China has always been viewed by both India and the US with unease and skepticism. Moreover, issues such as nuclear proliferation and terrorism, both with a regional geopolitical context, further resulted in strained ties between the two countries.

When the US withdrew from Afghanistan in August 2021, it was viewed as a 'window of opportunity' by both the countries to have more bilateral focus in their ties away from the burden of third party. It has been more than three years since US withdrew from Afghanistan, however both Islamabad and Washington are yet not certain about the course of their relationship. Having a long history of missed bilateral thrust in ties has left both grappled with uncertainty. At present there is no major issue that diverge their interest as in the past over the issues of nuclear proliferation and support to the Taliban in Afghanistan. However, they are still struggling to identify areas of mutual cooperation which span beyond counterterrorism, countering/preventing violent extremism (C/PVE) and security ties. There are several new issues that are affecting global security, such as climate change, food insecurity, water scarcity, health concerns, pandemic and so on. Both the US and Pakistan are struggling hard to adjust to these new global realities with a wide focus on human security and carve out modes of cooperation in all such areas.

While trying to reset their bilateral ties, both Islamabad and Washington are found struggling with new geopolitical realities of the region and beyond. Especially the consistently fluid US-China relations, India-China tensions,

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conflicts in Ukraine and Middle East after the Gaza war have all remained instrumental in shaping the course of the US-Pakistan relationship. Especially, Pakistan is found walking on tight rope while balancing two powers – the US and China - who maintain differing perspectives on regional and global issues and conflicts.

This book while taking a deep dive into the past track of the US-Pakistan relations which remained overshadowed by geopolitics, examines new areas of cooperation for a more bilateral focus in their ties. The book argues that the regional geopolitics would remain relevant and would continue to affect the US and Pakistan both, however for a long lasting and stable relationship they must focus more on bilateral content in their ties. They must identify areas of mutual cooperation along with improving people-to-people relationship. The book identifies climate change, health security, knowledge economy, investment in skilled Pakistani-American diaspora and entrepreneurial ecosystem as potential areas of cooperation between the two considering a global focus on these issues and especially in line with Pakistan's hard struggle and need for support in all these areas. Furthermore, the book explains socio-political and socio-cultural US analogies and experiences that are relevant for Pakistan. Such analogies are not only instrumental in helping Pakistan to cope with its worsening political and economic challenges, but analogies can also prove vital for incorporating a sense of belonging among the people of Pakistan and the US, hence paving the way for increased people-to-people contacts and subsequently improved diplomatic relationship. The niche point of the book is that it moves forward from the unifocal security-oriented debate and analyses the feasibility of a comprehensive bilateral relationship between the US and Pakistan discussing a wide range of issues and provides a fresh perspective on this bilateral relationship.

Within this context, the purpose of this book is threefold;

- Deliberate the past track of ties and see what Pakistan and the US can learn from that experience.
- Exploring and analyzing new avenues of cooperation between the two countries with a purpose of expanding bilateral cooperation.
- Analyzing political and cultural aspects of the American polity and see how Pakistan can learn from US experiences to drive itself out of current political and social chaos, especially in the realm of democracy, freedom, protection of human rights, management of cultural and religious diversity and rule of law.

Regional Geopolitics and US-Pakistan Relations: Historical Overview

The seven decades' journey of US-Pakistan bilateral ties is characterized with contentions, mistrust and an overwhelming focus on regional geopolitics.[1] When Pakistan got independence from the British Raj in August 1947, the US

was among the first ones to acknowledge the newly independent state. Pakistan's first Prime Minister, Liaqat Ali Khan (1950-1953) paid official visit to the US, first such trip by any of Pakistan's Prime Minister then. The trip officially made Pakistan part of the US bloc in comparison to Soviet Union and indeed it was a decisive moment to determine Pakistan's policy orientation during Cold War era.[2]

Multiple security and economic concerns of Pakistan such as possibility of Indian hegemony in the region, internal structural economic weaknesses, political uncertainty and belligerence by Afghanistan along with India, pushed Pakistan to be part of the US-led bloc. The US provided considerable military support to Pakistan. Both countries signed the Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement in 1954. The US aid witnessed peak in 1960s when Pakistan joined the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) in 1954 and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) in 1955.[3]

The 1965 and 1971 wars between India-Pakistan, however proved detrimental to that initial cooperation as the US did not meet the expectation of Pakistan, hence paving the way for perennial trust deficit between the two that still haunts their relationship.[4] In 1970s, after Pakistan started its nuclear weapons program and its relationship with China started to warm up, the US President Jimmy Carter (1977-1981) suspended most US aid in response to Pakistan's covert construction of a uranium enrichment facility.[5] Such moves by the US eventually strengthened the sense of abandonment in Pakistan which further got a stronghold after Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989. That shaky foundation in bilateral ties which was overshadowed by mistrust and suspicions further remained weak due to the influence of the other parties.

However, there were certain historical episodes in their ties which can be referred to as the honeymoon period. One such phase was when both the countries came closer during 1980s to counter Soviet Union in Afghanistan. That cooperation was not driven by their mutual interest rather by their own individual self-interests. Pakistan wanted a safe and secure Western border and economic and political assistance, and the US wanted Soviets to be defeated, hence both found it convenient to join hands. Once the US objective was achieved it did not bother neither about Afghanistan nor about Pakistan and left the region in a fragile transition at the cost of regional and global stability.[6]

The same story was repeated in the aftermath of 9/11, when the US needed Pakistan to oust al-Qaeda from Afghanistan and also to handle the Taliban regime there who gave protection to al-Qaeda and had ties with Islamabad. Pakistan at that time was struggling with the international isolation due to its support to the Afghan Taliban and nuclear program and found 9/11 as a golden opportunity to come out of international isolation, hence it joined the War on Terror in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, with fingers burned in Afghanistan in 1990s due to the US abandonment, Pakistan never trusted its ally. The US also paid least of an attention to Pakistan's sensitivities in

connection with Afghanistan and India being the bulwark of Pakistan's foreign policy orientation since decades.[7]

Upon assuming power in 2021, the Biden administration continued the legacy of President Donald Trump (2017-2021) in its relations with Pakistan. However, a new impetus has yet again been imparted to this relationship since the withdrawal of the US and NATO security forces from Afghanistan after the swift Taliban takeover on August 15, 2021. Despite the passage of over three years, the Taliban remain without any world recognition and the threat of terrorism and extremism is resurfacing in the region especially in Pakistan. However, it seems that Pakistan has lost its charm for its ally – the US. The relationship rather seems to be caught by some new emerging challenges.

For example, former Prime Minister Imran Khan's visit to Russia in February 2022, at a time when Russia started its annexation of Ukraine, raised concerns within the US. On the domestic front, the government of Imran Khan fell after a vote of no-confidence in April 2022. The former Prime Minister accused the US of meddling in the internal affairs of Pakistan and precipitating his downfall.[8] However, such allegations were turned down by the US. Relations indicated an upward trajectory after the Shahbaz Sharif government came into power in Pakistan in April 2022. Pakistan continued to struggle with the IMF bailout package and successfully exited the grey list of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in October 2022.[9] In September 2022, the US agreed to provide Pakistan USD 450 million sustainment package to maintain its aging F-16 aircraft.[10] David Blome was sent to Pakistan as the new ambassador in April 2022 to rekindle the relationship. However, it is yet to be seen when the relationship will revive with a new bilateral focus as President Trump's policies in his second term are yet to unfold towards Pakistan.

Missed Opportunities: Correcting the Course

Amidst this geopolitical adventurism, both the US and Pakistan paid little attention to strengthening their bilateral ties. The US used Pakistan for achieving its goals in South Asia during and after the Cold War. The cozy ties of China and Pakistan, however kept the US on its toes to let Pakistan totally go off its hands. To stabilize post-9/11 Afghanistan, the US gave Pakistan military aid under Coalition Support Fund – an instance of unifocal security-centric orientation of this relationship. The US has paid a lip service to Pakistan's stance on Kashmir and Durand Line – two major sources of Pakistan's troubled ties with India and Afghanistan respectively. However, Pakistan cannot be exempted from carrying the burden of failure to nurture smooth and long-lasting bilateral ties with the US. [11]

Pakistan always used the US to address its military and economic asymmetry with India. It further used the US shoulder to attain its objective of Strategic Depth in Afghanistan. The 1980s Afghan Jihad and post-Soviet withdrawal rise of the Taliban were handled by Pakistan with the vision to strengthen its hold over Afghan polity. The Strategic Depth approach of Pakistan is not a hidden fact, where it wanted to extend its area of influence

in Afghanistan to counterbalance its power asymmetry with India.[12] Post-9/11, the US caution of "with us or against us" undoubtedly pushed the then President Pervaiz Musharaf to side with the US in its War on Terror. For example, Richard Armitage warned that if Pakistan did not help Washington, the US would bomb Pakistan "back to the Stone Age."[13]

However, having experienced the US abandonment in the aftermath of Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, Pakistan maintained a double policy of siding with the US and their foes the Taliban at the same time. The triumph of the Taliban in Afghanistan in August 2021 was extensively celebrated in Pakistan, pointing toward the attainment of desired Strategic Depth.[14] Similarly, Pakistan's security calculations viz India always made Islamabad wary of cozy ties between India and the US. Pakistan always expected preferential treatment by the US in comparison to India while turning a blind eye toward the strength of bilateral US-India ties.[15]

With this backdrop, the recent efforts to reset the bilateral ties is crucial for both the US and Pakistan, requiring a careful review of the policy interests and priorities between the two countries. There is equally a need to bring forth the commonalities between the American and Pakistani people and their associated socio-cultural contexts so as to develop a sense of belonging toward each other for having long lasting and comprehensive ties.

There are five core areas that need to be explored to add bilateral content to the Islamabad-Washington ties: climate change, health security, knowledge economy, encouragement of entrepreneurial ecosystem and investment in skilled Pakistani-American diaspora. All these issues are comparatively new for discussion in policy and academic circles in both the countries. However, their significance in the contemporary global context cannot be ignored. For example, climate change is a huge global issue at the moment and Pakistan has witnessed the impacts of climate change in 2022 when it was hit by monsoon flooding. Similarly, health security has been prioritized in global policy debates after the Covid-19 pandemic. The contentious approach of President Trump towards these issues, however, remains a source of concern within Pakistan's policy circles.

Moreover, there is a focus especially in Pakistan to diversify its economic relationship with the US. Therefore, there is a need to identify less explored but potential areas of economic cooperation that would serve the purpose of prosperity at grass root level inside Pakistan as it is faced with immense economic crisis due to soaring external debt burden. The book therefore focuses on unconventional areas of economic cooperation such as knowledge economy using the case study of the US Fulbright program; the role that can be played by Pakistani-American software developers who have huge potential to uptick Pakistan's economic orientation and lastly the focus on entrepreneurial ecosystems which can give boost to small businesses across Pakistan. All these areas have barely attracted scholarly attention in the literature on the US-Pakistan relations. This book takes a leap forward to fill this gap and provides a detailed analysis of these issues and their potential in adding more bilateral content to the US-Pakistan ties.

The US Analogies and Experiences: Relevance for Pakistan

The historical analogies, however contested, play a significant role in any country's foreign and domestic policy making.[16] The correct extent of historical analogies can bring about positive results in policy domain. Similarly, it has been a common practice where historical analogies are being used by statesmen to justify their actions in international relations. The most recent example can be of the US and UK use of Nazi Germani example to invade Iraq – bringing out similarities between Hitler and Saddam Hussain. Another example is the use of Vietnam analogy in the context of post-9/11 war in Afghanistan.

In the context of Pakistan-US relationship the use of US historical analogies can prove instrumental in enhancing people-to-people contacts and subsequently improve the trust issues between the two. This is a totally ignored aspect in the literature on the US-Pakistan relations. It is a fact that the US and Pakistan are totally different countries situated in two different far apart continents, with different demographic, political, economic and cultural settings. However, there are certain aspects of the US polity in historical context which can prove beneficial for Pakistan to be used as analogy to cope with the current political and socio-economic crisis in the country.

In this regard, the US experience of dealing with the issue of polarization in social, cultural and political context can be useful for carving a way out of the current political polarization in Pakistan which is resulting in instability in the country. Within this context, looking into the history of the US and finding similarities would serve the purpose of better ties between Islamabad and Washington. Moreover, Pakistan can look into historical phases of transformation in US polity to seek guidance on how to navigate through this challenging phase of instability in the country.

The American Civil War (1861-1865) was a major event in the history of the US, paving the way for the American values to play a key role in the global political theatre. The Revolution of 1776-1783 resulted in the creation of the US and the Civil War of 1861-1865 determined what kind of nation it would be in future. The war resolved two fundamental questions left unresolved by the revolution: whether the US was to be a dissolvable confederation of sovereign states or an indivisible nation with a sovereign national government; and whether this nation, born of a declaration that all men were created with an equal right to liberty, would continue to exist as the largest slaveholding country in the world. Northern victory in the war preserved the United States as one nation and ended the institution of slavery that had divided the country from its beginning.[17] With this the world witnesses the rise of a new and powerful nation both internally and externally with strong values explained in American Exceptionalism.[18] Multiculturalism and diversity have been an evolving social reality of the US since centuries. America's struggle against the racial injustice and racial discrimination have although remained a point of criticism nevertheless, one cannot ignore the triumph of equality and participation as beacon of American polity.

Pakistan in the past few years is going through a challenging phase due to its economic and political instability and persistent security concerns owing to political polarization at home along with spillover impacts of instability in neighboring Afghanistan. Pakistan needs comprehensive governance reforms in all fields to break this vicious cycle of fragility.[19] There is no denial of the fact that in terms of political and economic stability there can be no match of the US political and economic governance system. Abraham Lincon once stated, "A state divided against itself cannot stand."[20] Such motivation and focused policy approaches to bring the house in order are needed by Pakistan's leadership and people alike, where they need to stand united in the best interest of Pakistan. Therefore, understanding historical examples of excellence in governance from the US can prove beneficial for Pakistan.

Similarly, the US role in the domestic politics of Pakistan has been widely discussed and criticized. The recent episode of Pakistan's former Prime Minister, Imran Khan blaming the US for conspiracy to overthrow his government in 2022 is a case in point. Another example can be of the US drone strikes where it is widely believed that such attacks have violated Pakistan's sovereignty.

Such focus on US violation of Pakistan's sovereignty proved endemic for the relationship between Islamabad and Washington due to massive anti-Americanism in Pakistan and distancing people from each other. If both the countries want to come out of the security centric focus and intend to rejuvenate their ties the first step would be to restore people's confidence on both the sides through improved people-to-people contacts. Moreover, both the US and Pakistan have had difference in perspectives regarding issues of global concern such as terrorism, economic aid, human rights and freedom of expression. For instance, there has been huge misunderstanding about the US culture of aid and assistance and bar of expectations always remains high in Pakistan whenever it comes to the US financial assistance. People and government both are found to be expecting a lot from the US and when it does not come at par with the expectation it further widens the trust deficit.

To mitigate such challenges, myth bursting on both the sides is necessary through understanding the system in which they operate. The focus on historical political and social experiences and drawing out commonalities between the two countries can be a very strong component of public diplomacy with the objective of eroding trust deficit and developing a better understanding about each other. While realizing the importance of such narratives about commonality on public opinion on both sides, this book takes a first step in the direction of exploring some political and social analogies in the US that can prove relevant for Pakistan. The electoral politics, freedom of expression, cultural inclusion, respect for multiculturalism and protection of human rights are some subjects that are discussed with the aim of myth bursting on both sides and igniting commonality of perspectives on some pressing issues in the global context.

US-Pakistan Ties: Analytical Construct

The US-Pakistan relationship has been discussed and analyzed from the analytical lenses of geopolitics primarily, with a least of a focus on detailed discussion of areas that can enhance their bilateral interaction especially at people-to-people level. There is another segment of literature that discusses the role of Pakistan military and other security concerns especially nuclear proliferation, terrorism and security aid by the US to Pakistan.[21] This book while concentrating on the past also explores the future trajectory of the bilateral US-Pakistan ties. For this purpose, the following 'Four-Ps Framework', unique to this study, helps in analyzing the past, present and future of this unique relationship in a systematic manner. The following Table 0.1 provides a snapshot of the framework, followed by detailed description of each P:

Table 0.1 Four-Ps Framework to Analyze the US-Pakistan Relationship

Pillar	*Features*	*Historical Course*	*Future Trajectory – Areas of Cooperation*	*Impact on Bilateral Ties*
Prioritization	• More bilateral focus in ties with clearly defined areas of cooperation	Priority was regional geopolitics and associated security concerns	• Clarity of vision regarding foreign policy options and available resources • More focus on comprehensive bilateral ties	Improvement in Bilateral Ties
Partnership	• Respect for equality and sovereignty	Pakistan's sense of being treated as an unequal partner	Treating each other as equal partners not as "Kleenex"	Restoration of Trust
Participation	• Incorporating popular perspective in policy response	Ignoring it as an element of Soft Power – resulting in anti-Americanism	More people-t-people interactions to clear the fog - Trust building avenues	Acceptance of each other's perspectives and limitations – hence improvement in ties
Persistence	• Projection of sustainable relationship	Short-term objectives with reference to evolving regional situation	Comprehensive bilateral ties with popular support tend to stay longer	Erosion of sense of abandonment – more trust building

Prioritization

It has been a desolate fact that throughout its history, the trajectory of the US-Pakistan relationship has been adjusted due to any third party's particular situation or circumstances. It was hardly a priority in both Islamabad and Washington to engage each other on bilateral basis. Similarly, the policy prioritization was done in line with the regional and global security imperatives. After the US withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021, the regional geopolitical scenario has changed considerably and so are the priorities in both the US and Pakistan policy calculus. The Afghan theatre has lost a central position for the US and now China is being treated as a priority strategic concern. Similarly, Pakistan also moved its focus away from geopolitics to more geo-economic orientation in its foreign policy while maintaining a fair balance between its economic and security priorities on the one hand and between the US and China on the other hand. This shift in geostrategic priorities makes this timeframe a ripe moment for both the US and Pakistan to outline their priorities toward each other with a more bilateral focus in the direction to achieve them.

Partnership

It is essential to recognize that perceptions of equality in international relations are often influenced by a combination of historical factors, strategic interests, and diplomatic dynamics rather than a simple measure of formal equality. One important aspect of the US-Pakistan relationship is the constant complaint by Pakistan to be treated as a junior partner not as an equal sovereign state. The famous phrase, "You Americans have discarded Pakistan like a piece of used Kleenex"[22] accurately explains the sentiments on Pakistan's side. This sense or perception of inequality prevails in Pakistan due to several reasons. First and foremost is the overall context of the relationship between the two countries, where Pakistan always felt that the US has used it for its short-term strategic interests in the region like the one during War on Terror. Similarly, the US preferential treatment to India is always viewed by Pakistan as an act of undermining Islamabad's security concerns in the region. Top diplomatic visit with a clear tilt toward India has further created this inferiority complex in Islamabad. Such feelings can be a result of inflated expectations from the US as well, where Pakistan viewed itself as more important and always considered itself to be of more usage to the US.

Certain US strategies have also given rise to such sentiments, for example, the US drone strikes inside Pakistani territory were viewed as an attack by the US on a country's sovereignty.[23] The US way of conducting the drone strikes with secrecy and at times not informing Pakistan about the time and targets of the attacks effectively eroded its authority over its airspace.[24] The US drone strikes are a major source of anti-Americanism in Pakistan.

Moreover, the provision of aid by the US to Pakistan also posed challenges to sovereignty. The Kerry-Lugar-Berman Act, enacted in 2009, authorized civilian aid to Pakistan but included conditions related to human rights, democratic governance, and nuclear proliferation, which were perceived by general public as an assault on Pakistan's freedom and sovereignty by the US.[25] The stakeholders on both the sides need to pay attention to this very factor of equal partnership to avoid future rifts.

Participation

The power of people's sentiments and perspective has increased manifold since the influence and use of social media in shaping the public opinion and its role in policy analysis. Pakistan and the US both had image issues – the US has been viewed as power with selfish self-interest among Pakistanis and people in the US viewed Pakistan as a backward conservative country plagued with menace of terrorism who does not hesitate to spread this menace across the world.

Pew Research and Gallup Survey reports showed highly critical views of Pakistanis about the US. Pew Research in 2012 showed that 74 percent considered the US as an enemy[26] which revealed the dilemma of trust deficit between the two countries. In another such poll survey in 2007, hardly 15 percent of Pakistanis had a positive view of the US. Moreover, despite being affected by terrorism, Pakistanis "overwhelmingly opposed the US-led efforts to fight terrorism — six-in-ten (59 percent) oppose America's anti-terror campaign, while only 13% back it."[27] Pakistanis also viewed negatively "the American efforts to encourage democracy in their country — 57 percent believe the US only promotes democracy when it serves its interests, and 72 percent say they dislike American ideas about democracy."[28]

Such negative image is a result of unifocal security orientation in their ties and lack of focus on enhancing people-to-people contacts between the two countries. Pakistan's 60 percent of the population comprises of youth bulge and their opinion and perspective is very relevant in policy domains due to their access to social media. This youth bulge is looking for an equal partnership with the US where the later should respect the sovereignty of Islamabad. Moreover, the American public want Pakistan to be honest in its ties with the US. There is a need to increase people-to-people contact at students, women and business levels. Especially the role of social media is crucial in this regard to bring both the countries closer to each other The participation by the multiple stakeholders at public and private level has remained limited, therefore both the US and Pakistan could not develop bilateral focus in their ties. Such participation, especially at popular level, is essential to address the trust issues between the two countries.

Persistence

Last but not the least, both the countries suffered due to their short-term policies toward each other. Both of them remained engaged in the pursuit of

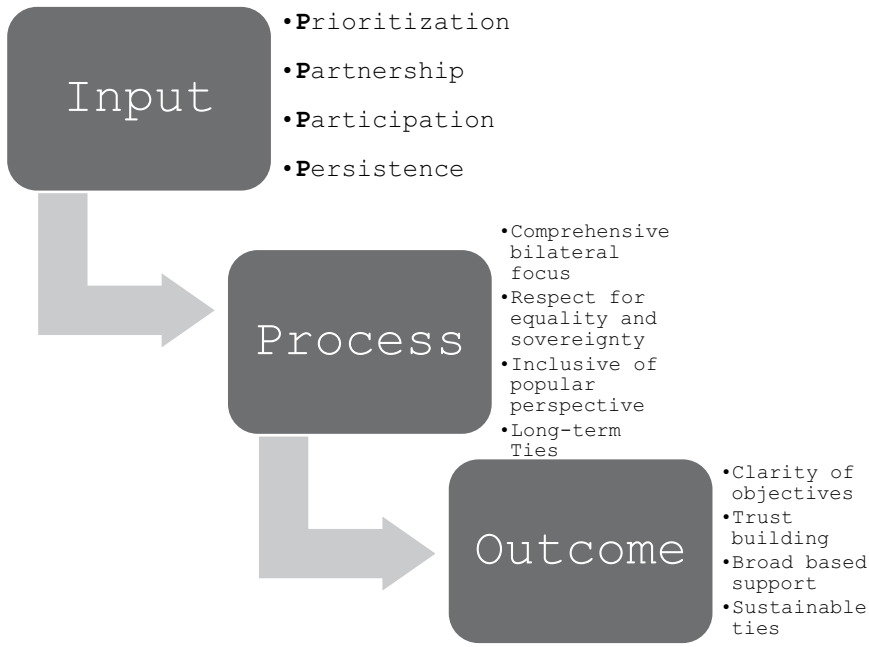


Figure 0.1 Four-Ps in Bilateral US-Pakistan Ties

short-term objectives and that primarily not in the bilateral context. For example, when the US was in the final phase of the withdrawal from Afghanistan, in response to a journalist question in India, Wendy Sherman, the deputy secretary of state, stated that her trip to Pakistan was aimed at accomplishing a 'specific and narrow purpose' — referring to Afghanistan.[29] Such short-term vision on part of Washington especially gave rise to suspicions in Islamabad and led toward further deepening the trust deficit between the two. Hence, there is a need for broad-based and comprehensive relationship with people's involvement and support in order to make them persistent in long run.

About the Book

The book is divided into five parts to discuss the history of the US-Pakistan relations, the geopolitical essence of the ties with China, Afghanistan and India, the US political and cultural analogies, new areas of bilateral cooperation and possible future trajectory of their ties.

Part I of the book takes thematic dive into the historical evolution of ties between the US and Pakistan in Cold War and post-9/11 context when the relationship was overwhelmed by the regional geopolitics. Michael Kugelman discusses the sharpest focus on the interplay between bilateral relations and

broader geopolitics and he thematically looks at the relationship through four primary country-specific lenses that have shaped it over the last 75 years: The Soviet Union, Afghanistan, India, and China. Aizaz Ahmed Chaudhry carry forward the debate and analyses the intricacies of post-9/11 events and their impact on the US-Pakistan relationship. He argues that the ties, despite enduring setbacks, remained intact due to unintentional focus on the people-to-people contacts between the two countries.

The part II of the book goes deep down into the discussion of US-Pakistan ties with China, Afghanistan and India. Nadeem Riyaz and Nabila Jaffar provides an overview of US-China relationship and Pakistan's delicate balancing act to maintain cordial ties with both the competing powers. Huma Baqai explores the impact of Afghan factor on Pakistan-US ties. Syed Hussain Shaheed Soherwordi and Saira Aquil looks into the complexity of India-US-Pakistan triangular relationship. The authors agree that the Chinese, Afghan and Indian factors have remained dominant in shaping the contours of this relationship and expressed their concern over haunting memories of the past untrustworthiness which does not allow US and Pakistan to identify common grounds to take a fresh start in their ties.

To overcome this dilemma, the book in its part III discusses important US political and cultural analogies to assess their relevance in the context of Pakistan and to identify shared problems and experiences to ignite the feeling of belonging and oneness on both the sides especially at people-to-people level. This section is a blend of academic analysis on the one hand and personal experiences of the authors on the other. Kenneth Holland elaborates the features of freedom of expression, freedom of media, protection of human rights and rule of law in the US polity and explores how such rules can find a way in Pakistani politics. Nasir Jamal and Ayesha Siddiqa narrate their cultural experiences while interacting in the American society to assess and suggest ways and means of the use of American experiences of addressing cultural diversity in the US as an analogy to address the same issue of socio-political polarization in Pakistan that has ethnic, linguistic and religious essence. Steve Hall provides an understanding about the US priorities and way of providing economic aid and assistance to countries in the need. Such understanding about the US way of doing things is very important for Islamabad to be pragmatic in its expectations from Washington.

After setting the stage for "Moving Forward" by identifying crucial commonalities between the US and Pakistani polities, the part IV of the book discusses crucial new areas of cooperation, other than security and geopolitics, between the two countries. It starts with the discussion on cooperation in the field of health security and climate change by Sadia Sulaiman and Mustansar Klasra under the domain of human security. Aayesha Siddiqa, using the US Fulbright Program as an example, explore how both the countries can enhance their cooperation in the field of knowledge economy. Saira Aquil explores a relatively new area and source of cooperation between Islamabad and Washington when she debates the importance of Pakistani-American software

developers in fostering economic cooperation between the two countries. She points out important limitations for engaging such highly skilled Pakistani diaspora for the benefit of improving people-to-people ties between the US and Pakistan. Alicia Dean yet move forward the debate and shares her own personal experience as a founder of entrepreneurial ecosystem in fostering economic collaboration at the gross root level between the US and Pakistan.

The book ends (Part V) with a thorough discussion of possible and prevalent challenges especially the heavy influence of the geopolitics on the US-Pakistan relationship. Within this context the challenges arising from the evolving difficulties in China-US relations, Pakistan-Afghanistan interaction and India -US ties have been discussed by both Hassan Abbas and Sadia Sulaiman. They put emphasis on the need to find more bilateral content by both the US and Pakistan as the geopolitics would stay relevant perhaps forever. The book provides a way forward using 'Four Ps' Framework', unique to this study, by setting up clear 'Priorities', ensuring 'Partnership' on the basis of mutual respect and equality, consideration for the 'Participation' by diverse factions of society with emphasis upon incorporating youth perspective and public opinion and guaranteeing a 'Persistent' bilateral relationship with more long-lasting impact.

Notes

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Part I

History of US-Pakistan Relations


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1 Geopolitical Paradoxes in the US-Pakistan Relations

Michael Kugelman

While regional dynamics have evolved considerably since 1947, some contemporary South Asian geopolitical storylines that animate US-Pakistan relations today and in recent years are rooted in the relationship's early days. These include the convergence of interests between the US and India over China, with problematic implications for US-Pakistan relations; allegations of deception that Washington and Islamabad have levelled at each other in reaction to events in other countries; and a US-Pakistan alliance that has endured—albeit with multiple interruptions—despite Washington's efforts to strengthen ties with India. Indeed, despite the significant changes in Washington's relations with Islamabad and its neighbors over the years and frequent tensions in US-Pakistan relations, Pakistan is still the only country in South Asia to have a long military alliance with the US since Pakistan's independence. This long military alliance is arguably a result of policy interests but also of the solid person-to-person ties between military officers from both countries cultivated by many years of Pakistani military personnel spending time at US training academies and, to a lesser extent, American officers spending time at Pakistani military training facilities.[1]

This chapter offers a historical survey of US-Pakistan relations against regional and global geopolitics. To provide the sharpest focus on the interplay between bilateral relations and broader geopolitics, a thematic—not chronological—approach looks at the relationship through four primary country-specific lenses that have shaped it over the last 75 years: The Soviet Union, Afghanistan, India, and China. These four countries have had major impacts on the trajectory of the relationship between what Dennis Kux, author of a well-regarded book on how Pakistan and the US navigated these geopolitical factors over their history, calls "disenchanted allies".[2] The paper asserts that the more things have changed over the last 75 years, the more they've stayed the same. There has been ample continuity in how regional dynamics have impacted bilateral relations. The paper also aims to explode some myths about geopolitical impacts on US-Pakistan relations, from the idea that the two had a continuously warm relationship during the Cold War (they did not) to the contention that the China-Pakistan partnership constrained more significant US-Pakistan ties (that has not always been the case)

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The Soviet Lens: Cold War Alliance with A Catch

One might argue that US-Pakistan relations were excellent during the Cold War, as the two formed an alliance against communism and partnered in bilateral and multilateral efforts to counter the Soviets. This is true to a great extent; ample cooperation helped create an environment for warm people-to-people relations that would become a hallmark of bilateral relations. During the Cold War years, for example, Washington launched its prestigious Fulbright Scholarship program in Pakistan (it would become the largest of any Fulbright country programs). American tourists flocked to the country, including along the border with Afghanistan.[3] Lahore even hosted Hollywood stars Ava Gardner and Stewart Granger when they filmed a movie there called *Bhowani Junction*.[4] But the broader truth is a bit more nuanced. Soon after independence, Pakistan's government sought a Cold War partnership with the US, but initially, Washington was reluctant to commit. Back then, it did not view South Asia as a key Cold War battleground, and at that early point in the Cold War, it was focused on post-World War Two recovery efforts.[5]

Of course, the US did eventually come around. The two countries would partner operationally in Afghanistan by supporting the *Mujahideen* (Holy Warriors) forces fighting the Soviet occupation, resulting in extensive military and intelligence cooperation. They would also participate in several multilateral anticommunism alliances, known as the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) — though the US was not a formal member of CENTO, and both SEATO and CENTO failed to last more than a few decades.[6] The early Cold War period also produced one of the first crises for US-Pakistan relations—one that had the hallmarks of the type of tiffs that would bedevil US-Pakistan relations in more recent years. In the late 1950s, the US set up surveillance activities at the Badaber base in Peshawar, and the CIA depended heavily on it to monitor the Soviet Union. This set the stage for a dramatic the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the US crisis. In 1960, an American U-2 spy plane took off from Badaber to survey the USSR and was shot down. That incident plunged US-USSR relations into deep tensions, but US-Pakistan relations also took a hit (as did Islamabad's relations with Moscow). The Soviets threatened to use force against Pakistan for its role in the incident, thereby dragging Islamabad into a Cold War crisis that it much preferred to avoid. Some within the Pakistani military accused the US of being deceptive by not informing Islamabad about the U-2 mission. Badaber would be closed in 1970.[7]

This kind of story of US spy craft in Pakistan, and the angry reactions in Pakistan provoked by it, would, of course, take on more prominence many decades later after 9/11 especially—from virulent public opposition to drone strikes and the controversy over the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) contractor Raymond Davis to the outcry that followed the revelation that the CIA used a fake vaccination campaign to help track down Osama Bin Laden.

And yet, the first example of this type of crisis happened barely a decade after Pakistan's independence and the formal establishment of US-Pakistan relations.

A Soviet Lens with an Indian Shadow

One must also consider how India influenced US-Pakistan relations during the Cold War. Did Pakistan join SEATO and CENTO to partner with the US on anti-communism? To an extent, yes. But Islamabad also joined those alliances to gain more support from the other alliance members for Pakistan's position on India and to strengthen Pakistan's capacity (through arms and additional military assistance) to deter perceived threats from India.[8] Similarly, Washington's desire to partner with Islamabad was fueled by shared concerns about the Soviets and about India's role in the nonaligned movement (NAM), especially the Indian friendship with the Soviet Union that emerged and strengthened starting in the early 1970s.

The Afghanistan Lens: Cooperation and Contention

From 1979 to 2021, the US government frequently pursued relations with Pakistan through the lens of Afghanistan—a source of cooperation and contention in US-Pakistan relations.[9] Regarding cooperation, the US and Pakistan worked closely to back the anti-Soviet *Mujahideen* forces. Much later, in the immediate post-9/11 era, in 2004, the US and Pakistan established a new counterterrorism alliance focused on combating al-Qaeda and part of a broader effort to work together in the US-led war in Afghanistan.[10] In more recent years, despite tensions over Afghanistan, the two continued to find ways to cooperate. For example, the US and Pakistan were part of several multilateral groupings, such as the Troika Plus, that focused on regional diplomacy in Afghanistan. Pakistan helped the US secure the release of an American hostage, Caitlan Coleman (and her Canadian husband and their three children), from Taliban captivity, in 2017. In 2018, Donald Trump asked Imran Khan to help bring the Taliban to the table for the US to launch negotiations over a withdrawal deal, resulting in an invitation to visit Washington and meet with President Trump at the White House.[11]

But there were also many cases of contention over Afghanistan. The US departure, following the withdrawal of Soviet forces in 1989, would give rise to one of the more powerful Pakistani narratives impacting US-Pakistan relations, which has endured for several decades: The notion of abandonment that the US is pleased to cast Pakistan aside when its interests call for it to do so (several Pakistani leaders over the years, including most recently Imran Khan, have used the colorful metaphor of treating Pakistan like tissue paper).[12] And, of course, a major source of US-Pakistan tensions over the last 20 years was the Taliban issue and the widely held view in Washington that Pakistan was supporting the very actor that the US military was fighting.

When the Taliban re-took power in 2021, and then-Prime Minister Imran Khan responded that Afghans had broken the shackles of slavery, the comment was not received well in Washington.[13] For many US officials, it amplified many years of frustration about what the US perceived as consistent Pakistani support for the Taliban. In Pakistan, by contrast, after the Taliban re-took power, there was frustration that Washington was unwilling to acknowledge its policy failures in Afghanistan—and a wide range of scholarship in recent years had laid out those US failures very clearly[14]—and instead chose to scapegoat Pakistan.

From a US perspective, the Afghan lens applied to the relationship with Pakistan was sharp and constant. Even when it may have seemed like the US was looking to deepen its ties with Pakistan for the sake of the relationship itself, there was often an underlying Afghanistan-focused motivation. The Kerry Lugar Berman bill, which tripled civilian assistance to Pakistan, and the US-Pakistan strategic dialogue, which established a wide range of topics to focus on for cooperation on high levels (most of the issues were non-security focused), both emerged around the time of the US troop surge in Afghanistan. With both initiatives, one of Washington's goals was to help strengthen democracy and civilian institutions in Pakistan. But another motivation was to build more trust and goodwill with Islamabad in the hope that the US would get more support from Pakistan in Afghanistan and that Islamabad would better align its policies in Afghanistan with those of Washington.[15] Fittingly, the Strategic Dialogue became a casualty of US-Pakistan tensions in Afghanistan. It was suspended for several years after the Salala incident in November 2011 when North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) - US gunships in Afghanistan killed 24 Pakistani border troops.

The India Lens: Hyphenation And Dehyphenation

India played a recurring and complicated role in US-Pakistan relations for decades. Much like the US-Pakistan relationship was not all good during the Cold War, the US-India relationship was not all bad. Especially during the first few decades of the Cold War, US-India relations were at times quite cordial and resulted in US actions that worked against Pakistan's interests. In another case of a trend that would play out again many years later, the US did not let its alliance with Pakistan prevent it from engaging closely with India. And a big reason for this engagement, as explained later in this paper, was China. In 1959, President Eisenhower visited India significantly and was highly critical of China. Thanks to recent scholarship, we now know that a few years later, in 1962, the US supported India militarily in its war against China—and even warned Pakistan to stay out of the war. It's a remarkable thing to contemplate, even now, many decades later: Sixty years ago, long before any talk about US-India strategic partnership and long before Washington and New Delhi initiated a robust defense relationship, the US was militarily supporting India in a war against China. Only in the early

1970s did the US-India relationship take a big tumble, opening up more opportunities for US-Pakistan cooperation. As detailed later in this paper, a big reason for that change was the 1971 war that resulted in Bangladesh's independence.

The US, in more recent years, since the George W. Bush administration, has sought to de-hyphenate its relationships with India and Pakistan—in other words, treat the US relationships with both countries on their separate terms, without looking at India and Pakistan through the lens of the India-Pakistan relationship.[16] And this did play out, to a considerable degree, with the US scaling up its ties with India in a big way, driven mainly by shared interests in countering terrorism and later in countering China. This is why New Delhi has preferred the US de-hyphenation policy—it has enabled the US and India to scale up their relationship while avoiding issues that Pakistan would have liked the US to focus on more—none more so than the Kashmir dispute. However, there have been at least two notable areas where the US de-hyphenation policy has not been held over the last decade or so.

One example was the message from President Trump on Kashmir in 2019. Several times (both before and after India's revocation of the special autonomous status of India-administered Kashmir in August of that year), President Trump offered to mediate between India and Pakistan on the Kashmir dispute. That's not typically an offer made by the US government, and certainly not in more recent decades. It bears noting, however, that in at least one offer, he said he would mediate only if both sides asked him to do so—and India, which seeks not to internationalize the dispute, would not make such a request.[17]

Another example where US de-hyphenation didn't hold was with terrorism—and in this case, India benefited. The US and Pakistan signed a counterterrorism alliance after the 9/11 attacks, mainly to target al-Qaeda. But US-India cooperation began coalescing around counterterrorism as well, especially as there were several terrorist groups based in Pakistan that greatly concerned the US and India—and none more so than Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT). The 2008 Mumbai attacks by LeT killed six Americans, prompting the US to ramp up its intelligence activities in Pakistan.[18] And this provoked one of the most severe crises for US-Pakistan relations—the one involving Raymond Davis, a CIA contractor who shot and killed two people in Lahore and was arrested by Pakistani authorities before being released following heavy and difficult US-Pakistan diplomacy. Why was Raymond Davis in Pakistan? He was working with other CIA personnel to gather information on LeT. This was a case where the US-India partnership impacted Pakistan, and the US-Pakistan relationship, in a significant and deleterious way.[19]

The China Lens: Two Contrasting Case Studies, One Major Competition

China was a notable driver of US policy in South Asia in decades past, well before US-China competition had reached its current level of intensity and

well before Washington's policy toward broader South Asia started to develop the China-focused lens that it is increasingly taking on today. The China factor in US policy can be explained by briefly examining two case studies: The US position on the 1962 India-China war and its position on the 1971 conflict.

US Backs India in the 1962 India-China War

In 1962, when India and China were at war, the US stepped in to help New Delhi with military aid. A 2017 book by Bruce Reidel, *JFK's Forgotten Crisis*, brings fascinating new insights about the US's role in this conflict.[20] The Kennedy administration airlifted weapons and other supplies and even arranged to send a naval vessel into the Bay of Bengal to show solidarity with India. Even more remarkable, according to Reidel, Washington pushed Pakistan to stay out of the conflict and warned that Pakistan's involvement would be an act of war. What drove the John F Kennedy administration, so soon after emerging from the Cuban Missile Crisis—one of the biggest foreign policy crises in American history—to take the dramatic step of militarily backing India, a country that was nowhere near being an ally? And why did Washington warn Pakistan, a US ally, not to get involved in the war? Kennedy was, in fact, mindful of the growing rivalry between the two Asian giants, China and India, and he wanted India to come out on top. China, at that time, was closely aligned with the Soviets and was a bitter rival of America. The US had also recently fought Chinese forces in the Korean War. Kennedy's sentiment was similar to that of Eisenhower, whose visit to India in 1959 was rooted in a desire to see India triumph in its competition with China.[21] India lost the 1962 war, which prompted the Kennedy administration to provide more military aid to India to strengthen its capacity to deter Beijing—though New Delhi also turned to the Soviet Union for assistance.[22]

US Backs Pakistan in the 1971 War

The Sino-Soviet split happened in 1969. This created an opening for the US and China to explore opening up formal relations. "Ping pong diplomacy," which entailed American table tennis players visiting China in April 1971, became a critical confidence-building measure. Henry Kissinger, the US national security advisor, visited China in July 1971, a trip that got Washington and Beijing even closer to a breakthrough in relations. The Nixon administration was determined to pursue a better relationship with China and wanted to use Pakistan as an intermediary for opening relations with China. And this is why the US would side with Pakistan, not India, in the 1971 war, which broke out in December of that year. Consequently, the Nixon administration did not call out Pakistan for its brutal actions in the war. Nixon would famously send an aircraft carrier, the *USS Enterprise*, into the Bay of Bengal as a show of force.[23]

In sum, the US took diametrically different positions on two various Cold War-era South Asian conflicts that happened less than a decade apart. Two different US presidents opted to send aircraft carriers into the Bay of Bengal as a show of support—but the first time, it was meant to support India, and the second time in support of Pakistan and, by extension China. (The 1962 India-China war would end before the aircraft carrier had to be dispatched to the Bay of Bengal, but Kennedy had given his full assent for a vessel to sail there.) It bears noting that in contrast to the 1962 and 1971 wars, Washington took a more neutral position on the third major South Asian war of the 1960s, the 1965 India-Pakistan war over Kashmir, with the Lyndon Johnson administration supporting The United Nations (UN) led efforts toward de-escalation.[24]

Growing US-China Competition

In recent years, US-China competition and rivalry have picked up, which has imposed constraints on US-Pakistan relations, given Pakistan's close partnership with Beijing. For example, the leading US policy in Asia in recent years, with strong bipartisan support in Washington, is the Indo-Pacific Policy. It was announced during the Trump administration and has been fully endorsed and continued by the Biden administration.[25] The policy is meant to counter Chinese power, leaving Pakistan, a close partner of China, on the outside looking in. However, it is notable that, even as US-China competition has heated up over the last decade, there has been some space for US-China-Pakistan cooperation. This was seen in Afghanistan, where the US, Pakistan and China have comprised the Troika Plus grouping with Russia. There has also been some, though admittedly not much, US private sector support for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Over the last few years, the US government made clear that it was keen to find ways to work with Pakistan, despite the geopolitical constraints of US-China competition and China-Pakistan partnership. One example is the speech on CPEC that Alice Wells, then a top State Department official, made at the Wilson Center in 2019.[26] The address did not go well in Pakistan or China because it was harshly critical of CPEC and China's investment model.[27] However, many people remember the first part of the speech, which featured all the criticism, and not the second part of the speech, where Wells made a detailed pitch for more US investment in Pakistan, using an investment model that she argued was more equitable and transparent than China's model of investment. The implication was that US-Pakistan cooperation could continue despite US-China competition and China-Pakistan partnership.[28]

Conclusion: Navigating Future Bilateral Ties Amid Regional Geopolitical Realities

This essay has argued that regional and global geopolitics have heavily influenced US-Pakistan relations during their 75 years of existence. The essay also

argues that each country has tended to view the relationship through the lens of other countries, with the Soviet Union, Afghanistan, India, and China figuring prominently in this calculus. This analysis throws up two key questions for the future of US-Pakistan relations, seen against the backdrop of broader geopolitics. One relates to Pakistan, the other to the US. First, how can Pakistan generate more agency in its relationship with the US given current geopolitical realities, which include a post-US Afghanistan, intense US-China competition, deep Pakistan-China partnership, and strong US-India partnership? In Afghanistan, Pakistan arguably has lost its previous utility as a mediator between the US and the Taliban, given that the US has direct communication channels with the Taliban, and Washington has designated Qatar as the country to represent its interests in Afghanistan. Not to mention, Islamabad's relations with Kabul have faced tensions since the Taliban retook power in 2021, mainly over border issues and the Taliban's refusal to curb the presence of the Pakistani Taliban in Afghanistan. Despite all this, it's worth asking if there may still be options for the US and Pakistan to partner in Afghanistan, whether through cooperation in humanitarian assistance or counterterrorism collaborations.

Additionally, more broadly, how can Pakistan pitch itself as a partner to the United States, especially on the trade and investment issues Islamabad would like to become the new anchor for a reframed relationship with Washington? Islamabad, and Pakistani business leaders, may point to the country's large, growing, tech-savvy, English-speaking, urban middle class—a critical demographic that can serve as a consumer base for US investors but also can help fill labor needs within the US tech sector, one of several key American industries that can be potential investors in Pakistan. And yet, that same demographic—seemingly a clear advantage for Pakistan in its efforts to court foreign investors and traders—is also present in India and Bangladesh, countries with which America has more stable relationships. The challenge for Pakistan is to pitch itself to Washington as a unique partnership with advantages unique to Pakistan. Meanwhile, how can Islamabad navigate US-China competition? Is there an opportunity for Pakistan to be a third-party mediator to help bring the US and China together, for example, to discuss climate change? President Biden has said that he seeks cooperation with China in areas where it serves US interests, and he has cited climate change—a top foreign policy concern of his administration—as an example.[29]

Sceptics of a potential Pakistani mediation role would reasonably contend that if Washington and Islamabad are intent on talking about climate change, they'll find a way to do so themselves and don't require any facilitating role from Pakistan. Indeed, a one-on-one meeting between Biden and Chinese President Xi at a G20 summit in Bali in November 2022 was much discussed for the possibility of a thaw in tensions, even if modest and that could not happen in fact. However, the intensity of the US-China competition can't be emphasized enough. Therefore, Islamabad's role as a potential mediator can't be overlooked. Moving forward, the question for the US is how to look at its

relationship with Pakistan through the lens of Pakistan and not through the lens of other countries in the broader region. While the US and Pakistan have tended to view their relations through the lens of other countries, Washington's third-party lenses have been particularly sharp and entrenched. The de-hyphenation policy vis-à-vis India means that the New Delhi prism has receded, to a large extent, from the US thinking on Pakistan. But starting with the lenses of the Soviet Union and then Afghanistan, and now with China, Washington has struggled to view the relationship with Islamabad uniquely through the lens of Pakistan.

Developments in 2022-23 produced encouraging signs that Washington is prepared to look into reframing its relationship with Islamabad through a focus on non-security relations. There were announcements of a new bilateral health dialogue, high-level exchanges on trade and investment (including an extended visit to Pakistan by Dilawar Syed, the US special representative for commercial and business affairs at the State Department), and provision of humanitarian aid following devastating floods in Pakistan in summer of 2022. Sustaining this momentum will be a challenge. But if it can be maintained, there will be an excellent opportunity to move on from the past, to enable the relationship to be driven more by bilateral developments than by external geopolitical ones, and more broadly to ensure that the regional and global geopolitical albatross is no longer constantly around the neck of the bilateral relationship.

Notes

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2 Pakistan-US Relations

Continuity and Change in post-9/11 Context

Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York on September 11, 2001, often called 9/11, had a transformational impact on how interstate relations would be conducted in the 21st Century. Transnational terrorism emerged as a common threat to humanity and became a high-priority agenda point in nearly every bilateral and multilateral forum. Pakistan-US relations, too, came under sharp scrutiny because of al-Qaeda and other terrorist elements hiding in the neighborhood of Pakistan, especially in Afghanistan. Further, the role that non-state actors could play in indulging in violent extremism and terrorism also came under sharper international focus. With Pakistan agreeing to cooperate with the US and the rest of the world, a new chapter of collaboration opened up in Pakistan-US ties. The tensions that had appeared in the bilateral relationship since 1990, when the US had imposed sanctions against Pakistan under the Pressler Amendment and later when India and Pakistan tested nuclear devices in 1998, eased out with incredible speed. Pakistan became a partner in the US-led Global War on Terror (GWOT). For the following two decades, both nations worked together and, in many ways, succeeded in containing the menace of terrorism.

The areas of bilateral cooperation between the US and Pakistan proliferated rapidly to include intelligence sharing and logistical support for US military operations in Afghanistan, the US support to counter-terrorism operations inside Pakistan, consultations in the United Nations (UN) to impose sanctions on the non-state actors involved in terrorism, and broader US engagement to bolster Pakistan's military capacities and economic development. A decade later, a multi-billion dollar program of financial assistance to Pakistan was approved by the US Congress, which came to be known as the Kerry-Lugar-Berman Act (KLB) of USD 1.5 billion per year as non-military aid for the period of four years (2010-14).[1] In addition, the US was also providing Coalition Support Fund (CSF) to Pakistan. Pakistan attained the status of 'non-NATO ally'. Most importantly, people-to-people contacts, which had continued even during the years of estrangement, picked up pace in every bilateral domain.

The fast-paced cooperation between Pakistan and the US continued for a decade and a half after 9/11 before misunderstandings eventually cropped up.

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The GWOT had succeeded in dissolving the Taliban government, but complete victory against the Taliban was eluding the US. Al-Qaeda had been weakened, but its leadership was still at large. The US was frustrated and would allege that Pakistan was not doing enough to target the Taliban's presence in Pakistan. Pakistan had its viewpoint as it believed that instead of military victory, the US should seek a political solution to the Afghan conflict. The US later came around to this viewpoint and started negotiating with the Taliban, which led to a deal in February 2020 and paved the way for the withdrawal of the US and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) troops from Afghanistan.[2]

The relationship between Pakistan and the US in the post-9/11 period had, thus, followed a familiar pattern of a roller coaster ride. What has been a redeeming feature, however, is that while government-to-government relations have seen ups and downs, the people-to-people relationship has sustained without getting affected too heavily by the downturn of the bilateral relationship. As such, contacts and cooperation have always continued in education, health, agriculture, investments, commerce, and information technology. This people-to-people interaction has remained the mainstay of relations between the two countries throughout the decades. After US withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021, there are signs of the US and Pakistan renewing their contacts and trying to find and support areas of common interest. This should indeed augur well for strengthening the bilateral relationship, including its foundation – the people-to-people interaction.

This chapter argues that the increased people-to-people contacts emerged as a vital aspect of this relationship. It was because of this increased public engagement that the relationship survived despite having serious trust issues due to the alleged support of Pakistan to the Afghan Taliban.

Global and Regional Context of US-Pakistan Relations

Both the US and Pakistan remained engaged in multi-dimensional ties and the relationship had both global and regional context. In the United Nations, both countries had continued to stay engaged on the three sanctions regimes approved by UN Security Council (UNSC): UNSC Resolution 1267 of October 1999 against the Taliban and al-Qaeda;[3] UNSC Resolution 1373 that was authorized right after 9/11 binding the UN members to act against the perpetrators of transnational terrorism;[4] and the UNSC Resolution 1540 that required the international community to cooperate in preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their possible acquisition by non-state actors.[5] The UN Security Council monitoring teams, especially the 1373 counter-terrorism committee, became active and would periodically visit Pakistan to ascertain progress in eliminating terrorism and curtailing terrorist finance.

There was also the regional context to Pakistan-US ties in post-9/11 context. India had used the sentiment in the West to project itself as a fellow victim of terrorism emanating from the so-called "radical Islam."[6] India's main concern was that Pakistan was not apprehending anti-India militants

opposed to the Indian occupation of Jammu and Kashmir. In the first few years that followed 9/11, the US did not want India to distract Pakistan from the GWOT, nor was Pakistan interested in facing a two-front situation. Pakistani leadership thus tried and succeeded, albeit after some false starts, in engaging with India for a peace process that lasted many years. By then, China was engaged in its peaceful rise and had not fully figured into the American security calculus. China and Pakistan started a multi-billion-dollar connectivity project, of Pakistan-China Economic Corridor (CPEC), which began in 2015, when Pakistan had just succeeded in afflicting a fatal blow to terrorists hiding in North Waziristan Agency of the tribal areas of Pakistan bordering Afghanistan. During all these developments, and despite mutual concerns about the methodology to fight the war against terrorism, multi-faceted cooperation continued between Pakistan and the US. President Obama invited the Prime Minister of Pakistan to visit the US in 2013 and 2015. A strategic dialogue at the ministerial level guided bilateral cooperation in several areas.[7] However, this cooperative mode began to change with the election of President Donald Trump, and the two countries drifted apart again.

The relationship between Pakistan and the US in the post 9/11 period had, thus, followed a familiar pattern of a roller coaster relationship. What has been a redeeming feature, however, is that while government-to-government relations have seen ups and downs, the people-to-people relationship has sustained, without getting affected too heavily by the downturn of the bilateral relationship. As such, contacts and cooperation have always continued in the fields of education, health, agriculture, investments, commerce, and information technology, and it is this people-to-people interaction that has remained the mainstay of relations between the two countries all through the decades. More recently in late 2022, there are signs of the US and Pakistan renewing their contacts and making an effort to find and support areas of common interest. This should indeed augur well for strengthening the bilateral relationship, including its foundation – the people-to-people interaction.

US and Pakistan's Immediate Response to 9/11

It would be important to cast a deeper look at how 9/11 brought Pakistan and the US together and to what extent this cooperation helped tackle the forces of terrorism. The terrorist attacks of 9/11 were not the first major acts of terrorism. The world had witnessed a steady growth in terrorist incidents occurring well before 9/11. Likewise, the link of non-state actors to transnational terrorism was also not new. Al-Qaeda's presence in the Middle East and Afghanistan was already being noticed. What made 9/11 different was the scale and ferocity with which terrorism could affect global priorities and undermine the spirit of interdependence that emerged after the Cold War's demise in 1991. The terrorist attacks of 9/11 were conducted with such precision and at such a massive scale that even today, several theories, including conspiracy theories, are struggling to understand the motives, planning, and

commitment that could launch such a massive attack. It was, therefore, not surprising that the world community, mobilized by the United States, came together at an astonishingly rapid speed to institute a series of measures that every member state of the United Nations would need to take to deal with terrorism and violent extremism effectively. Within two weeks after 9/11, the UN Security Council met to adopt a resolution (1373) under Chapter VII of the UN Charter with a binding effect on all member states to inter-alia "prevent and suppress the financing of terrorist acts."[8]

The US took no time to conclude that 9/11 was masterminded by al-Qaeda, which had taken refuge in Afghanistan. The US gave an ultimatum to the Taliban to hand over the al-Qaeda leadership. On the former's refusal, the US decided to invade Afghanistan in October 2001, initiating a war that lasted for two decades. Every country would now be required to cooperate in checking the activities of non-state actors committing terrorism. In many ways, Resolution 1373 imposed a much tighter sanctions regime than the one adopted in October 1999 in Resolution 1267 on Taliban and al-Qaeda. Resolution 1267 had required the member states to "freeze the assets of, prevent the entry into or transit through their territories by… to any individual or entity associated with al-Qaeda, Osama Bin Laden and/or Taliban…".[9]

Pakistan's leadership was clear that these two resolutions, coupled with military action by the US against al-Qaeda and Taliban, would bring Pakistan under tremendous pressure as Pakistan had a long porous border with Afghanistan and was perceived to be a supporter of the Taliban. The government of President Pervez Musharraf (2001-2008) readily agreed to the US request for cooperation. He did so partly because the world community was already upset with the human rights record of the Taliban. Moreover, the economy of Pakistan was under stress, and, more importantly, the overall sentiment in the aftermath of 9/11 and resolution 1373 required all countries to cooperate in the fight against terrorism. However, the way the US sought this help and readily agreed upon by General Musharraf has raised eyebrows in Pakistan. The warnings by US officials, such as that Pakistan would be "bombed to the stone age"[10] or that "either you are with us or against us,"[11] did not go down well with the people of Pakistan. Further, the consistent drone strikes against targets inside Pakistan and the use of Pakistani airspace to attack positions in Afghanistan further fanned anti-Americanism in Pakistan.

War on Terror: Fallout for Pakistan

As the US war in Afghanistan dragged on, the frustration was also mounting in Pakistan because of the fallout for the people of Pakistan. Many of the battle-hardened militants had started trickling into the mountains of Pakistan's tribal areas to escape the heavy US bombing in the mountains of Tora Bora in search of Osama bin Laden and the other regions of Afghanistan.

Those militants later on aligned with the Pakistani Taliban, who had come together under the banner of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in 2007. They created their hideouts in South and North Waziristan in the Federally Administer Tribal Areas of Pakistan (FATA). Some came to settled areas like Swat in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province and started asserting their version of Shariah. Some of the political leaders of Pakistan ignored this growing militant threat within the country and instead started criticizing Pakistan's cooperation with the US in the war against terrorism. This confusion provided additional space for TTP to continue launching their attacks in the name of fighting America. Pakistan army for the first time entered in the tribal areas and several military operations were conducted to clear the tribal areas of militants.

Most impactful military operation, Zarb-e-Azb, was conducted in June 2014, successfully dislodging the militants from their hideouts in North Waziristan. All this while, there was robust US-Pakistan cooperation in counterterrorism. The US reimbursement of costs incurred by Pakistan to counter militancy through the Coalition Support Fund (CSF) was an immense help to Pakistani law enforcement authorities. The idea was that while the US would restrict the space of militants in Afghanistan, Pakistani authorities would also target them as they crossed into Pakistan. The hammer and sickle approach did work to some extent, but its downside was that militancy slowly crept into Pakistan.

The War on Terror cost Pakistan thousands of lives and billions of dollars' worth of loss to the country's economy.[12] Frustration was mounting in the country as to why Pakistan was fighting a war that was not of its making. Many in Pakistan started believing that this was America's war and that Pakistan should find an exit. In 2011, three incidents heightened the prevailing anti-American sentiment in Pakistan. First, a US national, Raymond Davis, was caught killing two Pakistanis in broad daylight in Lahore but escaped through an unpopular court adjustment. Second, came the killing of Bin Laden in a compound in Abbottabad by a US secret surgical operation in May 2011 without taking Pakistan into confidence. Third, in November 2011, NATO forces attacked and killed several Pakistani soldiers in the Salala post at the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. The tensions hit an all-time high when the US refused to apologize for the attack. As tensions between the US and Pakistan increased, the government closed the lines of communications, and thousands of trucks carrying supplies for the US troops in Afghanistan were stopped en route. It took both governments considerable effort to restore mutual trust and the groundlines of communication.

US Dissatisfaction with Pakistan's Efforts

The most disconcerting element of the alliance with the US to fight terrorism was the US's relentless demand that Pakistan must "do more" to squeeze

Pakistan-based Afghan Taliban so that the US could defeat the Taliban and establish their writ on the entire territory of Afghanistan.[13] Pakistan was ready to put pressure but unwilling to take kinetic action against the Taliban as that would have shifted the Afghan war to Pakistan. As it was, the bulk of the Afghan Taliban's fighting cadre was in Afghanistan. The quarterly reports of the Congress-mandated Senior Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction (SIGAR) constantly warned that much of the territory of Afghanistan was not under the writ of the Afghan government.[14] The Afghan National Army, too, was suffering from allegations of massive corruption, incompetence, and ghost soldiers. However, the successive US governments did not pay enough heed to these reports. The US focused mainly on the argument that the Taliban were winning because they had sanctuaries in Pakistan. They found no merit in the idea that the bulk of the Taliban fighting cadre was in Afghanistan, and they would visit Pakistan only because they had families there, like millions of other Afghans, and for health purposes.

It was clear that Americans were following a stick-and-carrot approach with Pakistan. Stick came as a "do more" mantra, while carrot was through the leverage of military and economic assistance such as the KLB package. After nearly seventeen years of the bitter and bloody fight in Afghanistan, the US government decided to change gears and hold talks with the Taliban, for which they facilitated an office for the Taliban in Doha. The political approach was also followed because there was growing pressure within the US government to pull back from such costly wars being fought in distant lands. With President Donald Trump taking over the US government in January 2017, much of the public debate in the US had shifted to finding ways to withdraw US troops from Afghanistan and Iraq. Following February 2020 deal with the Taliban, the US troops began to pull back from Afghanistan. When President Biden took over in January 2021, he shared the objective of the US pulling back its forces from Afghanistan. In August 2021, the US withdrawal of troops was completed, creating a vacuum that the Taliban rapidly filled. Partial Peace and stability returned to Afghanistan, but economic and humanitarian situations became grim because of UN and US sanctions on the Taliban. No country was willing to recognize the Taliban government and wanted the Taliban to first deliver on respecting human rights, especially girls' right to education, forming an inclusive government, and assuring the world that terrorist entities would not use Afghan soil. As of writing this paper, the Taliban government had not been recognized, nor has the Taliban moved, in any significant manner, toward meeting the international community's expectations.

Eventually, by that time, the US-Pakistan ties also began to improve. There was a realization in the US that its lack of success was not due to Pakistan but because of what a US general called a "strategic failure."[15] Notably, the US was late in pursuit of a political solution and wasted precious time in an attempt to secure a military victory. Moreover, neither the US-supported government of Ashraf Ghani nor the Afghan National Army inspired much

confidence that they could fight militancy in Afghanistan. With this realization, positive contacts opened up between the US and Pakistan. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif briefly met with President Biden at a reception hosted by the US President on the eve of the UN General Assembly session. Talks were also held between the Pakistani Foreign Minister and the US Secretary of State. This reinforced the theory that the US and Pakistan could not drift apart too long because close cooperation was a strategic imperative for both countries.

Complexity of Af-Pak

The Obama administration's Afghan strategy of 2009, which sought a surge of US troops to defeat al-Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan and reverse Taliban territorial gains in Afghanistan, also had a regional dimension.[16] The strategy tended to de-hyphenate Pakistan from India and hyphenate it to Afghanistan, and a new term, "Af-Pak," was coined.[17] A global forum of the Office of Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan was created, with Richard Holbrook acting as the first US Special Representative from 2009 to 2011. Pakistan was uncomfortable with the term Af-Pak which treated situations in Afghanistan and Pakistan as one large theatre of war. Since the ground realities were different in both countries, the strategy did not produce results, and the Obama administration decided to draw down its troops from Afghanistan by the end of 2014.

Another notable element of the Obama strategy was to engage neighbors of Afghanistan to stabilize the situation in the country. This further allowed India to increase its presence and activities in Afghanistan. This was a concern for Pakistan because of the apprehension that India would use the Afghan space for a "double squeeze" against Pakistan.[18] The Afghan governments of Presidents Hamid Karzai and Ashraf Ghani allowed India to invest in development projects acceptable to Pakistan and engage in intelligence sharing and manoeuvres that could create instability in Pakistan. President Donald Trump's South Asia Strategy in August 2017 emboldened India to find additional space in Afghanistan. The governments of Afghanistan were well aware of Pakistan's concerns, especially about the Indian consulates in Afghanistan being the source of planning instability in Pakistan. However, the Afghan government did not pay any heed to Pakistani concerns. The region's geopolitics took another major twist with the start of the third decade of this Century. The strategic competition with China and Russia, and not Counter Terrorism, emerged as the top priority for the US concerning national security as documented in the National Security Strategy of December 2017.[19] The US-China competition had taken nearly a decade to mature. Sensing the rapid economic outreach of China, the US introduced a competing initiative, the New Silk Road.[20] However, the initiative fizzled out since there needed to be more clarity on the new Silk Road.

Asia Pivot

Then came an announcement by President Obama of Asia Pivot in 2011.[21] It was clear that the US was now more closely focused on the Asian continent, which was fast emerging as the economic engine of the world economy. Under the Trump administration, an Indo-Pacific Strategy was introduced, which was aimed at counterbalancing China.[22] India emerged as a partner of choice for the US to push back China. Australia, India, Japan, and the US formed a grouping called the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD), which, too, was perceived as an attempt to contain the rise of China.[23] It was clear to Pakistan that the US would now focus more on its competition with China and this context, rely more on India to achieve its objectives than on Pakistan. In August 2021, when the US decided to pull out of Afghanistan, American attention to Pakistan began to fade. Some analysts argue that it was good that Pakistan, which had absorbed so much American attention since 9/11, could now focus on its internal matters and less on global geopolitics. The counterargument was that since the people of Pakistan and the US were engaged in so many areas of cooperation, it was unrealistic an expectation that Pakistan and the US could move away from each other. President Donald Trump's administration should have attempted to resurrect the strategic partnership that the Obama administration had maintained with Pakistan. President Joe Biden was also not keen as much American attention had shifted to Europe, especially after the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

With Afghanistan under Taliban rule, relative stability may have returned to the country, but terrorist entities began resurfacing in various parts of Afghanistan. In July 2022, a US-operated drone killed al-Qaeda leader Ayman Al Zawahiri in Kabul, which raised questions about the Taliban's commitment to the US in February 2020 deal that Afghan soil would not be used to house terrorist entities that could commit terrorism in other countries.[24] For all regional countries, the scenario of terrorism coming back was too disconcerting. Accordingly, every nation wanted the Taliban regime to honor its commitment to counter-terrorism. One paradox of this debate was whether the Taliban should be incentivized to help them fulfil their obligations or should be coerced to do what the international community expects them to do.

The US had frozen over USD 9 billion of Afghan funds in the US banks.[25] There was a demand to release those funds for humanitarian assistance. Pakistan, too, was keen to address the Afghan humanitarian situation, as over 90 per cent of the Afghan population had descended below the poverty line.[26] Pakistan tried to use its conversations with the US, Europe, and the Muslim world to attend to the economic situation in Afghanistan, warning that if Afghanistan descended into another civil war, the whole region and the world would suffer. However, with increasing instability in Afghanistan, Islamabad has also faced the revival of terrorism and extremism.

War on Terror and Course of US-Pakistan Relations

The events of 9/11 may have brought Pakistan and the US closer, but for years the relationship remained exclusively focused on fighting terrorism. The strategic dialogue initiated by the Obama administration with Pakistan was a serious attempt to break away from this security-centered approach and sought to broaden the spectrum of bilateral relations. Six working groups were created to discuss wide-ranging proposals of cooperation in economy and finance; energy; education, science and technology; law enforcement and counterterrorism; security strategic stability and non-proliferation; and defense. Within years, considerable interaction picked up the pace. With the advent of the Trump administration, the strategic dialogue was disrupted. The two countries started drifting apart as government-to-government ties cooled down.

There has always been a sense in Pakistan that the US is more inclined to work with Pakistan only on security issues and, at times, when it suits the US. Pakistanis wanted to have a broad-based relationship. However, one point that needs to be underscored and often goes overlooked is that the US and Pakistan already enjoyed close multidimensional relations which were not dependent on the blessings of the two governments. For instance, the US-Pakistan trade has always been of the highest value in Pakistani exports regardless of which administration was in power in the US. In 2021, Pakistan's exports to the US crossed the 5 billion USD mark.[27] Likewise, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has worked with successive Pakistani governments to provide Pakistanis with quality primary and higher education. According to official numbers quoted by USAID, this cooperation has trained more than 46,000 teachers and school administrators since 2013, provided 19,000 scholarships for talented students to attend tertiary education and built or repaired more than 1,600 schools in Pakistan.[28] The US and Pakistan governments have remained engaged in health sector cooperation for decades. The two governments are working on a Health Dialogue to deepen cooperation in the health domain. Cooperation avenues under this Dialogue include Pakistan Disease and Control Prevention (CDC), children's vaccines, Covid 19, maternity and child health, and non-communicable illnesses.[29]

For decades, the US and Pakistan governments have also worked on enhancing cooperation in the agriculture sector. The initiatives have included providing equipment and technical assistance to farmers' organizations and agricultural businesses, helping Pakistani agricultural products access bigger markets, and training farmers and entrepreneurs on citrus and livestock production, management, and business-to-business market development skills. These details are documented on the website of the US embassy in Islamabad.[30] Hundreds of Pakistani professionals are now engaged with Silicon Valley, contributing to information technology and software development cooperation. All this cooperation continued even when the two governments were not fully engaged.

Concluding Thoughts

While the US was busy with the new global priorities of competition with China and the Russia-Ukraine war, the situation in Afghanistan started to deteriorate. The worsening humanitarian conditions in Afghanistan, however, could not attract much of the global attention due to the Ukraine war. But the increasing insecurity in Afghanistan having regional implications could not be overturned till long by the regional states, especially Pakistan and China. The Islamic State of Khorasan Province (ISKP) had increased its tentacles across the whole region. The East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), and many other organizations are also operating out of Afghanistan.

Pakistan began coordinating closely with the regional countries and expected the US and Europe to stay engaged and not abandon Afghanistan. Islamabad and Washington are making renewed attempts to pick up the threads of cooperation amidst all this geostrategic strain. Pakistan is keen to de-securitize the relationship, though, for the US, security concerns would always dominate discussions. Apart from working together to deal with resurging terrorism, many areas for bilateral cooperation need governmental support and facilitation. Pakistan must balance its relations with all major powers, especially the US and China. This may be daunting given that the US-China competition is intensifying and could morph into a Cold War. However, Pakistan has no option but to maintain good ties with both countries. Treating these two vital relationships as zero-sum is not an option for Pakistan. Meanwhile, cooperation from people to people continues unabated, as has been the case all through the past seven decades. It is interesting to note that the cyclical nature of Pakistan-US ties remains in play. The two countries have also learned to live through cooperation and confrontation, co-existing in the bilateral relationship. All indications are that this cyclical pattern will continue.

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Part II

US-Pakistan Ties under the Shadow of Geopolitics


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3 Unravelling Triangular Perplexity in US-Pakistan-China Ties

Nadeem Riyaz and Nabila Jaffer

In the aftermath of World War II (WWII), the world got ideologically divided between capitalism and communism with the United States (US) and the Soviet Union leading the two blocks respectively. Pakistan sided with the US from 1950 onwards and its relations with the US derived many benefits as well as difficulties. Both Washington and Islamabad struggled to maintain friendly bilateral ties. It is a unique relationship that has fluctuated from Pakistan being the 'most allied ally' of the US during Cold War to the 'most sanctioned ally' of the US in the 1990s.

In comparison to the US, Pakistan's relations with China have survived the test of time and have grown exponentially over the years. The relationship has further strengthened with the initiation of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in 2015. However, recently, the bilateral friendship between Islamabad and Beijing witnessed difficulties also, which need to be ironed out. Especially, Pakistan found itself in a pressing situation where it has to maintain a balance between the US and China – two competing powers of 21st century.

Despite the large volume of trade between the two countries, which remained at around USD 690.6 billion in 2022, China's increasing economic influence is seen as a direct threat to the American global supremacy as a unipolar power – a position attained by the US after the end of Cold War.[1] The ongoing rivalry between the two giants affects nearly all countries and given the present global dynamics and economic slowdown after the war in Ukraine further complicates matters between US and China.

Pakistan has traditionally engaged with both the US and China to varying degrees and success. Its geo-strategic location is an asset that compels both the great powers to engage with it in their own national interests. Pakistan's predicament is to navigate the tough competition between the US and China in a way that it avoids the Cold War situation of taking side with one power against the other. This chapter discusses the intricacies of this triangular relationship among Pakistan-China-US, exploring its past challenges and identifying the areas that have affected Pakistan the most.

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China Pakistan Relations: A Tale of Friendship

Pakistan started relations with China on a very positive note as it was the first Muslim state that recognized the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1950 and established diplomatic relations on May 21, 1951. However, in those days, China's role was limited to its domestic reorientation and Pakistan could not bank on it for its financial and security needs in the formative decade when it was struggling with post-independence economic, security and political turmoil. The relationship further got a positive twist after border agreement between the two in 1963.[2] In 1971, the then US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger visited Peking from Islamabad. That resulted in the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the US with the help of Pakistan.[3] The next thirty years saw the relationship grow between Pakistan and China and led to cooperation in multiple areas. In 1978, the Karakoram Highway was opened connecting northern Pakistan with China to the Arabian Sea. Moreover, both countries also concluded agreements on educational exchanges in 1983, which eventually led to 32,000 Pakistani students presently studying in China.[4]

In 1989, Pakistan and China signed an agreement on Reciprocal Encouragement and Protection of Investments, which later made China the largest investor in Pakistan. China signed a contract with Pakistan in 1999 to jointly develop and produce the JF-17. It was indeed a landmark event for Pakistan's defense Industry."[5] The relations were further expanded to tourism, exports, a treaty of good neighborly relations, and high-profile official visits at the beginning of the new millennium.[6]

Owing to increasing convergence of interests, China-Pakistan cordial relations have grown into a close strategic partnership 2001 onward which also led to military cooperation and Chinese investment in Gwadar port and later culminated into China-Pakistan-Economic-Corridor (CPEC). The CPEC is a USD 65 billion worth project aiming at regional connectivity through a road and rail corridor. The project is divided into three phases as illustrated in Table 3.1. The official CPEC website states the objectives and importance of CPEC for regional connectivity and for Chian-Pakistan bilateral relations in following words;

> *The enhancement of geographical linkages having improved road, rail and air transportation system with frequent and free exchanges of growth and people to people contact, enhancing understanding through academic, cultural and regional knowledge and culture, activity of higher volume of flow of trade and businesses, producing and moving energy to have more optimal businesses and enhancement of co-operation by win-win model will result in well connected, integrated region of shared destiny, harmony and development.*[7]

For Pakistan, the CPEC is a 'game changer', and it has relied heavily on China to avert the economic problems faced by the country for the past

Table 3.1 Phases of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor

CPEC Phase-I: 2015-2020	*CPEC Phase II: 2020-2025*	*CPEC Phase III: 2025-2030*
• Energy and power projects • Infrastructure Development Projects • Transport projects • Gwadar port	• Industrial Cooperation and Economic Development • Focus on Special Economic Zones (SEZs) • Socio-Economic Development Project	• Regional Connectivity • Sustainable Development

several years. Pakistan-China relations are based on strength and mutual respect. There are no major divergences. Pakistan has always relied on China for support in international forums and the Chinese have always obliged. Over the years, Pakistan developed broader economic ties with China and the volume of trade in 2021 was close to USD 28 billion.[8] Presently, the two countries have growing defense relations and Pakistan also buys military hardware from its trusted friend. However, there are some irritants in the bilateral China-Pakistan ties owing to Chinese security concerns in Pakistan. Especially, due to the killing of Chinese nationals working on various CPEC projects in Pakistan resulted in slowing down the pace of CPEC projects. Pakistan continues to allay the Chinese apprehensions and still banks on its time-tested ties with China.

China-US Relations

China was an ally of the US in the WWII against Japan. But Washington did not establish diplomatic relations with the Communist Party of China (CPC) when it took power from the nationalists and PRC founded in mainland China as a result of the Civil War in 1949. The US support and recognition of the Republic of China (ROC) government in Taipei was the first major seed of rivalry.[9] The US remained wary of China because of its communist ideology amid its strategic competition with the Communist Soviet Union. The US did not want China to get close to the Soviet Union. The split between China and the Soviet Union after border clashes in 1969 led to Beijing's eventual reunion with the US.[10]

Henry Kissinger's visit to China led to negotiations and the US accepted the One China Principle and ended military support to Taiwan.[11] Soon after, the United Nations acknowledged the PRC as the only government in China and also won China a permanent seat in the UN Security Council (UNSC). Multiple visits were made by the leadership of both states in the coming years.[12]

The Convergences and Divergences

China's economic reforms under Deng Xiaoping in 1979 opened doors for companies from the US, Europe, and Japan. China remains one of the biggest

FDI-receiving countries in the world. A large amount of the FDI came from the US. In the year 2021, US investments in China were valued at USD 118.19 billion. As a result of evolving trade and commercial relations, President Clinton signed the US-China Relations Act of 2000, guaranteeing Beijing permanent normal trade relations with the US and allowing China to join the World Trade Organization in 2001. China and the US became the largest trading partners as China's annual GDP growth rate from 1989 until 2010 was a record high at around 10 percent. The economic growth has slowed down as China's economy is maturing but it emerged as the world's second-largest economy. After opening, trade between the US and China increased from USD 5 billion to USD 650 billion in 2021.[13]

The US remained one of the most popular study destinations among Chinese students. Multiple programs were offered in many American universities for Chinese students. Over 317,000 Chinese students were enrolled in the US in the academic year 2020 and 2021.[14] However, this pattern has now shifted owing to the US threat perception from China's technological and scientific achievements. Thus, in addition to other protectionist measures, the US banned Chinese students from enrolling in scientific and technological fields.

China and the US are members of various multilateral organizations including the IMF. On July 1st, 1968, China accepted Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT).[15] Both Washington and Beijing worked together to implement Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for sustaining long-term global growth. China and the US are the biggest emitters of carbon dioxide.[16] The world is looking up to cooperation between the two countries on the climate agenda.

The unprecedented rise of China and its economic network around the globe threatened the US and it resultantly declared China the biggest challenge to its interests. The genesis of the American apprehension of China is its model of governance under one-party rule. China's economic expansion under CPC and its military assertiveness in the South China Sea is seen as a threat to global norms and peace. The US calls China's economic policies predatory and blames it for coercive tactics abroad.[17]

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is the main target of the US. The project connects China with multiple states through land and sea routes. The US has continuously criticized the project and forced the member states to withdraw from BRI. The US has projected the project as a debt trap by China to gain control of the national assets of partner states. The US has also launched Build Back Better World (B3W) project to counter China's BRI.[18]

The Indian Ocean and the South China Sea also remain an area of great concern for the US. The US has charted out the Indo-Pacific Strategy and other multilateral alliances such as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad). AUKUS—a trilateral security arrangement between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the US—is also aimed against China.[19] In response, China is undertaking measures such as the Global Security Initiative and Global Development Initiative to give a Chinese vision of global peace and

development.[20] China is maintaining its resilience for achieving the Chinese dream envisioned by President Xi Jinping by 2049.

Taiwan has always been one of the most important factors in US-China relations. The US has shown its support for Taiwan in the past and again recently. China accused the US of reneging on its stand on Taiwan and threatened to invade Taiwan after US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan in August 2021. The US warned China that it would act if China showed any aggression towards the island.[21]

China's technological advancement is also considered a threat to the US; both states are involved in fierce competition for semiconductors and microchips.[22] Similarly, the US considered China's 5G a security threat fearing China's surveillance. The US has banned several Chinese tech companies like Huawei to stop China.

The trade war escalated between China and the US in 2019 after the Trump administration's protectionist policies. President Trump imposed tariffs and China also retaliated with increased tariffs.[23] There are differences over the issue of Hong Kong between the two countries.[24] China dislikes and condemns the US meddling in Hong Kong which it regards as an internal matter. The US has continuously criticized China for its lack of Human Rights. The lack of privacy and freedom of speech in China has been a big concern for the Western world. The US has placed sanctions on China due to the use of violence towards Uyghurs and other religious and ethnic minorities.[25] On terrorism, China initially supported the US but gradually China became cautious of the US presence in the region under the pretext of the War on Terror. Due to the US continuous criticism of Pakistan concerning its role in the war on terror Pakistan became closer to China which was named a strategic triangle by pundits.[26]

Washington and Western scholars were expecting that the economic development of China within the Western-led liberal market system will also inspire reforms in China's political system. However, contrary to these expectations, the CPC's position strengthened internally as it succeeded in placing China on an unprecedented economic development path. Eliot Cohen, a military historian, in his book *The Big Stick*, terms "China a greater challenge than either radical Islamists or Russia. He believes China's emergence as a global economic and political power is the most significant development of the 21st century."[27] According to Wu Xinbo, "China does not pose an existential threat to the United States, yet it does threaten to dilute US hegemony, share its global leadership role, and demonstrate an alternative to its development and governance model."[28]

China as a Factor in Pakistan-US Relations

Pakistan has "a lot of 'positive relevance' rather than the much-hyped military dimension, on display since the war on terror," as noted by defense analyst Inam Ul Haq.[29] The third-party factor in Pakistan-US relations has

always been counterproductive. India, China, and Afghanistan have all played a defining role in the foreign policies of both the US and Pakistan. The US has a strategic partnership with India as a counterweight to China. Its relationship with Pakistan has continued to remain influenced by its ties to Afghanistan. David Hale, former US Ambassador to Pakistan once stated, "Pakistani leaders have to protect their national interests. We can't make them behave the way we want them to behave."[30]

Pakistan, despite its current political instability and economic weaknesses, continues to be of interest to the US, and its "sensitive geostrategic neighbourhood, makes it too important a country for Washington to let drift completely into China's orbit."[31] China also finds Pakistan relevant in its future strategy of BRI due to CPEC. Furthermore, Pakistan is the second largest country in South Asia and a nuclear power that can be a counterweight to India's growing might. China is viewed by India as a direct threat to its economic prowess. To keep its strength China needs to engage actively with Pakistan and strengthen its relations with other South Asian states.[32]

US Stance on CPEC

Pakistan and China have traditionally maintained strategic ties that are further bolstered by economic convergence through CPEC, which is a key feature of their ties. It has been cherished by both the countries as a game changer. Despite initial support for CPEC's regional connectivity and stabilizing effect on Afghanistan, the US has adopted a critical approach towards the trade corridor. The US is not in favor of Pakistan's increasing maritime cooperation and economic dependence on China. Especially the inclusion of strategically located Gwadar Port in the ambit of CPEC left the US wary of such developments where Beijing was found dominating the geostrategic landscape of South and Central Asia.

The US criticism increased with the mounting debt crisis of Pakistan. Mike Pompeo, former Secretary of State, warned Islamabad that any bailout package from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) should not be used to service the CPEC loans. He stated, "Make no mistake, we will be watching what the IMF does."[33] Then came the criticism by Alice Wells, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia, when she criticized CPEC and expressed concerns over the costs, debt, transparency, and jobs associated with CPEC, and warned of consequences for Pakistan's national sovereignty.[34] The increasing debt crisis in Pakistan are being used as pretext by the US to justify its point of view regarding a faulty economic development model by China.

Sino-US Strategic Competition and Pakistan's Stance

The US, since 2017, has declared China as the greatest challenge to the US by replacing the "war on terror" with the "great power competition".[35] Even in

the 2022 National Security Strategy, the US reaffirmed its commitment to managing competition with China to prevent China from turning the existing world order in its favor.[36] The US has shifted its focus from Afghanistan after the withdrawal of coalition forces from Kabul. The US attention is focused on countering China[37] as its increasing economic interests and partnerships around the globe are perceived as a direct threat to the US strategic, economic, and foreign policy interests. The competition in the oceans and the increasing rivalry for economic supremacy brought the big power politics back after the Cold War.

The US strategic objectives against China have put Pakistan in a challenging situation. Pakistan is not under any pressure from China to curtail ties with the US. The intensified rivalry between China and the US has created a delicate situation for Pakistan which does not have the option to place all its eggs in one basket.[38] Some historians and analysts termed it a Cold War competition between China and the US to bring Pakistan into its sphere of influence a strategic triangle.[39] For some experts in the US, Pakistan's friendship with China ensures its renewed relevance to the US even after American troops withdrew from Afghanistan.[40] In the present situation, this triangle can be used constructively. Pakistan cannot be discounted as it is "one of the few countries with high levels of access to China, European countries, and the US." [41] Pakistan's good relations with the US may be of interest to China as a stable and strong Pakistan can ensure the successful completion of CPEC.

Conclusion

Today, Pakistan is grappling with growing economic difficulties and political instability. It has little muscle to flex and has to play a game of engagement where it remains relevant to both China and the US. As taking sides is always hazardous, Pakistan cannot afford to be a part of any one camp. It has to keep its national interest supreme and balance its relations with both China and the US. Any alliance which is at the cost of the other will be counterproductive. As such, Pakistan will be compelled to continue its relations with both of these countries. Continuing the relations in balance with both China and the US will be challenging. It could only succeed if the relations are recalibrated and a clear trajectory determined.

The vibes from the US, as of 2022, indicated that this is possible if pursued intelligently. Both Pakistan and the US need to work on the convergences and minimize the divergences of their relationship. The trust deficit on both sides needs to be bridged and negative narratives countered. Positive synergy needs to be propagated in areas of common interests. There is an urgent need to move away from a security-oriented relationship to a broad-based one that is based on geo-economics, culture, education, and think tank cooperation. Both countries would need to work towards increasing people-to-people contacts. Public diplomacy is the trend of this century. It needs to be worked on for mutual benefit. Areas that could lead to better cooperation are climate

change, gender empowerment, and food security. The strong Pakistani diaspora can play its role in projecting bilateral ties.

Relations with China require careful handling. Pakistan has to address any Chinese misgivings. The second phase of CPEC must be pursued vigorously and Chinese security concerns addressed. Pakistan needs to look inwardly and improve its economic climate for inviting FDI. The coming decade is one in which investments and financial aid will be difficult to procure. Engagement with China at people to people, cultural, and educational fields need to be increased. Learning of Chinese language is essential if Pakistan desires to make use of the huge Chinese business potential. Collaboration among think tanks of both countries needs strengthening. The key remains to understand the Chinese ideology and culture for future engagements.

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4 The US-Pakistan Relations and the Afghan Quagmire

Huma Baqai

"Pakistan-US relations are a textbook case of political realism".[1] In international politics, the theory of political realism underlines the conflictual, aggressive, and competitive side of relations between states. Realists believe that states, the principal actors in the global arena, "act in pursuit of their national interests, are concerned with their security, and struggle for power".[2] Since 1947, the construct of convergence between Pakistan and the United States (US) has been ambiguous. The engagement from both sides is largely compulsion driven. On more than one occasion, both states have pursued divergent interest trajectories sabotaging each other's interests at regional and international levels.[3] "Uneasy marriage to an odd couple of modern international relations" refers to the relationship. This roller coaster alliance is the direct outcome of the lack of trust between Washington and Islamabad. Pakistan perceives itself as a utility partner for the US; once its strategic importance diminishes, the relationship stagnates.

During the Cold War, Pakistan opted for a pro-Western alignment with a pro-American leaning. Pakistan became "America's most allied ally" after joining US-supported defense organizations and regional associations. In May 1954, the Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement was signed, and Pakistan became an official part of the pro-Western US bloc.[4] During the Cold War, the US's most prominent foreign policy objectives in Asia were to gain influence by forging military and economic alliances with like-minded states to curtail Soviet communist influences.[5] Pakistan was America's bulwark in Asia against the Sino-Soviet communist alliance. However, after the end of their first decade of cooperation, the fractures in their alliance became discernible largely because, much to Pakistan's surprise and later anger, it was the US's neutral stance between the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965 and 1971. The US neutrality was shocking for the elite of Pakistan, who saw America as an 'equaliser' in times of crisis with its staunch enemy India.[6] The same trend continued for decades to come. Especially in the post-9/11 context, the US and Pakistan relationship remained marred with uncertainty and a lack of trust. The US was apprehensive of Pakistan's support of the Afghan Taliban. Pakistan always remained wary of its bitter experiment when the US abandoned it in 1989 after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. These apprehensions due

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to the Afghanistan conflict did not allow a healthy bilateral relationship between the two countries. This chapter elaborates on how Afghanistan, historically and in its present context, affected the bilateral US-Pakistan ties.

Afghanistan: A Decisive Factor

With the Cold War competition's acceleration in Afghanistan, the US and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) increasingly courted Afghanistan with technical, military, and economic assistance. The USSR was eager to provide what the US would not and vice versa. The Cold War had come to Afghanistan with its subsequent tragic impact on the country. In 1979, the USSR entered Afghanistan to support the newly propped-up pro-Soviet regime in Kabul. Approximately 100,000 Soviet soldiers took over major highways and cities. The Soviets had to deal with a swift and broad rebellion in Afghanistan. Foreign support was behind the various groups of rebels, including the *Mujahideen* (Holy Warriors), pouring in from Pakistan, Iran, the US, and Central Asia. Initially, the *Mujahideen* rebels were politically divided into various independent groups; their arms quality was minimal, and their military efforts were uncoordinated. Within just two weeks of the Soviet invasion, the US and other foreign supporters decided to take the resistance to the next level by providing large quantities of arms and other war materials via Pakistan. The help largely came from the US and Middle Eastern countries. In March 1985, Reagan's national security team switched from chasing the Soviet forces in Afghanistan to driving the Red Army completely out of the country by supplying Stinger anti-aircraft missiles to the *Mujahideen*, breaking the embargo on "Made-in-America" arms.

> *Throughout the Reagan years, the US funding for the Mujahedeen steadily increased and was facilitated by innocuously named lobbying groups like the Afghan American Educational Fund, [and] much more was issued from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)'s budget. The Mujahideen became one of the most radical groups that received the bulk of US funding: one-third of US funds went to the religious zealot and Pashtun, Gulbuddin Hekmtyar.*[7]

The CIA supported Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) in recruiting mercenaries and religiously motivated volunteers worldwide. The seeds of an extremist takeover of Afghanistan were sowed. This would later feed into full-fledged global *Jihad* (Holy War). Associated Press writer Mort Rosenblum stated, "Usama bin Ladin was the type of Soviet-hating freedom fighter that US officials applauded when the world looked a little different." In November 1987, President Reagan hosted the Islamic Union of Mujahedeen of Afghanistan at the White House and reiterated his support for the Afghan Jihad.[8]

Post-Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the US conveniently abandoned the rebel groups and guerrillas fighting the Soviet army, and Pakistan was left

alone to deal with the *Mujahideen*. ISI's role became more prominent during the Afghan civil war in the 1990s following the Soviet withdrawal.[9] The scattered *Mujahideen* formed factions, took up arms against each other, and ultimately gave rise to theTaliban.[10]

The convergence between Pakistan and the US during the Afghan crisis (1979-88) was an excellent example of Pakistan becoming a critical utility partner of the US. The United States, as the powerful partner, exploited Pakistan's desperate need for military and economic assistance and its search for powerful friends to achieve some parity with India. In exchange for military and economic assistance, the US was given access to Pakistani bases and other vital facilities to expand the scope of its policy of containment of communism.[11] It was unfair to assume that Pakistan would not work for its core interests and would be entirely committed to serving US ends in the region.[12] The Soviet withdrawal reduced Pakistan's utility, and as a result, the relationship became less intimate. The geo-strategic denominator that enhanced Pakistan's importance had disappeared. Thus, the US-Pakistan partnership was not renewed.

Pakistan: The Most Sanctioned Ally

The US-Pakistan relationship experienced a more obvious downward slide since President Bush's administration came to power in 1989, where perhaps an attempt was made to de-hyphenate India and Pakistan for the first time. In 1989, the Bush administration was alarmed by South Asia's nuclear ballistic missile arms race. It came down very strongly on Pakistan to roll back its nuclear program. The then President of Pakistan Ghulam Ishaq Khan (1988-1993) put his foot down by saying that the program was critical for Pakistan's security and survival. The lessons learned in 1971 stayed with Pakistan. The influential Indian lobby mobilized American Congress members against Pakistan and had the Pressler sanctions imposed. A senior Pakistani civil officer had said then: 'You Americans have discarded Pakistan like a piece of used Kleenex'.[13] Pakistan also looked at the US nuclear diplomacy as selective, discriminatory, and detrimental to Pakistan's security.[14]

Post-9/11 US-Pakistan Alliance and the Afghan Factor

The tables turned overnight post the 9/11 attacks, and Pakistan, the most sanctioned ally of the US, was set to become a frontline state in the war on terror and, subsequently, a non-North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) ally. Pakistan became a frontline state and a part of America's counterterrorism operations that provided communication lines and gave the US access to Pakistani air bases for drone operations.[15] In return, Pakistan was provided with military & economic assistance.[16] Pakistan was in a close dance with the US yet once again. Since 2001, the situation in Afghanistan has shaped the US-Pakistan relationship. Afghanistan has further complicated it. In 2008,

during President Obama's term, the US developed the 'Af-Pak' construct/policy. A term popularized by Richard Holbrooke, who later became the first US special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan.[17] Pakistan both resisted and resented that. Since then, the relationship has only deteriorated, and the trust deficit between the two countries has increased. The realization in the US of the imperative to engage with the Taliban was triggered by the consistent rise of the Taliban since 2015 and their subsequent recognition as a key player in Afghanistan by major powers and neighboring states. This allowed Pakistan to return to the game and validated its earlier position of finding a political solution to the conflict. Pakistan played a vital role in bringing the Taliban to the negotiating table, which made the Doha talks a possibility. The talks then became a precursor for the eventual US withdrawal from Afghanistan.

In September 2018, President Trump appointed Mr Zalmay Khalilzad to negotiate with the Taliban.[18] He had also helped President George W. Bush plan the overthrow of the Taliban in 2002. Mr Khalilzad spent nearly 18 months in Doha, Qatar, meeting with Taliban representatives to craft an agreement that was eventually signed in February 2020.[19] The US envoy dealt with two of America's most contentious involvements in the Muslim world, serving as the clean-up ambassador after the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan.[20]

The American allegations of Pakistan's dual play in Afghanistan have echoed since the times of President Bush. Some damage control was done now and then to achieve short-term objectives. However, largely the thrust of the policy was that Pakistan was part of the problem and not a part of the solution. US refusal to connect the dots between violence in Afghanistan and the conflict between Pakistan and India suited India and Afghanistan. The three conveniently blamed Pakistan for the deteriorating situation on the ground. All US had done in terms of a policy shift in Afghanistan was to give India a more important role in the region. This was not very kind to Pakistan's sensitivities. Pakistan furnished more than once tangible evidence of India using Afghan soil to undermine its security. India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) had been involved in terrorist activities against Pakistan. India allegedly not only trained the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) but also supported it by providing arms and immunities against Pakistan. The TTP had also targeted Chinese personnel and interests in Pakistan, working as a proxy for India.[21]

Pakistan brokered and facilitated the process between the US and the Taliban.[22] Pakistan also brokered such talks in the past, and it was requested again to play its part. After rigorous behind-the-scenes efforts from Pakistan, US chief negotiator Zalmay Khalilzad pushed for the peace deal to be signed.[23] The historic Peace Accord is the first-ever documented effort between America and the Taliban towards peace in Afghanistan.[24] More importantly, it was recognition of the Taliban as the representatives of Afghanistan. The US bypassed the government it had propped up to talk to them directly, something the Taliban had demanded for a long time.[25] From then onwards the Taliban consolidated their position in Afghanistan and gained influence in key world capitals,

maintaining a position of power in all subsequent negotiations.[26] The August 2021 US withdrawal from Afghanistan triggered the need to revisit the relationship. US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, when responding to questions on the Afghan war, had to give assurances to the Congress on Pakistan. He said,

> *This is one of the things that we are going to be looking at in the days and weeks ahead - the role that Pakistan has played over the last 20 years but also the role we would want to see it play in the coming years and what it will take for it to do that.*[27]

The Afghan Factor: Post-US Withdrawal Scenario

On 30th August 2021, the night sky of Kabul lit up with gunfire as the Taliban celebrated victory after the wheels went up on the airplane, taking the last of US soldiers out from Afghanistan, a day before the announced deadline for a complete withdrawal of troops.[28] On October 7, 2001, a US-led coalition began an intense bombing campaign on Taliban-controlled Afghanistan. Logistical support was provided by other nations, including France, Germany, Australia, and Canada and later, troops were provided by the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance rebels.[29] The conflict in Afghanistan spanned over two decades and became the longest war in US history.[30] It is also referred to as America's 'forever war' and would be remembered forever for its colossal failures, unfulfilled promises, and frantic exit. It cost 240,000 Afghan deaths, 2500 American soldiers, 2.3 trillion US dollars, and spectacular humiliation to the mightiest superpower. It is, in fact, a story of American hubris and blunders that spans a period of 20 years and four presidencies, both Democrat and Republican.

Pakistan has always remained desirous of peace in Afghanistan. It has worked to ensure an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process. Despite irrefutable evidence of its blunders in Afghanistan and commanding generals admitting that they had tried to fight a war without a functional strategy, the US blames Pakistan for its failure and un-ceremonial exit from Afghanistan. According to Craig Whitlock's book *Afghanistan Papers*, numerous individuals interviewed described the US government's persistent and intentional efforts to deceive the public.[31] They stated that officials at both military headquarters in Kabul and the White House habitually manipulated statistics to present the illusion of victory in the war, despite the reality being otherwise. In Bob Woodward's book *Obama's Wars*, Admiral Mike Mullen acknowledged the inadequate allocation of resources towards the war in Afghanistan for several years and the need for a clear strategy for the conflict.[32] David Hale, Diplomatic Fellow Wilson Center and Ambassador to Pakistan, rightly said, "Pakistani leaders must protect their national interests. We can't make them behave the way we want them to behave".[33] This is the crux of the issue and has resulted in growing distrust between the two. The US does not trust

Pakistan, and Pakistan has, over the years, become an increasingly anti-American country. This anti-Americanism is largely driven by American foreign policy towards Pakistan, compounded by broader dissatisfaction with its policies towards the Muslim world.

The singular focus and flawed execution of the Afghanistan war have negatively impacted democracy in Pakistan, fueled Pashtun nationalism in the tribal regions, and triggered jihad and class and cultural conflicts.[34] While Pakistan alignment with the US following the 9/11 attacks may have shielded it from direct retaliation, the alliance came at a significant cost, economic losses, diminished sovereignty, weakened democracy, and compromised peace. While the economic losses from participating in the War on Terror can be quantified, the erosion of national self-esteem due to the loss of sovereignty remains immeasurable.

Tense Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations

The Afghan Taliban and the Pakistani establishment have enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship. However, interestingly since the takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban, the TTP has stepped up its attacks on Pakistan's side of the border, killing dozens of soldiers and civilians in 2021.[35] For Pakistan, this was a rude shock; it had been expected otherwise. It has become evident that the Afghan Taliban and the TTP are two sides of the same coin. Border tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan have escalated significantly since the Taliban's return to power. In 2021, Pakistan experienced a 42 percent increase in terrorist attacks. Fatalities from terrorist incidents and counterterrorism operations rose from 850 in 2021 to 980 in 2022, marking a 15 percent surge. The trend continued, with a sharp 25 percent increase in 2023. The Global Terrorism Index 2025 reports that Pakistan witnessed a 45 percent rise in terrorism-related deaths, escalating from 748 in 2023 to 1,081 in 2024, one of the steepest surges worldwide. This uptick in violence has not been ably pronounced since the fall of Kabul, further destabilizing the region.[36]

Pakistan had been flagging the issue way before it came to the forefront and made headlines. On 31st July 2022, Al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri was killed in a precision strike in the center of Kabul, and this was the first drone strike by the US since its withdrawal in August 2021. It is impossible to comprehend that; he was in Kabul without the Taliban's blessing, and they are now in an indefensible defensive position. There were fears that Pakistan would have to bear the cost of this strike. Thus, this revives the long-simmering debate about the decision to withdraw US forces from Afghanistan and how should the Taliban regime be approached. The Biden administration's engagement with Pakistan pre- and post-withdrawal has almost exclusively focused on Afghanistan. However, Pakistan wants the relationship to be defined more broadly, based, and rooted in geo-economic trade investment and connectivity. The US is not receptive to Pakistan's geo-economic pitch. The blame game and scapegoating of Pakistan need to stop. This is not helping the situation on the ground or the relationship. The country has hosted millions of Afghan

refugees since 1990. There are about three (3) million Afghan refugees residing in Pakistan.[37] "British General Sir Nick Carter acknowledged that with the large influx of refugees, it was nearly impossible for Pakistan to identify Taliban sympathizers from among the throngs of displaced Afghans".[38]

In September 2021, in the US Senate, 22 Republican lawmakers proposed a bill titled "Afghanistan Counterterrorism, Oversight, and Accountability Act of 2021", calling for Afghanistan's new Taliban government to be sanctioned, along with governments that have supported the Taliban.[39] The bill also calls for a report that will include "an assessment of support by state and non-state actors, including the government of Pakistan, for the Taliban between 2001 and 2020, that also looks at the provision of "sanctuary space, financial support, intelligence support, logistics and medical support, training, equipping, and tactical, operation or strategic direction".[40] The bill has been referred to the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. Former Federal Human Rights Minister Shireen Mazari reacted to the bill by saying that Pakistan will again be made to pay a heavy price for being an ally of the US in the 'War on Terror'. The former minister stated;

> *Twenty years of presence by economically and militarily powerful US & NATO left behind chaos with no stable governance structures. Pakistan is now being scapegoated for this failure…This was never our war. We suffered 80,000 casualties, a decimated economy, over 450 drone attacks by our US 'ally' and the disastrous fallout of these attacks on our tribal areas and people…It is time for those powers that were present in Afghanistan to look to their own failures instead of targeting Pakistan which paid a heavy price for being an ally and suffering constant abuse in a war that wasn't ours.*[41]

Pakistan insists that there are real limits to its leverage over the Afghan Taliban. Washington will likely continue to see Pakistan through the prism of neighboring countries: Afghanistan, India, and China.

Conclusion

Pakistan-US relations have sustained over the years despite the multiple challenges, though only with a few ups and downs. Pakistan has been the "most allied ally" of the US during the Cold War, the most sanctioned ally post-Pakistan's gate-crash into the nuclear club, a non-NATO ally post 9/11 and the most bombed ally. The last two statuses have been contingent on the situation in Afghanistan. The relationship is also a story of broken promises, marked by an acute trust deficit between the two countries. Pakistan's unending dependence on the US has depleted its options to the point that getting out of the bind is impossible. Pakistan lacks what it takes to free itself from it. More importantly, Pakistan's military, political, and economic elite are very comfortable despite the erratic nature of engagement. Until recently, the power elite of Pakistan has successfully suppressed any revolutionary change.

The love-hate relationship with the radical ideologues is also a two-edged sword that has worked well for Pakistan despite the challenges. It has allowed it to acquire manoeuvring space for itself with the US. The million-dollar question remains: Is this approach sustainable? For the first time in its history, the ruling elite of Pakistan is on the back foot, which may also change the trajectory of Pakistan's foreign policy. Several other countries have witnessed this paradigm shift, Iran and Turkey being two prime examples.

However, for now, Pakistan is getting more comfortable with the idea of hedging. Hedging is to be nicely located between balancing and bandwagoning and is a state's third strategic choice. The ongoing global power shifts, the most prominent of which is the rise of China, the relative decline of the US, Russia-China nexus, Russia's rising global assertiveness, and last but not least, the complete state of disarray and confusion the European Union is in, has given the middle powers the option of using the hedging strategy to the fullest. It involves policies that advocate a mixture of return maximization and risk-contingency planning that circumvents the dominance of major powers. In some ways, an insurance-seeking behavior where countries have many constraints and compulsions creates options and choices by cooperating with two more powerful states also competing. The Belgian scholar Jonathan Holslag calls it the return of hard hedging, meaning regional powers playing to both camps US and China, to avoid taking sides to maximize their options and autonomy. Former US Ambassador to Afghanistan and Pakistan, Ryan Crocker, stated in the New York Times that the US made a mistake by disengaging with Pakistan in the 1990s and would be repeating that mistake by turning away from Islamabad now. "We need to be engaged with Pakistan on ways to assess and deal with this enhanced threat," wrote Crocker. The relationship right now is that of a patron-client; it must progress to a partnership, which is more inclusive in nature. Pakistan's shift from geopolitics to geoeconomics should receive a positive reception from Washington; it is not factored into the relationship. The fault also lies on Pakistan's side, which has not built up the requisite infrastructure for this shift to be realized tangibly.

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5 India-US-Pakistan

Complexity of Strategic Triangle

Syed Hussain Shaheed Soherwordi and Saira Aquil

The South Asian geopolitical landscape has remained largely affected by India – Pakistan enduring rivalry with no end in foresight. The issue of Kashmir has been the major bone of contention between the two that has consequences for regional security and stability. Their bilateral tensions are also reflected in their foreign policy projection. Especially Pakistan, since its independence in 1947, has had to struggle with managing Indian influence and role in its regional and other bilateral ties. Pakistan's relationship with the United States (US), China, and Afghanistan remained influenced by the Indian factor. It structured the interaction pattern and policy-making choices in Islamabad along with Washington, Beijing and Kabul. Within this context, the interwoven political, economic, and military interactions between India, Pakistan, and the United States have shaped their complex relationship. As each country's foreign policy decisions significantly impact the others, these nations' actions are subject to political hyphenation. Especially the US has been vital in shaping the dynamics of New Delhi and Islamabad ties. For the US, India has been a key ally in countering China's influence in the Indo-Pacific strategy, Quad, and Sino-US bilateral relations.[1]

On the other hand, Pakistan remains a major geo-political actor in the region for the US. Pakistan's strategic location at the intersection of South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East is crucial to the US. Pakistan's support was instrumental for the US in its War on Terror and its hunt for al-Qaeda leaders. For Pakistan, the US has remained an important partner throughout. However, Washington's cozy ties with India always troubled Islamabad owing to its security concerns, especially due to the importance that the US attached to India. Pakistan has expressed concerns about the growing proximity between India and the US, calling for the US to maintain a more balanced approach.[2] Pakistan has also sought closer economic and trade ties with the US and has attempted to enhance its relationship with China to counter India's growing strategic partnership with the US. However, the US has claimed to maintain a balance between the two. In 2022 the State Department Spokesperson, Ned Price, told reporters at his daily news conference.

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> *We look to both as partners because we often have shared values. We do have, in many cases, shared interests. And the relationship we have with India stands on its own. The relationship we have with Pakistan stands on its own.*[3]

Pakistan, however, regards its eastern neighbor as its enemy and has serious security concerns. In contrast, the US has always maintained good relations with India and surprisingly New Delhi's close ties with Russia have not impeded this relationship.[4] Considering this complex triangular relationship, this chapter explores the Indian factor in the US-Pakistan bilateral relationship in its past and present context. The chapter goes deep down into various aspects of the US-India relationship that strengthen their bilateral ties and hence raises concerns in Islamabad. The triangular US-Pakistan-India relationship has had wider implications for the geopolitics of South Asia, hence affecting its stability.

India-US Multi-dimensional Partnership

The 2022 US National Security Strategy document crafted by the Biden-Harris administration considers India as a reliable partner in pursuit of its strategic interests in Asia Pacific especially in the context of countering China. It states,

> *As India is the world's largest democracy and a major defense partner, the United States and India will work together, bilaterally and multilaterally, to support our shared vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific.*[5]

This cooperation does not stop at the strategic and security aspects only. Rather the cooperation avenues between Indian and US have expanded from traditional security to non-traditional security concerns. Future generation communication technology and artificial intelligence (AI), space and cyber security and climate change are significant aspects of the New Delhi and Washington multifaceted relationship in its contemporary context. For the US, Indian importance emanates from several factors including its democratic model, huge trade and market potential, its nuclear power status and due to India's regional power posturing to counter China's influence and rise. This multifaceted relationship has been one of the key aspects of the South Asian geopolitical chessboard.

India's Democracy: Ideal for the US

After 1947, India's adherence to democracy has attracted the US appreciation. It would not be an exaggeration to state that the US-India partnership benefits from their longest and oldest democratic credentials. Both nations

take pride in sharing the same democratic values. Tanvi Madan has put this important credential in the following words

> *Democracy has contributed to the countries' perception of each other 'as' natural or 'like-minded' partners and even as role models, especially for countries and the peoples seeking to balance democracy, diversity, and development*.[6]

In 2005, under the Global Democracy Initiative, both US and India decided to assist nascent democracies.[7] They also contribute to the UN democracy fund to strengthen democratic processes in transitory and war-ridden societies. India does represent democracy as its strength to establish a close relationship in the upper echelons of the US state department and successfully lobby in the US Congress to achieve its bigger objectives to be accepted as a world player, not only as a counterbalance of China in the Indo-Pacific. However, there is a recent criticism on Indian PM Narendra Modi's strict adherence to Far-Right Hindu nationalism, referred to as *Hindutva*, which has been a source of human rights violation in India.[8]

India-US Trade and Economic Ties

In 2021, the United States and India traded a record USD 157 billion in goods and services.[9] Regarding international trade, the US is India's most important customer. Businesses in the US have expanded their operations in India because they see it as a strategically important market. Their counterparts in India are looking to do the same in the US. American-Indian trade continued to show resilience despite the global COVID-19 pandemic's devastating effects on the Indian economy. The figure rose from USD 120.6 billion in 2020 to USD 159.1 billion in 2021.[10] New Delhi's strategic thinking has diversified in recent years by including the Indian diaspora in promoting better relationships and economic collaboration between the US and India. According to a study, Indian diaspora in the US is approximately 4.5 million, the second largest after the Chinese diaspora.[11] Indian diaspora in the US has always advocated a strong relationship between the two countries.[12] To harness the wealth, intellect, services, and national branding of Asian Indian American, the Modi government devised a diaspora policy to facilitate the diaspora at home. New Delhi recognized the importance of its diaspora in the US as it gradually entered the US domestic political landscape. Indian immigrant engineers and managers are the backbones of Silicon Valley in the US. Diaspora achievements and potential are a political and economic asset for India. PM Modi held two larger rallies of Indian American & non-residential diaspora in 2014 and 2019 in the US to gauge the support of Indian American and showed the burgeoning of the India-US relationship. Even Trump attended Modi supporters rally in Houston, which is referred to as a "Howdy-Modi' affair.[13]

Nuclear Cooperation between India and the US

Through the Atoms for Peace program, the US assisted India's nuclear energy experiment in the 1950s. This entailed the construction of a nuclear reactor for India, providing nuclear fuel, and facilitating education for Indian scientists in US nuclear laboratories. However, India refused to sign the NPT in 1968 because it was biased, and its subsequent nuclear test in 1974 resulted in 25 years of isolation from the US and other nations.[14] In 2006, the US Congress passed the Hyde Act, also known as the US-India Nuclear Cooperation Approval and Non-proliferation Enhancement Act.[15] The Act sought to exempt a proposed nuclear agreement between the US and India from certain provisions of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 to facilitate the transfer of nuclear fuel and technology to India. The deed was regarded as a significant advancement in US-India relations.[16] The US and India are also engaged in civil nuclear cooperation, which has sometimes drawn criticism for being a source of the nuclear arms race in South Asia, where Pakistan felt threatened by such endeavors. Both countries have remained engaged in nuclear cooperation, and they are eyeing expanding that cooperation in the years to come. This nuclear cooperation has also focused on counterbalancing China's resolve to surpass US in the nuclear race. The 2005 India-US Civilian Nuclear deal was one such initiative to counter China.[17]

India: A Counter Balancer to China

Since the end of the Cold War, India and the US have worked to strengthen their ties in several areas against China's expanding sphere of influence. Several countries are looking at China's growing power because of its assertive behavior in the South China Sea and its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).[18] Over the years, this partnership has evolved and expanded, encompassing a wide range of areas, including defense, security, trade and investment, science and technology, and energy cooperation.

China growing clout in the world system led to the formation of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad). It is a strategic forum comprising the US, Japan, India, and Australia. The Quad was first formed in 2007 but was short-lived and lapsed after a few months. It was revived in 2017 and has become an increasingly important aspect of the Indo-Pacific security architecture. The Quad aims to enhance cooperation and coordination among the four countries on issues of common concern, including security, economic growth and development, and the promotion of a free and open Indo-Pacific region.[19] In 2019, the United States, Japan, Australia, and the Asia Development Bank, launched a public-private initiative called the Blue Dot Network. The program's objective was to encourage the development of high-quality, environmentally friendly infrastructure in the Indo-Pacific region. Concerns about the long-term viability and public accountability of

Chinese-funded infrastructure projects have prompted the Blue Dot Network to propose an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative.[20]

Furthermore, in response to alleged China's threats to national and economic security in the Indo-Pacific region, the United States has introduced the *Strategic Competition Act of 2021*, which aims to mobilize the country's strategic, economic, and diplomatic tools to meet the challenge. The bill hopes to strengthen and deepen the bilateral and regional partnerships with India by reiterating support for quadrilateral cooperation and the Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership with India, Taiwan, ASEAN, and New Zealand. The bill states that the US should "reaffirm its commitment to the Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership with India and further deepen bilateral defense consultations and collaboration with India commensurate with its status as a major defense partner."[21]

All such initiatives explain the Indian significance in the US foreign policy calculations to counter rising China's influence. This commonality of interest between the US and India brings Pakistan into the limelight, being the closest ally of China. Such initiatives strengthen Indian diplomatic posturing, which it has used against Pakistan, especially on the issue of Kashmir on several occasions. Hence this phenomenon creates geopolitical complexity for Pakistan.

Pakistan's Struggle with India-US Duo

As stated, the geopolitics has remained a crucial factor in shaping the dynamics of the US-Pakistan relations and Indian factor has a predominant role in this regard. For Pakistan the US-India cooperation has been perturbing in the following key areas.

Nuclear Politics in South Asia

In 1971, the Soviet Union's deployment of a nuclear-armed submarine to protect India from Pakistan paved the way for India's production and testing of a nuclear device in 1974.[22] The test, known as the Smiling Buddha, elicited domestic approval but sparked global alarm as India became the newest nuclear club member. The event prompted the formation of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, an international organization that regulates exports of nuclear material and technology to prevent proliferation. Pakistan responded by developing its nuclear weapons program with the assistance of China.[23] The testing of Pakistan's nuclear weapon for the first time in May 1998 brought the persistent conflict between India and Pakistan to the forefront of the region, thus elevating the stakes in the long-standing conflict over the Kashmir region. The dispute reached its zenith in February 2019 when India responded to a terrorist attack in Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir by dropping conventional bombs on Pakistan's territory.

The nuclear arms race between India and Pakistan has significantly affected the relationship between Pakistan and the US. In response to India's nuclear tests, Pakistan felt compelled to develop its nuclear weapons program, leading to tensions with the US. The Pressler Amendment was a provision that was added to the US Foreign Assistance Act in 1985 to prohibit US military and economic assistance to Pakistan unless it could be certified by the US President that Pakistan did not possess nuclear weapons. The purpose of the sanctions was to prevent nuclear weapons proliferation, given the US perspective that Pakistan's nuclear program was a destabilizing factor in the region.[24]

Such sanctions significantly impacted the relations between the US and Pakistan, resulting in a marked decline in military and aid cooperation. These sanctions were eventually lifted in 2001, following the terrorist attacks of 9/11, as Pakistan became a non-NATO US ally in the War on Terror. The US's strategic focus on India, including its support for India's nuclear program and technology transfers, has contributed to heightened tensions between India and Pakistan and fueled an arms race between the two countries, further complicating US-Pakistan relations. The presence of nearly 325 nuclear weapons (160 by India and 165 by Pakistan) in South Asia has rendered it the most concerning nuclear hot spot in the word.[25]

Kashmir: An Achilles Heel of Pakistan

Kashmir, a princely state during India's partition, was at the center of the first India-Pakistan conflict in 1947-48. Pakistan annexed a third of the land, and India kept the rest under its sphere of influence. The region was a primary flashpoint during the 1965 conflict, and heavy fighting occurred along the ceasefire line. The Kargil conflict of 1999 also led to heavy casualties. The United Nations successfully mediated a ceasefire that both sides accepted, ending the wars. The ceasefire line created officially became the Line of Control (LoC) in 1949. Pakistan has often sought the US's help in resolving the Kashmir dispute. Pakistan thinks adding the US into the mix will increase the pressure on India to negotiate a solution. It regards the US's backing as the key to getting India to the table. Human rights abuses in Indian-administered Kashmir trouble Pakistan, and the country wants to end the conflict for regional peace. During the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s, Pakistan supported the Afghan revolutionaries backed by the US and got substantial military and economic aid in return. During that time, Pakistan also lobbied the US to help settle the Kashmir conflict.

In exchange for critical help to US in its War on Terror, Pakistan always expected the US to address its strategic asymmetry and strategic concerns viz India and Afghanistan respectively.[26] The US invested approximately USD 33 billion in military and economic aid in Pakistan between 2002 and 2018, with much of this money going toward counterterrorism initiatives.[27] Despite the strong strategic connection between the US and Pakistan, Washington has

avoided interfering in the Kashmir dispute, which it sees as a domestic issue between India and Pakistan. India, meanwhile, has argued that the Kashmir issue is best resolved through bilateral talks between India and Pakistan and has rejected any outside attempts to mediate the conflict.[28]

Pakistan Balancing US-China-India in the Region

There are many facets to Pakistan's connections with the US, China, and India. Pakistan's relationship with the USA has been a roller coaster ride.[29] While there has been counterterrorism cooperation between the two, there have also been strained relations due to allegations that Pakistan supported militants. Military and economic aid from the US has been granted to Pakistan; however, there have been times when the US has suspended or decreased funding due to disagreements with Pakistani policy. Pakistan's relationship with the US is significant for its economy, security, and regional stability. The US has always recognized the importance of its partnership with India.

In September 2014, Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi and the US President Barak Obama issued a joint statement exclaiming vision statement for the US-India Strategic Partnership with the message "*chalein saath saath*, forward together we go."[30] During Obama's visit in January 2015, the two sides issued the Delhi Declaration of Friendship and adopted the Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean Region. This was the first time the two countries had jointly articulated the challenges in the region and were a forebearer of subsequent work in the Quad and on approaches to the Indo-Pacific strategic construct.[31]

The same kind of friendship exists between China and Pakistan. Since the middle of the 1960s, when the US ceased military and economic cooperation following the war with India and imposed sanctions, Pakistan has been a major recipient of Chinese financial assistance. The 1962 war between India and China was partly a response to rising tensions between the two countries. Pakistan received military aid from China and launched joint military exercises and training.[32] The India-Pakistan war in 1971 tested Pakistan-China relations. Pakistan's diplomatic and military support from China offset India's military superiority. China's commitment to Pakistan's security and stability was shown at that crucial point in the bilateral relationship. China's massive investment in Pakistan's infrastructure as part of its Belt and Road Initiative has been a boon to its economy. In 2015, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a USD 65 billion investment in Pakistan and the flagship project of its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), brought the two nations' five-decade-long strategic relationship to the economic sphere.[33] China's energy, infrastructure, and other investment has helped Pakistan's economy. CPEC has given China maritime access through Gwadar.

However, both India and Pakistan do not enjoy good relations. Various wars and persistent border skirmishes have marked their rivalry. Terrorism,

the Kashmir conflict, and water-sharing agreements are just a few issues that further complicate an already conflictual relationship. While tensions at government level remain high between the two countries, Pakistan has made an effort to improve people-to-people contacts between the two countries. For example, Pakistan facilitated the Indian Sikhs who had difficulty travelling to the Kartarpur Gurdwara for many years. In November 2018, the governments of India and Pakistan agreed to open the Kartarpur Corridor. This border crossing allows Indian Sikhs to visit the sacred sites, situated inside Pakistan, without a visa. Timed to coincide with celebrations of Guru Nanak's 550th birthday, the corridor opened in late 2019.[34]

The government of Pakistan viewed the corridor as a goodwill gesture and was hailed by Indian Sikh groups who had been hoping for easier access to the sacred place for some time. A US brokered ceasefire deal in February 2021 has reduced the tensions on the eastern border between India and Pakistan. However, the inherent tensions and antagonism would take longer to be eliminated and the US proactive role has always been compromised due to Washington's lack of long-term strategic vision for South Asian region.

Cozy Indo-Afghan Ties and Pakistan's Neglected Concerns during War on Terror

India and Afghanistan stayed on good terms during the Cold War; however, ties were strained by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and during the rule of the Taliban in the 1990s. After the Russian invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, the then Pakistani President General Zia ul Haq's efforts to aid the Afghans—desperate to eject the invaders and the US ready to defeat its long-time Cold War enemy—were also focused on restoring Pakistan's lost strategic depth from the north.[35] Since then, India has been a major contributor to Afghanistan's security and political transition, as well as its development and humanitarian efforts. After the Taliban system collapsed and a new government was installed in Afghanistan in 2001, India became more involved in the country's reconstruction and development.

Regional competition with Pakistan has also influenced India's participation in Afghanistan. India has attempted to strengthen ties with Afghanistan to counter Pakistan's influence. Relations between India and Afghanistan have remained strong, with high-level exchanges and collaboration in various areas. India has been involved in training Afghan soldiers as part of its efforts to support the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan. Since 2010, India has trained thousands of Afghan soldiers and officers in various fields, including basic military training, counterterrorism, logistics, and leadership. India also provided equipment and infrastructure support to the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF), including the supply of military helicopters, transport aircraft, and military vehicles. India's USD 3 billion investments in Afghanistan had become a lucrative source of potential cordiality in India, and Taliban ruled Afghanistan. In an exclusive

interview with India's News 18 TV channel, Afghanistan's Defence Minister Mullah Yaqub, when asked if the Taliban would be willing to send their army officers to India for training, replied that they had no issues with it.[36] Mullah Yaqub's comments highlight a potential shift in the Taliban's willingness to cooperate with India on security issues and could pave the way for further cooperation between the two countries. It is important to note that the security situation in Afghanistan is currently in flux, and the impact of this regime change on India-Afghanistan relations remains uncertain.

Pakistan has long claimed that the Indian Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) supports separatist and militant groups inside Pakistan, namely in the province of Baluchistan. In his first public appearance after his surrender, former spokesperson and leader of the TTP, Ehsan Ullah Ehsan, alleged that India's intelligence agency, RAW, and Afghanistan's National Directorate of Security (NDS) had provided significant support to the Pakistani Taliban or TTP.[37] Moreover, Pakistan has claimed that India is strategically encircling Pakistan by utilizing its presence in Afghanistan to sow discord and instability in Pakistan. India has refuted these claims and instead accused Pakistan of providing a haven to insurgent groups like the Taliban and the Haqqani Network, which have attacked Afghanistan against Indian interests. The heightened tensions and instability in the region are exacerbated, not expected by Pakistan before August 15, 2021, by the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan. During the US-led war on terror in Afghanistan, the US largely ignored the India-Afghanistan nexus on terrorism in Pakistan. The US saw Afghanistan primarily through the lens of its security interests and did not want to upset the fragile balance of power in the region. It turned a blind eye to Islamabad's concerns and instead focused on its objectives of defeating the Taliban and Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan.

Conclusion

India and the US have developed a multi-dimensional partnership encompassing various fields such as defense, economic cooperation, and counterterrorism. The partnership has deepened over the years, with the two countries holding frequent high-level talks, joint military exercises, and signing agreements on defense and technology transfer. In 2020, the two countries signed the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) to share geospatial intelligence, further strengthening their strategic ties. The partnership has also provided India access to advanced military equipment and technology, improving its defense capabilities.[38] However, Pakistan has struggled with the India-US duo, viewing it as a threat to its national security. Pakistan fears that India's military capabilities will be further bolstered. India's growing role in Afghanistan and its warming ties with the US have troubled Pakistan, which sees these developments as potentially threatening its regional interests.

Moreover, Pakistan is deeply concerned about the US's silence on issues such as Kashmir and water disputes between India and Pakistan. Human

rights violations in Kashmir called for the US to be more active in resolving the conflict. However, the US has largely remained silent on the issue, which has further strained relations between the US and Pakistan. The US should maintain a balanced approach towards India and Pakistan in various areas of cooperation, including the economy, defense, and civil nuclear technology. While it is essential to strengthening strategic partnerships with India, the US should not overlook Pakistan's interests and concerns. In addition, the US should work towards addressing Pakistan's concerns about Indian terrorist actions on its soil while also promoting regional stability and peace. By maintaining a just and balanced approach, the US can help to foster greater trust and cooperation between India and Pakistan, leading to greater stability and prosperity in the region.

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Part III

The US Analogies: Relevance for Pakistan


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6 Human Rights and Media in the US
What Can Pakistan Adopt?

Kenneth M. Holland

Being one of the world's oldest democracies with a written constitution, the US is an excellent model for the young country of Pakistan as it continues its evolution toward a modern democratic republic.[1] The 1973 constitution provides for parliamentary democracy with executive power concentrated in the prime minister's office. It guarantees the liberal individual rights of freedom of speech, freedom of the press, religion, association, and assembly. Article 51 of the Constitution of Pakistan reserves 60 seats for women and ten for minorities out of 342 members of the National Assembly. The Federal Shariat Court reads Article 25(2) of the Pakistani constitution as guaranteeing gender equality.

Since the general election of 2008, Pakistan has made impressive progress in building a modern liberal democracy. Pakistan's position in the Fragile States Index, published annually by the Fund for Peace, improved from nine in 2006 to 30 in 2022, indicating substantial progress toward a stable democracy.[2] Pakistan's score in providing people's access to political rights and civil liberties rose from 6.5 in 2000, when Freedom House classified the country as Not Free, to 37.0 in 2022, with a ranking of Partly Free.[3] The recent passage of several new laws evidences Pakistan's growing commitment to human rights and media freedom. On December 2, 2021, the then President of Pakistan, Dr Arif Alvi, signed the Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals Bill to safeguard the rights of working journalists, following the enactment of a similar bill by the Sindh Provincial Assembly in May 2021. Also, in May 2022, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif pledged to defend press freedom by dropping plans opposed by the media for a new media control authority.[4] Over the past twenty years, the broadcast news media in Pakistan have emerged as a watchdog on the government.[5] In 2021, after a gap of several years, the government appointed chairpersons to both the National Commission for Human Rights and National Commission on the Status of Women. In April 2021, Pakistan secured membership in the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, promising to promote gender equality and women empowerment.[6]

In 2021, the Supreme Court of Pakistan ruled against the use of capital punishment against prisoners who were mentally ill.[7] In 2022, an ordinance

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to the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act 2016 (PECA) that would allow law enforcement agencies to prosecute journalists was declared unconstitutional by the Islamabad High Court for violating Article 19 of the Constitution, which guarantees freedom of speech. The court stated that free speech and the right to receive information, protected under Article 19-A of the Constitution, are essential for a society's development, progress, and prosperity and that their suppression under the PECA ordinance was contrary to the principles of democracy.[8] Civil society groups in Pakistan in 2021 won victories in court that reversed network shutdowns and internet censorship decisions.[9] Progress in protecting religious minorities was achieved in March 2022 when Pakistan's Federal Ministry of Education said that Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, the Bahá'i faith, Christianity, Hinduism, Kalash, and Sikhism would be added to the religious studies component of the Single National Curriculum. The policy marks the first time in the history of Pakistan that the Ministry of Education has included such a broad set of religions in the national school curriculum.[10] Greater political stability is evident from the fact that 2018 witnessed the third consecutive election where a democratic handover of power was observed.

In April 2022, the prime minister, Imran Khan, was removed from office under the constitution through a no-confidence vote and replaced following proper parliamentary procedure by Shehbaz Sharif, leader of the opposition political party. The Freedom in the World 2022 report noted, "Pakistan holds regular elections under a competitive multiparty political system".[11] The 2021 statute regulating social media states that every person or organization shall have the right to express and disseminate any online content as enshrined under Article 19 of the Constitution.[12] Pakistan showed progress in the Democracy Index, its score rising from 3.92 in 2006 to 4.32 in 2021 on a scale from 0 to 10.[13]

Pakistan's transition to a modern liberal democracy, however, is not complete and still in its nascent stage. In the 2021 Democracy Index, Pakistan ranked 104 out of 167 countries globally. Pakistan ranked 117th out of 179 (with Eritrea ranking 179th) on the 2022 Liberal Democracy Index published by the Varieties of Democracy Institute.[14] Pakistan ranked 153 out of 156 nations on the Global Gender Gap 2021 index issued by the World Economic Forum.[15] The index benchmarks gender-based gaps among four key Dimensions--Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment. Among 180 countries ranked on the World Press Freedom Index, Pakistan is 157, near the bottom and 12 positions lower than the year before.[16] On the 2021 Human Freedom Index, which measures personal and economic liberty, Pakistan ranked 145 out of 165 countries, dropping three positions from the 2018 index.[17] The World Justice Project's Rule of Law Index 2021 ranked Pakistan 130th out of 139 countries. Pakistan scores poorly in fundamental rights, corruption, order and security, and regulatory enforcement.[18] Pakistan ranked ninth on the Global Impunity Index (Somalia ranked first), which assesses countries where journalists are

regularly assaulted, and their assailants go free.[19] In the 2021 Freedom on the Net report, Pakistan was rated as "Not Free" regarding internet freedom, scoring 25 out of 100.[20] A good starting point for identifying areas where the US could inspire further reforms in Pakistan is the focus of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), an independent, non-profit organization founded in 1987. The HRCP's mandate includes women's rights, freedom of the press, freedom of speech, association, and freedom of assembly.[21]

Women's Rights

Eighty-five percent of the UN member states, including Pakistan, have explicit constitutional provisions that prohibit discrimination based on sex.[22] The constitution of the United States, however, does not. The US Supreme Court, however, has interpreted the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to prohibit discrimination based on gender. The fundamental rights that women have in America, under both federal and state law, include voting and running for public office, entering legal contracts, equality in family law, ownership of property, non-discrimination in education, employment, housing, public accommodations, and credit, equal pay for equal work, and protection from violence. Much of the advancement of gender equality and women's rights was achieved by Ruth Bader Ginsburg, a US Court of Appeals judge from 1980 to 1993 and an Associate Justice of the U. S. Supreme Court from 1993 to 2020. Before joining the judiciary, Ginsburg, a graduate of Columbia Law School, was active in civil society on behalf of women's equality and co-founded the Women's Rights Project at the American Civil Liberties Union (ALOC). As an attorney, she argued six gender discrimination cases before the Supreme Court and won five. In one of the cases in which she assisted in writing the brief, *Reed v. Reed* (1971), the Supreme Court extended the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment protections to women.[23] Ginsburg authored the opinion of the Supreme Court in *United States v. Virginia* (1996), which ruled that a public university's male-only admissions policy violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. The US Congress has passed several laws protecting women's rights, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which prohibits sex-based discrimination in any school, college, or university that receives funding from the federal government. The law led to a large increase in the number of girls and women participating in athletics at both the secondary school and university levels, including basketball, volleyball, soccer, cross-country running, and softball. Federal Violence Against Women Act of 1994 and state laws protect women by penalizing assault and battery. As a result of these legal protections, women have made impressive strides.

Women comprise nearly half (47 percent) of the US workforce. In the private sector, 41 percent of managers are women, including 75 percent in human resources, 75 percent in medical and health services, 62 percent in marketing and 49 percent in food service.[24] In 2016 the number of women enrolled in

law schools exceeded that of men for the first time. In 2020 women made up 54 percent of all law students in the United States.[25] Since 2017 women have also comprised the majority of medical students, constituting 54 percent of the number of enrolled students in medical school in the 2019-2020 academic year.[26]

It is important to mention that all those achievements were only possible after years long struggle and steadfastness of the women in the US. The same is expected of the women in Pakistan where they account for more than 50 percent of the population. The journey has just begun and it has a long way to go, hence it needs aspiration from successful analogies like the US.

Media Freedom

There is a close relationship between the rights of women and the freedom of the media. Freedom of the press can expose gender discrimination, exposure that can lead to greater enforcement of existing laws and new laws advancing the equality of women and men. Freedom of expression is a fundamental right in the Pakistani and American constitutions, on which other rights depend (see Appendices A and B). The First Amendment of the US Constitution guarantees freedom of speech, "the first freedom,"[27] and freedom of the press. Americans can say and write what they like, with few exceptions. Limits on free speech include obscenity, fraud, child pornography, defamation, harassment, incitement to violence, and true threats of violence. The First Amendment protects offensive speech. In the words of the Supreme Court in *Texas v. Johnson* (1989), "If there is a bedrock principle underlying the First Amendment, it is that government may not prohibit the expression of an idea simply because society finds the idea itself offensive or disagreeable." Hate speech is legal if the speaker does not take illegal action or incite others to commit illegal acts. The speaker cannot be punished simply for the words spoken (*Snyder v. Phelps*, 2011). There is no government censorship of the media. In the recent words of the US ambassador to Georgia, "Freedom to criticize the government is a core principle of a healthy democracy".[28] Journalism in the US is one of the most vocal and active worldwide. The Watergate scandal vividly illustrated the role of investigative journalism in exposing government wrongdoing in the 1970s, which led to the only resignation of a sitting president in American history.[29] Freedom of the press is not only about journalists' rights but also is correlated with the public's right to information.

In the United States, the public's right to know is protected by statute, not by the constitution, as in Pakistan (Art. 19A). The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) provides that anyone can request access to federal agency records or information. Some records, however, are protected from disclosure. Exemptions include classified information for national defense or foreign policy, internal personnel rules and practices, trade secrets and confidential

business information, attorney-client communication, personnel and medical files, and law enforcement records or information.[30] Individuals can submit a FOIA request to the agency's FOIA Office. The request must be in writing and describe the records sought. Most federal agencies now accept FOIA requests electronically. All fifty state governments have their FOIA-type statutes.

Along with having constitutional protection, as a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Pakistan is obliged to ensure protection and promotion of the rights of journalists and media professionals by adopting appropriate legislative, administrative and policy measures.[31] However, there are several concerns regarding the freedom of Media in Pakistan and it may take a while for democracy to prosper in its true spirit.

Digital Media

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulates electronic communication in the United States. The FCC, under the free speech clause of the First Amendment, has minimal content regulations. As a result of the First Amendment, very little government-mandated technical filtering of the internet occurs in the United States. There is significant public resistance to the type of content restriction policies found in Pakistan and many other countries. In the United States, prohibited content is not blocked but removed. The one exception is child pornography, which the First Amendment does not protect. Unlike most countries, removal is done by private parties rather than the government. Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act provides immunity for website platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, concerning third-party content. Internet service providers are considered "platforms" rather than "publishers." The language of section 230 allowed the internet to develop and is considered the foundation of social media: "No provider or user of an interactive computer service shall be treated as the publisher or speaker of any information provided by another information content provider." As a result, social media providers are not responsible for the content posted on their platforms. Internet platforms, however, have their standards that regulate content. Some content not allowed on Facebook, for example, is nudity, sexually suggestive content, hate speech, credible threats, direct attacks on an individual or group, excessive violence, fake or imposter profiles, and spam. One of the areas of controversy is the principle of net neutrality, according to which internet service providers (ISPs) treat all data on the internet the same and do not discriminate. Republicans tend to oppose net neutrality, as inconsistent with the principle of the free market, according to which ISPs, as private companies, should be able to give priority to certain data, such as streaming video, charge money for specific online content, and slow down or block other content. In contrast, Democrats tend to favor net neutrality on equality of access grounds.[32]

Freedom of Association

Unlike the Constitution of Pakistan (Article 17), the US constitution does not explicitly protect freedom of association. In *NAACP v. Alabama* (1958), the US Supreme Court ruled that freedom of association is essential to freedom of speech. People often need to join with others to engage in effective speech.[33] Also supporting a constitutional right of association is the First Amendment's reference to "the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." Freedom of association is an individual right to join or leave groups voluntarily and a collective right of the association to pursue the interests of its members. Freedom of association includes forming or joining a trade union and engaging in collective bargaining. The Supreme Court has placed limits on the implied freedom of association. It is illegal, for example, to consider race in making contracts; thus, private schools cannot discriminate in the admission of students based on Runyon *v. McCrary*, (1976). French political theorist Alexis de Tocqueville in his tour of America in the 1830s, admired the tendency of Americans to form associations in pursuit of political, social, and religious goals, a characteristic that he believed strengthened their capacity for self-government.[34] The freedom of association ensures a vibrant civil society in the United States, which both transmits the people's preferences to the government and holds the government accountable to the people.

Freedom of Assembly

The constitutions of Pakistan and the US guarantee the freedom of assembly (see Appendices A and B). It is closely associated with freedom of association and freedom of speech. It is the right of individuals to come together and collectively express their views, especially "to petition the Government for a redress of grievances," as the U.S. First Amendment says. Through freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and periodic elections, the people hold the government accountable for its actions and omissions. The right of assembly is an essential component of democracy, founded on the people's sovereignty. It is also known as the right to protest. Assemblies must be peaceful. If a crowd becomes violent, it can be dispersed by the police, and individuals penal for disorderly conduct. The right of access to the courts, legislatures and administrative agencies of the government is included within the right of petition, implied by the language of the First Amendment (*California Motor Transport Co. v. Trucking Unlimited*, 1972). Marches and encampments to protest or present petitions are sometimes repressed as threats to public order. An example is the expulsion of protesters in Washington, DC, who had come from around the country to demand payments of bonuses to World War I veterans.[35] The Supreme Court has ruled that the right of assembly is not absolute but relative and must be exercised in consonance with peace and good order, but that it cannot be abridged or denied in the guise of the regulation (*Hague v. CIO*, 1939).

Protests have been an integral part of the history of American democracy. Marches and demonstrations in the 1960s were key in dismantling racial segregation in the American South. In the United States, a person's right to organize a protest is strongest in "traditional public forums," including streets, sidewalks and parks. Counter-protesters have the same First Amendment rights as protesters, but police may separate the two groups. Protesters do not need a government permit to march on the streets or the sidewalks if they do not obstruct traffic. If a march, however, requires the police to block traffic or if it involves many people, the government may require a permit. The local government cannot deny a permit because the group intends to express unpopular views on a controversial topic.[36]

Conclusion

The more than 200 years of experience in the US of exercising fundamental freedoms provide many models for Pakistan as it transitions to liberal democracy. There is a remarkable similarity in the language of the constitutions of Pakistan and the United States, guaranteeing the equality of men and women and the rights of free speech, freedom of the press, freedom of association and freedom of assembly. Pakistan has many reasons to advance these basic rights, including strengthening its relationship with Western countries. The Parliament of the European Union, Pakistan's largest trading partner, for example, in April 2021 passed a resolution deploring human rights violations in Pakistan. The EU Parliament called for a review of Pakistan's eligibility for trade benefits conditional on its compliance with human rights obligations.[37] International development agencies, including the World Bank, have human rights criteria for granting loans or grants to applying countries. Since 1950 the World Bank has provided more than USD 40 billion in assistance to Pakistan. The Country Partnership Strategy governs the bank's current program in Pakistan for 2022-2026, which has four priority focus areas: girls' and boys' education, growing a healthy, green, and clean Pakistan, and inclusive growth.[38] Advancing the equality of women and the rights of minorities not only helps fulfil Pakistan's transition to democracy but also positions it to qualify for continuing development assistance. Given the similarity in the two partners' constitutions, there is much that Pakistan can adopt from the American experience in promoting human rights and media freedom.

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7 The Fair and Free Elections in Pakistan

Learning from the US Electoral Politics

Zafar Nawaz Jaspal

Since primordial times, the election processes have been adopted to make the governors accountable to the governed. In modern polities, it is common to equate representative government and elections with democracy. Through the elections, governs select the ruling elite to administer and steward the state. Therefore, fair elections are a cornerstone of a functional modern democratic polity. The biggest puzzle in the Pakistani democratic political system is the credibility of elections. The losers in the elections generally do not accept their defeat gracefully because they believe that their party or candidate is the best one. Besides, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has failed to mature as a trustworthy institution in the country.

The former Prime Minister of Pakistan (2018-2022) and Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Imran Khan, questioned the integrity of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) several times.[1] Generally scandalizing the Election Commission is viewed against democratic principles. On October 20, 2022, the PML-N senior leader also former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi (2017-2018) pointed out that the democratic system, without the sanctity of a ballot box, could not deliver, therefore, demanded for the electoral reforms. He accused that the Senate of Pakistan has "become a center for horse trading, as some candidates have spent a lot of money to buy votes and get elected."[2] There are several other examples where the ECP is being questioned for its transparency and credibility. Such allegations draw attention towards the declining credibility of the ballot box, which could cause the rejection of the election results. The legitimacy of such governments is always questioned which come into power as a result of questionable electoral process. It may even result in political violence, witnessed around the world hence affecting the stability of a state. A report by the Kofi Annan Foundation explains the importance of elections in the following words:

> *Elections are not an end in themselves. Their purpose, as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is to ascertain the will of the people regarding their government. They are processes to confer legitimacy to govern, and to peacefully resolve political competition.*

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> *A genuine election is ultimately one in which the outcome reflects the freely expressed choices of the people.*[3]

Pakistan is no exception in this regard where rigging in elections, violence on election days, delay in the election results and transparency of the ECP is always questioned. For instance, in 1977, the ruling Pakistan People's Party (PPP) allegedly rigged the general elections, which resulted in the country-wide political agitation causing the demise of the democratic political system and abeyance of the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan. Ironically, Pakistani political elite failed to realize the significance of the fair election and was unable to improve the sanctity of the Election Commission of Pakistan despite the nearly two-decades-long autocratic regimes of General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq (1977-1988) and General Pervez Musharraf (1999-2007).

Importantly, the election losers refused to accept the election results of the recent two general elections held on May 11, 2013, and July 25, 2018.[4] The questioning of the fairness of the said elections discredited the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Government (2013-2018) and PTI Government (2018-2022), which make both elected governments vulnerable to nondemocratic forces' continual interference. Indeed, it is not adequate to simply say that the Pakistani elections process is fair and one should not talk about it. It is also not reasonable to just complain about unfairness and not do anything about it.

The recurring puzzle of conducting free and fair elections in Pakistan germinated into two interlinked questions. How to ensure a fair elections process in Pakistan? Can Pakistan adopt and replicate election officers' fair election practices of the United States to make its elections process credible and trustworthy? Admittedly, no two democratic countries are exactly alike due to incompatibility in their political culture and evolution of the political system, yet one can learn and adopt the electoral practices of the other for the credibility and smooth functioning of a democratic political system. Though, Pakistan and the United States are federations,[5] but the former is following a parliamentary system of government and the latter is grounded on a presidential form of the political system. Both systems have analogous as well as divergent characteristics. However, both systems' smooth functioning requires the regular holding of fair and free elections in the country.

The American is the largest of the older well-established democracies, with a long and uninterrupted history of free elections. The Americans are viewed as the pinnacle nation in the democratic world due to the credibility of their electoral processes. For this reason, it can be argued that the American elections can provide good analogies for Pakistan to follow.

This chapter is divided into seven sub-sections. The first section precisely explains the evolution of democratic political systems. It is followed by an explanation of the constitutional framework for the election of the President and Vice-President of the United States of America. The third section critically examines the Americans' belief in the process of election fairness despite

political polarization in their society. However, such a belief in the process of election fairness is absent in Pakistani society. The fourth section spells out the genesis of the 2022-23 political crisis in Pakistan. It underlines the incompetence of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and the political engineering of the military-led establishment, which has been viewed by the opposition parties as the major causes of the current political crises in the country. The fifth section examines the apprehensions over the ECP and Constitutional initiatives to improve the functioning of the Commission. Besides, it contains empirical data, which discloses that the ECP is not truly independent, impartial and effective. The sixth section contemplates that like the United States, all government agencies in Pakistan operate within the orbit of law and all state institutions sincerely struggle towards holding free and fair elections. It is followed by a conclusion.

Representative Governments Through Election

The election evolved as an integral feature of the democratic political systems or the representative governments in Europe and North America during the seventeenth century. With the passage of time the electoral process got matured as the liberal representational model, which promises individuals the freedom to act according to their interests and wishes. "A liberal model highlights party systems and elected representative institutions as the key mode and site of democratic governance."[6] In this elected representative system the individuals express their desires through their right to vote freely. Gradually, the representative democratic structures take the form of parliamentary and presidential systems. In these systems, the state safeguards the sphere of personal autonomy of citizens. Constitutionally, both Pakistan and the United States are federations. Sovereignty is constitutionally divided between the federal (central) government and its federating units or political constituent units.[7] In Pakistan the political constituents are called 'provinces' and in the United States, the federating units are called 'states'. Unlike the United States, Pakistan is a parliamentary federal republic. The 1973 Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan "demands the practice of democracy within the political parties to promote democratic norms in political culture and to create a political environment conducive to strengthening the federal system in Pakistan."[8]

Electoral College in US Polity

The United States is a presidential federal republic. Though having more than two and a quarter century of a democratic system of government, it is not so different from other democracies. Americans go to the polls at multiple levels—federal, state and local—every year. "While the drama of the presidential elections every four years overshadows the many other electoral races at the federal, state and local levels, Americans are constantly debating and

deciding the results of political contests in a noisy, confrontational, but also continuous manner."[9] Interestingly, this debate has caused and endured political polarization in the United States but did not derail the democratic political system.

The US Constitution (1787), Article II, Section 1, modified by the 12th Amendment (1804), provides the constitutional framework for the election of the President and Vice-President of the United States of America. Accordingly, both are "not elected directly by US voters, but rather by the Electoral College, a representative body composed of 538 electors chosen by voters in parallel contests in each of the 50 US states and the District of Columbia."[10] The fairness of the electoral process and popular representation through the Electoral College has been frequently debated in the US. It is because, "in 48 of 50 states, the candidates winning the most popular votes win all the state's electoral votes, the general ticket or "winner-take-all" (WTA) system."[11] The critics claim that WTA disenfranchises voters who choose the losing candidates. Conversely, the proponents of WTA opine that it enhances the winning Presidential candidate's legitimacy. Hence, currently, the US public opinion is divided over the continuity or the abolition of the Electoral College.

Americans' Belief in Elections Fairness

The American citizens have a consensual belief that voting is a fundamental right, and officials must let every voter vote and count every ballot cast. Moreover, they agreed that the result of the elections ought to be accepted. For example, in recent American history, despite President Trump's "several achievements during his term, including a USD 1.5 trillion tax cut, criminal justice reform to reduce mass incarceration, the establishment of the Space Force, and the reshaping of the federal judiciary with a near record number of appointments," the voters expressed their displeasure during 2018 midterm over his policies such as a travel ban barring visitors from seven predominantly Muslim nations, shut down the government over a dispute about funding for a border wall, the US exit from Paris Climate Agreement, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and the Iran nuclear deal; rolled back efforts to rebuild relations with Cuba; overturned scores of environmental regulations; and repealing Obama-care. Consequently, Democrats won back the House of Representatives in the 2018 midterms with a net gain of forty seats.[12]

During the 2020 presidential campaign, Trump sued that the election would be fraudulent. He claimed it would be the "most corrupt election in our nation's history" and refused to say whether he would accept the results or cooperate in a peaceful transfer of power. "The only way we're going to lose this election is if the election is rigged," he told supporters.[13] Conversely, Joseph Robinette Biden, Jr., the presidential nominee of the Democratic Party, trusted the fair process of the elections. In his closing argument, he told voters, "This is our opportunity to leave the dark, angry politics of the

past four years behind us. . .. I run to unite this nation. And to heal this nation."[14] More than 66 per cent of eligible voters cast a ballot, the highest percentage in more than a century, since the election of 1900. Biden received a 306–232 win in the Electoral College with a 51 to 47 per cent victory in the popular vote.[15]

Although Donald Trump, the nominee of the Republican Party, refused to accept the legitimacy of the vote and declined to concede defeat, he was ousted from the White House. The Trump "campaign filed more than fifty lawsuits alleging improprieties in the vote across a handful of swing states. His advisors also unleashed a torrent of allegations, including that computer software with a connection to Venezuelan socialists was responsible for flipping millions of Trump votes to Biden and that truckloads of fraudulent ballots were delivered to voting sites in the middle of the night."[16] But they failed to erode the majority of Americans' trust in their electoral system. Notably, one of the Trump-appointed judges wrote, "Charges of unfairness are serious. But calling an election unfair does not make it so. Charges require specific allegations and then proof. We have neither here."[17] Hence, political stability prevailed despite all odds due to the people's trust in fair and free elections because officials followed election laws. Consequently, on January 20, 2021, Joseph Robinette Biden, Jr. was officially sworn in as the 46th President of the United States.

The preceding discussion reveals that Americans have been divided over the viability of the Presidential Electoral College in their polity. Many Americans opined that the election of the US President needs immediate reforms, but they have refrained to question the legitimacy of the elected President of the United States. A similar kind of political maturity is missing in the Pakistani political culture. Hence, the opposition parties in the National Assembly of Pakistan dubbed the leader of the house (Prime Minister) as a "selected" or "imported" prime minister.[18] Such branding of an elected Prime Minister not only derails the legitimacy of the Chief Executive of the country but also questions the credibility Election Commission of Pakistan's role in holding fair and free elections in the country. The mistrust over the Commission's performance will be examined in the following paragraphs.

Genesis of 2022-23 Political Crisis in Pakistan

Since the formation of former Prime Minister Imran Khan's government (2018-2022), a political crisis started to brew. Though the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), headed by Imran Khan, won the majority seats—155 (general seats 122, reserved 28, minority 5) of the National Assembly in the 2018 general elections or legislative elections, the party was short of 17 seats to demonstrate a simple majority, i.e., 172 members support in the National Assembly to form the government under the premiership of Imran Khan. A simple majority in the National Assembly was a prerequisite for electing a Prime Minister (chief executive) of Pakistan. Therefore, for forming a

government, PTI formed a political alliance with the smaller political parties (Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid faction from Punjab; Grand Democratic Alliance and Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan from Sind; Balochistan Awami Party, Jamhoori Watan Party, and Baluch National Party-Mengal from Baluchistan) and independent members of the National Assembly.[19]

Since the beginning, the opposition political parties, including the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz faction and Pakistan People's Party, claimed that PTI won the majority seats by manipulation in the 2018 general elections. "But soon after polls closed and counting began, a whole slew of opposition parties—the PML-N and the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), as well as smaller parties—started alleging rigging."[20] The opposition parties declared the Election Commission's incompetence as a major cause of their defeat. For instance, "the vote counts were slow to come in because the commission's software crashed."[21] Maulana Fazalur Rehman, leader of the MMA party and spokesman for the group of rival parties, said: "We will run a movement for the holding of elections again. There will be protests."[22] In addition, the opposition parties claimed that the PTI coalition government was constituted with the alliance of the smaller parties in the National Assembly by the political engineering of the military-led establishment. "The way it secured a parliamentary majority, however, is also being questioned by many. It has been claimed that members of the security establishment pressured and/or offered serious money to some independent candidates to support the PTI."[23]

Besides the coalition management, Khan faced a mounting balance-of-payments crisis. Moreover, the economic situation worsened as the US withheld USD 300 million in promised military aid, alleging Pakistan had not done enough to stem terrorism, being placed on the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) 'grey list,' COVID-19 pandemic and strict conditions of International Monetary Fund (IMF). Notably, in the beginning, Khan attempted to seek foreign aid from friendly countries (China, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates) to solve Pakistan's macroeconomic problems instead of seeking IMF economic package. However, despite the generous support of friendly countries, his government failed to manage financial difficulties. Consequently, Pakistan submitted a request for emergency lending from the IMF.

Prime Minister Imran Khan vocally criticized and opposed the previous Pakistani government's cooperation with the US in fighting radicalized militants near the Afghan border. He repeatedly stated, "this was not our war." Mr Khan's criticism of the US military operation in Afghanistan was tantamount to negating the horrors of 9/11. For the Americans, denouncing the United States' actions in the aftermath of 9/11 is akin to denying the Holocaust. However, he successfully brought the Taliban to negotiations with the US and facilitated the American troops' complete withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021. It brought an end to a two-decade of protracted asymmetrical warfare in neighboring Afghanistan. Despite it, he failed to win the confidence of the Biden administration. President Biden did not make a

telephone call to Khan, which ultimately became the source of friction. Moreover, Khan's visit to Russia in February 2018 and earlier to China to see the Winter Olympic Games against the wishes of Americans increased the frustration of the Biden administration.

Khan's government continued to face street protests and severe criticism from the opposition political parties for his close relationship with the military establishment, his crackdown on militants, increasing inflation due to weak economic policy, and his legal course of actions under the pretext of corruption against the heads of leading political parties (former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif head of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz faction and his family members, and former President Asif Ali Zardari head of Pakistan People Party). The rift between Khan and his political opponents resulted in forming of the major opposition parties' coalition, the People's Democratic Movement (PDM), in September 2020, with the stated goal of overthrowing Khan's government.[24]

The PDM attempted to overthrow Khan's government by boycotting a vote of confidence initiated by the government in the National Assembly in March 2021.[25] The Khan's government survived narrowly with the support of the coalition partners. However, it exposed the fragility of the ruling coalition. Following it, Khan fell out with the military establishment due to worsening inflation, bad governance, and a failed attempt by him to influence the top Army posts. Besides, as a leader, he could not settle the PTI's internal rivalries, which entailed several members of the party's defection. The PTI Punjab province members were against his appointed Usman Buzdar, the Chief Minister of Punjab. The PTI members questioned the governance of the Chief Minister and accused him of committing corruption.

The revolt within the PTI, key allies' distrust and the military establishment's neutral position in the country's polity encouraged the PDM to table a vote of no confidence against Prime Minister Khan in the National Assembly on March 08, 2022. The vote of no confidence was carried out after much dilly-dallying on April 10, 2022. The PDM resolution received 174 votes. Consequently, Imran Khan became the first prime minister in Pakistan's history to be removed by a no-confidence measure. In the vote of confidence, Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan from Sind and three political parties from Balochistan—Balochistan Awami Party, Jamhoori Watan Party, and Baluch National Party-Mengal—supported PDM. The following day, the National Assembly elected Mian Shahbaz Sharif a new Prime Minister of Pakistan.

Instead of mending fences with the establishment, Khan bluntly retorted, "only animals could be dubbed as neutrals."[26] Moreover, the military has come under criticism after Imran Khan's ouster through a successful vote of no confidence. Trends against the armed forces and its leadership have seen intense activity on social media platforms such as Twitter, and slogans critical of the army were also chanted during countrywide protests staged on Sunday (April 10, 2022) in support of Khan. On April 12, the Inter-Services Public

Relations (ISPR) stated, after the 79th Formation Commanders' Conference held at the General Headquarters presided over by Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa, "The forum took note of the recent propaganda campaign by some quarters to malign [the] Pakistan Army and create division between the institution and society." It added, "National security of Pakistan is sacrosanct. Pakistan Army has always stood by the state institutions to guard it and always will, without any compromise."[27] The FIA counterterrorism wing launched a crackdown on social media activists who believed they had been involved in a campaign against the army.

The new prime minister's election ended the constitutional crisis but furthered the political turmoil. Therefore, the uncertainty continues. It is because former Prime Minister Khan, despite defeat in the National Assembly, still enjoys widespread support in the country. Instead of accepting his defeat in the National Assembly, he adopted a multidimensional confrontationist approach. He announced that the United States hatched a conspiracy with PDM to oust his government. Indeed, the authenticity of external conspiracy is a debatable, but very catchy popular nationalistic slogan to muster the common person's support in the country. He is publicizing his slogans as a 'freedom struggle' against the 'foreign conspiracy of regime change.' He vows to bring down what he calls Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif government an 'imported regime.' Notably, many educated urban middle class tends to believe in the narrative, i.e., 'foreign conspiracy' or Americans' involvement in regime change in Pakistan. Secondly, Khan immediately launched an anti-government campaign out of the parliament on the streets, and people responded to him. Thus, countrywide demonstrations are questioning the legitimacy of the new government. On April 13, during his first public address since losing his government said, "My youth, get ready. I will be out on the streets with you in every city until we do not force them to hold elections." Thirdly, PTI announced en masse resignations from the National Assembly at the behest of its leader—Imran Khan, to build up strong public pressure on its successors for early elections. However, the planned mass protests and resignations from the Assembly could lead the country to political chaos. Fourthly, the new government has been encountering a messy economic situation. For instance, it cannot resist increasing fuel prices. The increase in the oil price upsurges double-digit inflation entailing public backlash and stimulating the growing political turmoil.

Qualm Over Election Commission of Pakistan

The electoral democracy in Pakistan is encountering various challenges including the credibility of the elections. The general impression is that the Pakistani establishment manages the outcomes of the elections, which undermines the sanctity of the ballot and the credibility of the elected government.[28] In the words of Javid Husain,

> *…repeated military takeovers and meddling in political affairs undermined the sanctity of the Constitution and the rule of law, weakened the democratic institutions — thereby suppressing the people's voice and preventing due accountability of our rulers through fair elections — and encouraged arbitrariness and corruption in the government's decision-making processes.*[29]

The establishment meddling in the elections incubated feelings among the people that they are not electing (truly) their representatives. Therefore, unelected institutions of the state that are accountable to none control their destiny.[30]

Importantly, the ECP has been rendered grossly controversial because it has failed to ensure transparency in the elections. [31] According to former Prime Minister Abbasi, "No election was transparent after 1970."[32] Moreover, the political parties frequently expressed their concerns over election engineering before election day. These facts disclose that the ECP is not truly independent, impartial and effective. Whereas, "the most fundamental principle defining credible elections is that they must reflect the free expression of the will of the people. To achieve this, elections should be transparent, inclusive, and accountable, and there must be equitable opportunities to compete in the elections."[33] The stabilization of Pakistan's democratic political system depends to a considerable extent on how ECP conducts the elections. It is because for casting ballots and facilitating the free expression of voter preferences at polls, the machinery of registration, the mode of nominating and the conduct of elections are highly pertinent.[34]

The parliament unanimously passed the eighteenth constitutional amendment in 2010 to improve the credibility and functioning of the ECP. Accordingly, the appointment of the chief election commissioner (CEC) was made more transparent and subject to parliamentary oversight. "Instead of the president handpicking the CEC, that official and the other four members of the ECP are now selected through consultations between the prime minister and the leader of the opposition in the National Assembly, then vetted by a joint parliamentary committee, comprising legislators from the ruling party or coalition and an equal number from the opposition, that makes the final decision."[35] Ironically, these reforms restored little trust in the electoral process.

The ECP has failed to improve its credibility despite the favorable constitutional amendment in 2010. Its credibility eroded immensely in March 2023. The political polarization in the country has intensified after Imran Khan, the first prime minister in Pakistan's history, was removed from office through a no-confidence vote on April 09, 2022.[36] The PTI members resigned from the National Assembly and demanded general elections in the country. In January 2023, "Mr Khan ordered his party's provincial governments in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to resign, apparently in a bid to force an early national election."[37] According to the Constitution of Pakistan, ECP must hold elections within 90s days in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The Constitution Article 105(2) provided that "the election shall be held not later than 90 days from the date of dissolution of the assembly. Article 224 provided for this election within 90 days of the dissolution."[38] The ECP's delay in the announcement of the date of the provincial election resulted in the intervention of the Supreme Court of Pakistan. On March 1, 2023, the Supreme Court in a 3-2 verdict ruled that elections should be held within 90 days. The ruling said,

> *Parliamentary democracy is a salient feature of the Constitution. There can be no parliamentary democracy without Parliament or the provincial assemblies. And there can be neither Parliament nor provincial assemblies without the holding of general elections as envisaged, required and mandated by and under the Constitution and in accordance therewith.*[39]

Following the apex court verdict, the ECP announced elections date on April 30 in Punjab and May 28 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The political crisis in the country deepened and the ECP credibility hit all-time lows on March 22, 2023. The ECP expressed its inability to hold the country's most populous province Punjab elections scheduled for April 30, 2023. It announced that "in the exercise of the powers conferred upon it by Article 218(3) read with Section 58 and Section 8(c) of the Elections Act, 2017, the commission "hereby withdraws the election program and a fresh schedule will be issued in due course of time with the poll date on October 8, 2023."[40] The ECP defended the postponement of elections in Punjab by citing the shortage of funds and the security situation of the country. However, the new date of elections (October 8) is beyond the timeline mandated by the country's constitution, i.e., elections shall be held within 90 days.[41] Immediately, the leading opposition political party, PTI rejected the justification of the ECP. The PTI chairman Imran Khan alleged the ECP violated the Constitution of Pakistan on the wishes of the government and the establishment. Shuja Nawaz, a Washington-based political analyst opined,

> *The wordy and convoluted decision of the Election Commission of Pakistan of this week betrays the hidden hand of the military yet again in giving the current set-up a chance to prove itself by serving out its full term.*[42]

This conduct of the ECP and the ruling political elite added to voters' mistrust of the electoral processes in the country. Moreover, it strengthened the perception that unelected institutions of the state managed the elections and controlled the elected ruling elite. Consequently, the mistrust over ECP functioning undermines the political stability in Pakistan.

Learning from US Politics

In representative democracies, the high cost of campaigning is one of the major problems of politics. "Money is of key importance in American politics. An enormous amount must be spent to reach the vast electorate, to break down public apathy, to change passivism to activism."[43] The review of the US elections during the last century reveals that Americans have been struggling to manage the problem of the high cost of campaigning through national and state laws. For instance, the old Corrupt Practices Act of 1925 sets limits on spending. Similarly, a congressional response to Watergate was the Campaign Finance Reform Act of 1974 to govern the campaign practices by establishing the Federal Election Commission to enforce the law. "The act required contribution and spending reports from candidates, placed a ceiling on expenditures by candidates for Federal offices, and provided public financing for presidential primaries, nominating conventions, and general elections."[44] For the sake of fair elections, the laws exist in Pakistan. But the need is reformation in these laws with the passage of time and the execution of these laws, like in the United States.

During the elections in the United States, all government agencies operate within the orbit of law and all state institutions sincerely struggle towards holding free and fair elections. Pakistani law enforcement agencies and institutions need to adopt the American institutions' nonpartisan approach during the elections for holding fair elections in the country. Besides, Pakistani elections need transparency.

Conclusion

If Pakistan is to thrive in the future, the Pakistani ruling elite must be able to concentrate on critical issues like a democratic political system, participatory political culture, political harmony, adherence to the Constitution, an independent judiciary, economic stability and growth with equality of opportunity for all, care for those who cannot care for themselves, border security, mounting debt, space investment, environmental stability, and above all election integrity. Notably, the political elite and electors in Pakistan could not ensure these objectives without accepting the results of elections in letter and spirit, which is only possible through the conduct of free and fair elections in the country.

The Pakistani electoral procedures need either major changes or to be completely reformed for improving the trust of the voters in the ECP. Besides, political parties require cultivating a culture of tolerance among their rank and files. So that the losers accept the verdict of the electors honorably and prepare for the next elections, while critically examining the causes of their defeat rather than pontificating lame excuses and alleging the Election Commission of Pakistan.

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8 Diversity, Difference, and Literature
An Account of American Experience

Nasir Jamal Khattak and Ayesha Siddiqa

I

Diversity is a condition inherent to human existence. Humans live in relational networks marked by differences across sexual, gender, racial, ethnic, class, religious, ethical, national, and political lines. Indeed, in a world where we are inundated by multiple and conflicting messages from numerous sources across a variety of media and platforms, "diversity" has become a buzzword whose nuances as a powerful theoretical and analytical term are often rendered obscure. It is worthwhile, therefore, to return to Homi K. Bhabha's distinction between "diversity" and "difference" to create a framework of discussion for this essay.[1] While the term "diversity" is often situated within a liberal framework of multiculturalism or cultural exchange that seeks to "contain" and "control" the dynamic iteration of cultural difference to enact a "consensus", "difference", on the contrary, promotes "multiple and *potentially antagonistic*, political identities…articulate[d] in challenging ways, either positively or negatively, either in progressive or regressive ways, often conflictual, sometimes even *incommensurably*".[2] While discussions on difference, diversity, and inclusion within the context of public policy are critical, narration and storytelling pave the way for these discussions. In other words, literature provides what Bhabha deems a "productive space of the construction of culture as difference, in the spirit of alterity or otherness," which circumvents a "liberal relativist perspective" of diversity that might taint discourses of public policy. Therefore, this essay seeks to shift focus towards narrative, literature, and the humanities in exploring the relationship between reading and diversity, writing and freedom, and between narrative and the articulation of difference.

A cursory review of U.S. history unveils a profound paradox that has characterized the American experience since its inception. While the nation was founded on the principles of egalitarianism, the American quest for the ideals of liberty, democracy, and freedom is offset by a parallel history of racial exclusion. Although recent scholarship has increasingly emphasized that multiculturalism and diversity have been an evolving social reality of the United States (US) since its inception,[3] America's history of racial injustice

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nevertheless, undermines its narrative of equality that has shaped the American polity. Indeed, contemporary iterations of racial inequality are testimony to the insidious legacy of racism that manifests itself in discriminatory practices across social, political, economic, and educational realms. However, notwithstanding this paradoxical and complicated history, America stands out as different with its intense and relentless discourse around pluralism, multiculturalism, and diversity. Indeed, "the concept of diversity has functioned as a key site of both congruence and division in the US for the past one hundred years," (re)shaping, in profound ways, American identity and experience while also "exposing inequities based on race, ethnicity, and religion".[4]

While there is no vindication for the troubled history of race relations in the US, America also represents one of the best-case studies of the struggle between what Carl Rogers terms the real and the ideal self of a society.[5] Since its beginnings, America has been a site of intense contestation of multiple contradictory identities and narratives anchored in racial, ethnic, religious, gender, and class difference. And there is no better medium to understand this persistent struggle than Multicultural American Literature. As the US and Pakistan commemorate 75 years of bilateral relations, there is much scholarly deliberation on different aspects of U.S.-Pak relations, including political, economic, security, trade, and cultural ties. However, one of the most powerful dimensions of bilateral relations is the ability of the respective peoples to find connections, form ties, and develop relations that foreground their interdependent fates. In this essay, we focus on exploring how literature serves as a productive site for cultivating difference and diversity that may allow us to reconceive the future of our shared world.

II

I will begin with my story as an alumna of the Fulbright program—the story of a woman of color who has battled social, religious, economic, and political challenges to be there and my encounter with America. It was in the Spring of 2006, soon after I had completed my bachelor's in English and was exploring the option of pursuing graduate studies in the US, that one of my professors (and the co-author of this essay), who had recently returned from the US shared his copy of Frederic Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An Enslaved American* (1845) with me. Having completed my undergraduate degree in English Literature from the University of Peshawar, where American literature or history was not part of the syllabus, I immediately knew I had discovered a parallel literary world. Mesmerized by Douglass's melodic rhetoric, I was also intrigued by the strange, alternative image of the US that this slave narrative portrayed, which significantly challenged my image of America based on my virtual encounters via American Television and Cinema. Indeed, the America that I read about in this slave narrative stood in stark contrast to the America that I had come across in my brush with Thomas Jefferson's Autobiography—the America of the 4th of

July, of A City upon a Hill, of the American Dream. It confronted me with an alternative America; an America that I was unfamiliar with; an America that was haunting the America that I was familiar with; and an America that America itself was grappling with. I was spellbound, mesmerized, and immediately hooked. Captivated by a then inexplicable desire to explore it further, I decided to write my Fulbright Scholarship proposal on the slave narrative focusing on the works of Frederic Douglass and Harriet Jacobs.

While reading to write the proposal, I delved deeper and deeper into African American history, the African American experience, and black intellectual thought. And the more I read, the more it dawned upon me that it was not that America was not exceptional, but that it was exceptional in various ways. That America was exceptional was not a myth, except that American exceptionalism manifested itself in many ways, sometimes at variance. While I found the slave narratives exceptional, I also found the history of the African American struggle against white supremacy truly exceptional. While America's longstanding investment in the ideals of freedom, equality, and opportunity is exceptional, its constant struggle with systemic racism, inequality, and racialized violence is also exceptional. Indeed, I found American exceptionalism evident in the history of the African American struggle for equality through the origins of slavery to the Civil War; the Reconstruction era; the Civil Rights Movement; and, more recently, the Black Lives Matter movement. It is this America that I have come to admire over the years, and that has taught me the power of storytelling.

As a student of literature from high school up until my undergraduate studies, I had always read books written by and about people I could barely identify with or that I could remotely relate to. I was reading about people who were so distant from me. Reading about the primarily male, middle-class, white experience, I saw myself as an outsider in the curriculum. Brown or black people appeared in these books, if ever, rendered to the margins as others whose absent presence contributed to the construction of the white self.[6] Reading texts written by black authors about people whose stories intersected with mine gave me a perspective on literature I had never had before. I could relate to these pieces; at times I even hear the echo of my voice in them too. The diversity of American Multicultural Literature that embodies a range of voices (African American, Asian American, Native American, Latin American, Jewish American, European Immigrant American, LGBTQ American, differently abled American, women, and children) allowed me to not only see my lived experiences reflected in the narratives I read but also found profound connections between our worlds. The diversity of American literature showed me that different lives, languages, and stories matter. That narrative is a powerful and subversive tool of assertion and resistance, giving voice to the voiceless and face to the faceless.

On my first day of classes in the African American Studies program at Boston University, my Black Women Writers class professor, surprised at seeing a Pakistani girl come to the US to study Black America, posed a question

that echoed in my mind for a long time to come: "What brought you here—to the African American Studies Program?". It was a simple yet profound question: notwithstanding my love of literature and the desire to explore a different literary landscape, the question propelled me to look for the answer that had been there all along. I was there to listen to the stories of African American men, women, and children; I was there to share my story; and to explore the intersections in our stories of struggle; resilience; of healing. I was there to find grounds for mutual collaboration, so we learn ways to halt that cycle of history that continues to oppress certain others. Indeed, the black experience in America paralleled various constellations of the postcolonial experience I had lived and continued to live. Although African American history of slavery, the civil rights movement, and contemporary race relations in the US reflect a discrete trajectory, they are anchored in a historicized subjugation of certain Others. These shared historical experiences of subjugation, marginality, displacement, and dispossession give rise to narratives of resistance and foreground the possibility and urgency of a politics of convergence.

My experience is very relevant in the contemporary context of Pakistan – a country struggling with polarization on the basis of religion, race and ethnicity. The American experience taught me how to accommodate others although in a long-time span but with an element of persistence and success at the end. The same can be done in Pakistan where people can come closer to each other blurring the divides and this can be possible if such experiences as mine are heard with heed in the policy circles.

III

I remember a road sign on my first visit to the US for higher studies; the sign read, "JFK, where America welcomes the world." I thought the sign was a marketing gimmick driven by inflated nationalistic sentiment. Over time, as I interacted with people on and off campus realized that the road sign was not far from reality. Perhaps for the first time, I began to experience what diversity and celebration of diversity meant. My background, belief system, the color of my skin, or any other property did not matter. What mattered was how far I contributed to the class discussions respectfully. Even though there was a difference of opinion, the idea was to have the dialogue go on to understand the issue and one another better. That was a coming of age of sorts for me. My opinion mattered; what I said was respected; I was discovering my voice. The deed mattered more than the doer, no matter who the doer was. It was indeed very odd for me to see a classmate have a rather heated discussion with a professor after he scornfully commented on feminism as "some sort of a mumbo jumbo." I was trained in an academic culture where disagreeing with a professor was unheard of. What surprised me was when that student aced that course. The student's differences of opinion did not impact the professor's evaluation of the student's performance in the course. Part of me believed that the off-campus community might not be as understanding as

the students and professors were. My visit to places of worship in the nearby towns helped me see that they welcomed me not because I subscribed to their belief system but because I was there, unlike other places where a visitor might have to profess the same belief system as that of the people there.

But then one may say I was more of a tourist, albeit for five years, who remained in the US for a short period. For those who live there for good and depending on which segment of the society they belong to, life is different and more challenging than it is for the mainstream. In a society that embraces diversity, subcultures are likely to preserve part of their identity, if not all. But then that is how life is: when two meet, each ends up getting something from the other though the balance in such a situation is tilted more towards the main culture in exerting its influence on minorities. Both evolve into something new, which has a little bit of each other; that is a process human civilizations follow, and that is what diverse and multicultural societies are all about.

But then the flipside of such society - like that of Pakistan - is how minorities face challenges in keeping their cultural identity intact. However, if society does not just give lip service to promoting a multicultural society and celebrating diversity is not just for political correctness, there will be credible voices pointing to preserving subcultures or identifying some of the perils facing minorities and subcultures.[7]

Martin Espada's "Latin Night at the Pawnshop" is a poem which rather self-reflectively critiques this aspect of US society.[8] This is one of the few poems that gives the story's setting, if not the only one. It is only after we read the poem that we realize that "Chelsea, Massachusetts/Christmas, 1987" not only gives a clear time and space to the poem but also reads like an inscription on a tombstone of the grave of the culture that is no more. The band instruments showcased in the pawnshop window and the speaker of the poem looking at them also bring to mind the image of a tourist in a museum looking at the ruins of a lost culture. The Latin culture has been "museumised," as Friedman would say.[9] Perhaps life in the host land became too challenging for the band members, or economic realities were too bitter than the aesthetics and cultural values. The poem becomes rather disturbing when we focus on the void, and the lack around it, suggested by the word "apparition." The salsa band, which symbolizes the identity of the Latin people, is absent in the season of celebration, revival, and rebirth, symbolized by Christmas. And even though the presence of an apparition or a ghost during Christmas is a source of hope and comfort, this one is not. The image of the "city morgue" and the "price tags" hanging from the different musical instruments suggest the death of the Latin culture in an environment where survival becomes a problem. The economic allusions, "pawnshop," "Liberty Loan," "price tags," "golden," and "silver," sharpen the sense of loss of the salsa band and its instruments, which have been sold cheaply to the pawnshop. That is the risk that subcultures and ethnicities run if the two do not find a middle ground where each impacts the other, and something new emerges from the two and

this is the exact situation in Pakistan right now where minority cultures have lost their essence in struggle to survive.

The need for money to fulfil their basic needs perhaps forced the band members to sell their culture in an environment where they needed to be integrated into the main culture in the Modoodian sense of the word. Furthermore, the poem's setting also points to the immediate audience, the denizens of the subculture and the main culture, and the problem of Latin culture dying in a dominantly Latino town.[10] Espada effectively critiques both the host and the guest cultures; both must give way to accommodate each other, especially the main culture. But then the presence of a subculture there points to a willingness of the main culture to integrate into the former. Without that, the subculture will be more of a subordinate, if not altogether, slave culture.

In other words, the gap between the two cultures, the main and the subculture—will widen and lead to resentment and conflict. That kind of equation will not be under the spirit of the US Constitution, which promises equal opportunities to all citizens. Fortunately for the US, despite bad patches in its past and present, its society and literature continue to sing the song of celebrating itself, which embraces all and allows a middle ground for diverse cultures to grow and evolve. That is perhaps why most US communities celebrate cultural days of people from different backgrounds for a better understanding and integration of minorities—an understanding based on mutual respect which celebrates diversity and embraces life. How can Pakistan integrate various cultures without their religious orientation – the main binding force for uniting various ethnicities living in the country – is yet to be seen. However, the American experience of incorporating sub cultures can be a useful analogy for Pakistan.

IV

As academics and literature teachers, our principal objective is to teach from a multicultural perspective. Incorporating a variety of voices, bodies, and stories from various ethnic, racial, and religious groups allows for a healthy, critical debate aimed at transformative political praxis and social change. The value of teaching Multicultural American Literature in promoting difference, tolerance, and pluralism is undisputed for us. Each semester that we teach African American or Asian American literature, some of our students tell us that no book of history ever familiarized them with the African American experience as did these narratives of resistance and redemption and that none of the texts on the abstract notions of feminist discourse ever connected them with women's lived experiences than did these narratives of intersectionality.

And then we ask what value humanities have. What do they yield? How can we measure it? Literature teaches us to understand the other by confronting the other within us. That is the relationship between voice, narrative, and

ethics, and that is the relationship between literature and human rights. Judith Butler makes an interesting case for critical thinking as the foundation of non-violence: "The first step towards nonviolence…is to begin to think critically, and to ask others to do the same. An active and sensate democracy requires that we learn how to read well, not just texts but images and sounds, to translate across languages." Literature helps us see "ourselves linked with others we have never directly known, and to understand that, in some abiding and urgent sense, we share a world".[11] This ability to understand ourselves as interconnected and interdependent, which is a prerequisite for nurturing difference and diversity, is embodied in Multicultural American Literature. As the US and Pakistan are deliberating a "reset" in their bilateral relations, there is a need to celebrate difference as articulated in their literary histories. The cultural experiences, as illustrated in their respective literature, can be relevant for both the American and Pakistani people and the governments on both sides can resonate to such experiences and cultural sentiments. Multicultural literacy can, in no small measure, help both Islamabad and Washington find mutual grounds for protecting and enriching their shared world. There is need to understand the importance of literature, culture, art and most importantly to understand the need to increase such literary and cultural exchanges and narratives of personal experiences like this at policy level to bring forth the element of oneness and commonness among the people in both these countries.

Notes

1 Homi K. Bhabha, "Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences," in B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths, H. Tiffin (eds.), *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, (New York: Routledge, 2006): 155–157.
2 Homi K. Bhabha, "The Third Space: Interview with Homi Bhabha," in Jonathan Rutherford (ed.), *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, (London: *Lawrence and Wishart*, 1990): 208.
3 Vincent N. Parrillo, "Diversity in America: A Sociohistorical Analysis," *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 9, No. 4, Special Issue: Multiculturalism and Diversity, (1994): 523-545.
4 Lawrence R. Samuel, *Diversity in the United States: A Cultural History of the Past Century*, (New York: Routledge, 2023).
5 Carl R. Rogers, "A Theory of Therapy, Personality, and Interpersonal Relationships as Developed in the Client-Centered Framework," in Sigmund Koch (ed.), *Psychology: A Study of a Science*, Study 1, Vol. 3: *Formulations of the Person and the Social Context*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959): 184-256.
6 Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*, (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1992): Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, (London: Penguin Press, 2003).
7 Tariq Modood makes a convincing argument about how giving only lip service to diversity and multiculturalism for political correctness fosters "fragmentation rather than integration." "A Defence of Multiculturalism." *Soundings*, 29 (2005): 3. Modood's main argument is that multiculturalism "is not about separatism, fragmentation, anti-integration" as some critics of multiculturalism have come to argue. He further argues that "the multiculturalist concept of integration in not one way but interactive. It is about fitting people together so that there is give and take, mutual change and the creation of something new" (67).

8 Martin Espada, "Latin Night at the Pawnshop", in Michael Meyer (ed.), *The Compact Bedford Introduction to Literature: Reading, Thinking, Writing*, (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2003): 547.
9 Jonathan Friedman, "Global System, Globalisation and the Parameters of Modernity" in M. Featherstone and S. Lash London (eds.), *Global Modernities*, (London: Sage Publication, 1995): 82.
10 Chelsea, Massachusetts, is a dominantly Hispanic/Latino town as per the US census 2020 http://www.census.gov/search-results.html?q=+Chelsea.
11 Judith Butler, "What Value Do the Humanities have?" 30 May 2013, McGill University, Montreal, Canada. Commencement and Graduation Speech. https://speakola.com/grad/judith-butler-humanities-mcgill-university-2013.

9 Tracing the History and Motivation of US Foreign Aid

1945-2021

Steven R. Hall

When Pakistan experienced severe flooding in August 2022, the United States (US) responded with a USD 30 million aid commitment and the deployment of a Disaster Assistance Response Team. The US Agency for International Development (USAID) touted these moves as indicators of its ongoing humanitarian commitment to Pakistan, answering in part federal planning minister Ahsan Iqbal's call for an "immense humanitarian response for 33 million people" affected by the flooding's devastation.[1] By contrast, in February 2022, violent protests erupted in front of Nepal's parliament over a USD 500 million infrastructure project supported by the US government's Millennium Challenge Corporation. While the electricity transmission and road project were funded as a grant that did not require repayment, opponents contended that it would weaken Nepal's sovereignty. As these incidents show, US aid is not without controversy and its reception varies across contexts. What cannot be disputed, however, is that, as the single largest provider of bilateral development assistance since WWII, the US has consistently played a significant role in promoting economic development.

In this chapter, I will discuss the culture of US official development assistance (ODA),[2] globally, in South Asia, and specifically in Pakistan. In the first section, I detail the trends in volume, sectoral allocation, and regional allocation of the US. In the second section, I discuss the competing goals that US foreign aid is designed to pursue. In the third section, I explain how the shifting geopolitical context has shaped US aid allocation. In the final section, I discuss US foreign aid in South Asia and, specifically, in Pakistan.

Broad Trends in US Foreign Aid Flows

Aid Volume

Beginning with the Marshall Plan in Western Europe in 1948, the US has taken the lead in the global promotion of economic development. As Figure 9.1 shows, the US has outpaced other donors from the Organization for Economic Cooperation's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee

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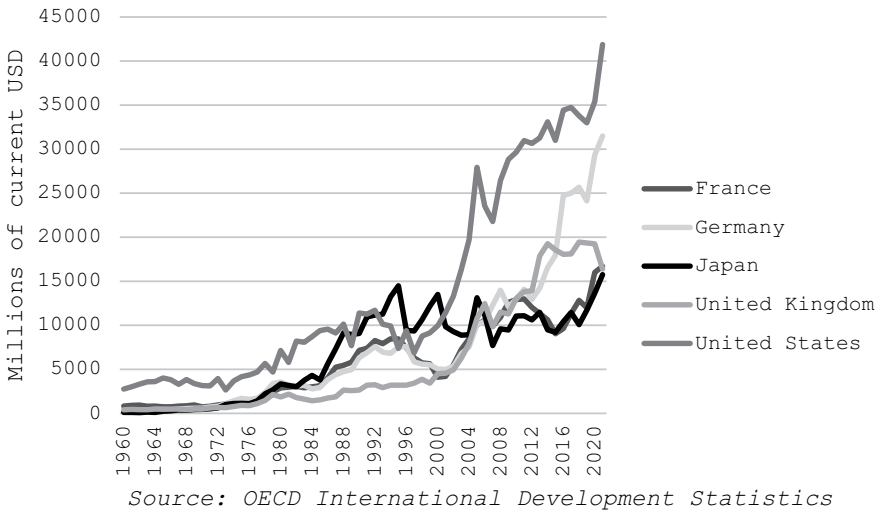


Figure 9.1 ODA Disbursements of the Top Five DAC Bilateral Donors.

(DAC) in all but eight years since 1960.[3] However, the growth of US aid has been uneven and subject to shocks. For instance, prior to the implosion of its so-called "Bubble Economy" and the onset of prolonged economic stagnation, Japan took a brief lead in global provision of ODA. However, the massive expansion of US foreign aid after 2000 vaulted it back into a position that only Germany comes close to reaching.

While the US has touted the volume of aid it provides in DAC meetings, it has often been criticized by other members for the generosity of the program given the strength of the US economy. Although US aid flows have been larger than those of other donors, they have lagged many states in terms of aid given as percentage of GDP. The Brandt Report, commissioned by World Bank President Robert McNamara in 1977, called for advanced industrialized countries to increase their foreign aid to 0.7 percent of GDP by 1985 and 1 percent of GDP by 2000. Despite widespread acceptance of the report, few states have met even the more modest 0.7 percent target. Even after a renewed commitment by donor countries to the 0.7 percent target in the Millennium Development Goals, progress has been erratic. Aid volumes increased after 2000 but slowed and even declined for many donors after the financial crisis and Great Recession. Only Sweden, Luxembourg, Norway, and Denmark have consistently met the 0.7 percent target. In recent years, among large volume donors, both the United Kingdom and Germany have met this mark. Nonetheless, the post-2000 foreign aid expansion improved US performance on this indicator. While prior to 2000, US aid was typically just below 0.1 percent of GNI, US ODA reached 0.18 percent of GNI in 2021 and after Trump's arrival it is touching new lows.

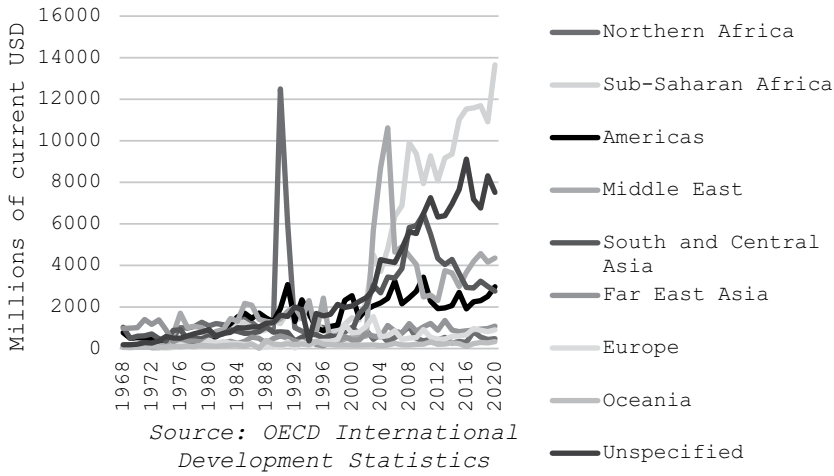


Figure 9.2 US Aid Commitments by Region.

Regional Allocation

The initial history of US aid offers a confused picture of allocation. In the early postwar period, the US program was so limited that concluding a project with one recipient or beginning a project with a new recipient would result in a substantial reallocation of aid flows among regions. As the Marshall Plan concluded in the early 1950s, the US focus shifted from Western Europe to Cold War interests in Asia, such as Taiwan, South Korea, and Vietnam. However, as the program has grown, the regional allocation pattern has become more robust to responses to geostrategic hot spots. The shift to Asia in the 1960s was accompanied by a new focus on Latin America. As the Cold War ended, responding to communist threats was no longer necessary, allowing allocation with less concern for geostrategic outcomes. As Figure 9.2 shows, the pattern that emerged indicates a clear emphasis on promoting development in Sub-Saharan Africa. This emphasis has remained consistent even after September 11th and the Global War on Terror (GWOT).

Sectoral Allocation

Changes in the sectoral allocation also reflect the evolving understanding of US policymakers of the purpose and efficacy of different foreign aid targets. In Figure 9.3, there is little clear pattern to be gleaned from the sectoral allocation before 1980. While this is certainly due in some cases to data issues (e.g., spikes in multi-sector/unspecified aid in the 1970s likely result from coding issues), this also reflects the absence of a clear overarching philosophy of how the aid should be used. In the 1980s, the US unilaterally concentrated its aid on social infrastructure (rather than traditional investments in

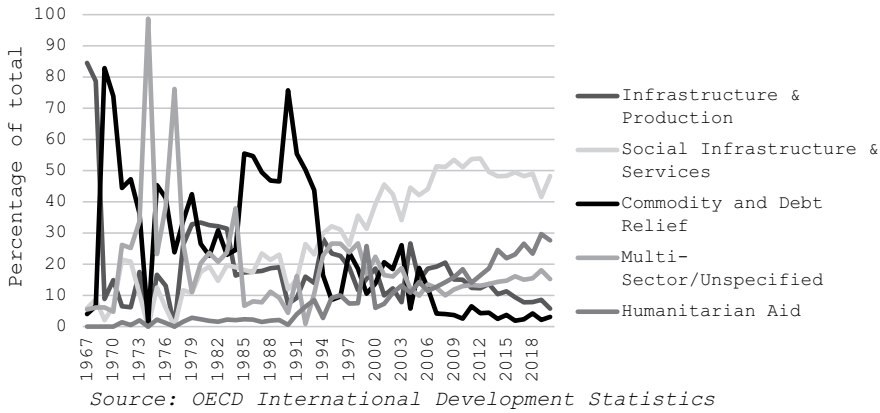


Figure 9.3 Sectoral Allocation of US Aid Commitments.

production facilities and economic infrastructure) and worked within multilateral institutions to encourage other donors to follow suit. Since then, social infrastructure has grown to comprise half of US aid flows.

Politics of Aid

Competing Motivations

Foreign aid is a tool of statecraft used by governments operating in an anarchic, self-help international system. For this reason, bilateral aid flows are almost never purely altruistic in nature. Instead, donors use aid programs to advance their security and economic goals while simultaneously providing recipient countries with humanitarian and developmental benefits. The extent to which each of these goals is emphasized and how that affects allocation varies across donor countries,[4] but US aid is no exception. The US uses aid to advance these interests, either directly through its provision to support an ally or develop an impoverished country or indirectly as a lever of conditionality. In this latter mode, the US uses aid as a carrot, rewarding countries who engage in desired behaviors (e.g., democratization, non-proliferation, or protection of human rights) with aid packages, or a stick, punishing countries that engage in undesirable behaviors by curtailing aid flows or suspending them entirely. Hence, the history of US foreign aid cannot be understood outside of its political context.

As a point departure for analyzing US aid, let us treat the US analytically as a unitary rational actor. The political context can shape decision-making about foreign aid in three ways. First, the balance between a state's different motivations for aid – humanitarian,[5] security, or economic – can be shaped by the domestic and international political contexts. For example, aid can be thought of as what economists call normal good; as incomes in the US have

risen, it has taken a greater interest in providing development aid abroad. This dynamic is reflected also in the contrast between emerging economies who are relatively new donors, like China, and higher income donors such as the Nordic countries. The aid programs of the latter tend be more humanitarian in nature and focused on development, whereas China's aid is much less concessional and follows its economic and strategic interests more closely.

Second, the types of international threats to its interests or opportunities to pursue them that a state faces can shift over time. For example, the US began the postwar period approaching aid through the lens of the Cold War; however, the security risks have shifted from the Soviet Union to terrorism to China since then. Such changes can affect both where aid is allocated, as security considerations often revolve around geographical hotspots associated with rivals, and what type of aid is given. Again, in the US case, the focus of aid has shifted from stabilizing anti-communist governments that were often authoritarian to supporting democratic institutions and the rule of law in recipient countries.

Third, decision-making over aid can change in response to an evolving understanding of the extent to which aid can actually achieve the goals it is designed to pursue. Whether and how aid can facilitate economic development or incentivize governments to democratize or protect human rights are questions subject to shifting positions in the scholarly and policy communities. The long-lived debate on the developmental effectiveness of aid is exemplified by the rift between William Easterly, who argues that aid encourages fiscal profligacy and entrenches dysfunctional regimes,[6] and Jeffrey Sachs, who contends that high income countries should substantially increase their aid flows.[7] When considering aid a side payment to encourage recipients to adopt policy choices preferred by the donor, there are robust debates within political science, for example, over whether aid can be used to encourage democratization[8] or whether it helps authoritarian governments maintain power.[9] Changing understanding of how aid might affect economic development or shape recipient behavior through conditionality will obviously shape decisions about how much foreign aid to provide, what countries to provide it to, and what sectors to target.

Competing Actors

Further complicating matters, foreign aid allocation is not a simple decision made by one actor. Instead, it is a multi-level game that includes both domestic politics (in both the donor and recipient countries) and international relations. In the case of the US, the domestic actors include the voting public, economic interest groups (e.g., exporters), Congress, the president, the national security bureaucracy, and the aid bureaucracy. Because these actors' interests are often heterogeneous, aid decision-making can be thought of as a complex bargaining process between them, based on their different levels of leverage in policy-making. This process also involves a set of principal agents

problems in which the principal actors lack full information about the actions of the agents they employ to protect their interests. This applies to the delegation of aid policy-making by voters to Congress and the delegation of implementation by Congress to the Executive branch and its aid bureaucracy. Information asymmetries in these situations can create slippage between the interests of the principal actor and the course of action chosen by the agent.

The introduction of multiple actors on the recipient side of the transaction likewise increases the complexity of aid decision-making by donors. A very simple model of recipient countries might split the state into a governmental actor and the people, which the government may or may not be inclined to serve. Because different kinds of aid are subject to varying levels of fungibility, that is, aid flows can be diverted away from the donor's targeted use, a donor interested in improving the recipient people's welfare may have trouble doing so. This introduces the possibility that aid that the recipient government voluntarily accepts can be welfare-reducing for the country if, for example, it is diverted to repression.

Of course, the diversion of aid may not be a concern for the donor if the goal of the aid is motivating the recipient government to change its behavior, as has often been the case for the US in its aid programs.[10] In such cases, the relevant additional actors that must be considered include other donors who might compete to influence the recipient. While developing country governments do not frequently enjoy this kind of bargaining advantage, the US did find itself in this position during the Cold War. In 1956, Egyptian President Nasser successfully leveraged a US aid offer for the Aswan Dam to secure a larger pledge from the Soviet Union. As China's foreign aid program grows, interactions of this kind may increase.

Changes in US Aid over Time

In this section, I apply the framework developed in the prior section to consider how US development assistance allocation has changed broadly since 1945 till 2021. To provide clarity, I consider the evolution of each of the three motives – humanitarian, security, and economic – in the US aid program. As mentioned above, considering recipient states as consisting of multiple actors allows the possibility that a voluntary aid transaction can be welfare-reducing for the country as a whole, serving the interests of the government while impoverishing its people. If a donor were to choose this sort of transaction frequently, it would be easy to infer that its motives were self-interested. However, because aid that addresses a donor state's security and economic motives can also enhance the welfare of the people of the recipient state, it can be difficult to identify the extent to which humanitarian motives have influenced a donor. Still, there are certain broad trends in donor aid, such as the countries and sectors targeted, that can help to identify motives of donors.[11] Looking at state policy broadly (including such migration and environmental policy), the Center for Global Development

ranks the 40 most powerful countries on their Commitment to Development Index. According to this measure of dedication to helping the world's poor, the US only ranked 22nd in 2021. However, this score belies an improvement in the volume and quality of development assistance that has taken place in the US program.

Shift from Production to Basic Needs and Institutional Development

At the beginning of US foreign aid program, the selective focus on Cold War hotspots such as Western Europe, South Korea, and Vietnam certainly indicated that security motives were ascendant in US decision-making. However, the content of the aid, particularly in South Asia, indicates that the goal was to promote the long-term economic development of the recipients, rather than alter their policy behavior, by funding the provision of fixed capital. This focus evolved out of an economic perspective that Easterly refers to as "Capital Fundamentalism," or the idea that the accumulation of fixed capital jumpstarts development in poor countries.[12] Arthur Lewis modelled underdeveloped countries as dual sector economies.[13] Because the overwhelming abundance of labor in the agricultural sector that could be drawn into urban areas, there would be no labor constraint on industrialization in such economies. As such, these countries could absorb large amounts of capital inflows, utilizing them to increase production rapidly.

While this describes the kind of aid provided by the US in the 1950s to South Korea and Taiwan well, a gradual transition in the sectoral orientation of US aid began in the 1960s. Passed in 1961, the Foreign Assistance Act created the US Agency for International Development (USAID), which would oversee what the Kennedy Administration dubbed the Decade of Development.[14] This involved an overall expansion of the aid program's volume and regional orientation, along with an increased focus on reducing poverty and inequality, rather than just increasing the capital stock of the recipient.

Meanwhile, the introduction of the Peace Corps, which sent volunteers abroad to provide technical assistance, signaled the beginning of a shift in how the US would provide aid. Aid tended to be too capital-intensive and often focused on white elephant projects that delivered little long-term benefit. By the 1970s, the US would shift its focus from capital-intensive aid to projects focused on basic needs. As Figure 9.3 shows, by the 1990s, social infrastructure comprised the largest share of US aid. Not only did this move indicate a humanitarian motive in targeting aid more directly to the most needy in recipient countries, the US would lead the effort to ensure that other donors did likewise in the 1980s. USAID officials and US exporters had noted that major donors were using aid tied to domestic procurement as a tool of export promotion; the result was that aid was displaced to countries with higher incomes to support programs that would be commercially viable without assistance (e.g., electrical power generation). The US exercised its leverage to bring DAC donors to an agreement to curtail the practice.[15]

By the 1990s, US aid projects would also begin to place greater emphasis on institutional development. This shift in focus matched a growing consensus in economics that development required more than just policy change; it also required a favorable institutional context.[16] Indeed, some would argue that institutional quality was the sole determinant of successful development.[17] USAID programming expanded to include the support of elections, democratic institutions, and the rule of law. This matched a similar realization within the international financial institutions that resulted in an augmented Washington Consensus that included institutional change with the more standard liberalization reforms. Taken together, while the country and regional allocation of US aid have followed a security-based logic, the changes in the sectoral composition of aid since the postwar period suggest that the US has focused on ensuring the development of recipients.

Changing Geopolitical Goals

US aid decision-making from 1945 to 1990 cannot be understood outside its role in countering Soviet influence in the Cold War. However, even with this goal, changes in allocation decisions can be observed based on the evolving understanding of the role aid could play in pursuing this goal. While the Eisenhower administration saw foreign aid as being a more cost-effective means of pursuing US interests than the use of the military, it encountered intense resistance to its modest requests for foreign aid from both Republicans and Democrats in Congress, due to its fiscal impact.[18] As a result, the use of aid was initially limited to key flashpoints as part of the strategic doctrine of Containment. Little concern was given to how the recipient governments had come to power or how they wielded that power it in office, as US aid flowed to the authoritarian regimes of Chiang Kai-Shek in Taiwan, Park Chung-Hee in South Korea, and a succession of leaders in South Vietnam who ruled after the assassination of Diem. Neither was particular concern given to the economic policy choices of the recipients; as long as the regimes were broadly anti-communist, state intervention in the economy was overlooked.

In the late 1950s, W.W. Rostow argued that by providing capital through foreign aid the US could move developing countries in the "economic take-off" stage, which would lead to self-perpetuating economic growth.[19] Rostow criticized prior administrations for neglecting Latin American and countries like India, as the US had focused on the front lines of the battle against communism, rebuilding Western Europe and South Korea under Truman and Eisenhower. As Director of Policy Planning at the State Department under Kennedy and Johnson and then as Johnson's National Security Advisor, Rostow's view took hold and a substantial expansion of the aid program began, including Kennedy's Alliance for Progress, which directed roughly $10 billion to Latin America. The US government saw widespread economic development as inoculating aid recipients from the potential spread of

communism. Despite its cost, foreign aid came to be viewed as preferable to the expenditure associated with direct military involvement.

The 1970s showed the impact of shifting domestic politics in the US on the orientation of its foreign aid. The Nixon Administration ended the Alliance for Progress, judging it to have failed in its goal of securing Latin America from communism. Between budget pressures and concerns about its value, foreign aid slowed under Nixon. The Carter Administration would revive the program, shifting to its focus to promoting peace between Israel and Egypt with substantial increases in aid to both. Carter would also prioritize human rights performance in foreign policy, curtailing aid to repressive governments like Mengistu's regime in Ethiopia.

In the 1980s, the US used foreign aid as a tool of conditionality in the final stages of the Cold War. With borders largely set and proxy wars of the 1960s and 1970s mostly concluded, the Reagan Administration employed aid to influence voting by recipient states at the United Nations. However, the actual record of aid use suggests that the principal-agent problems discussed above may have impeded this strategy, as USAID personnel sought to maintain connections with recipients.[20]

With the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1991 and the subsequent dissolution of the Soviet Union, the issue was rendered moot. As the Cold War had concluded, the US foreign aid program lost its strategic rationale and, unsurprisingly, contracted significantly. In the absence of a clear threat to US interests in a period of what appeared to be dawning unipolarity, this also created space for more humanitarian motivations. The share of aid devoted to education and health, particularly support for HIV/AIDS responses in Africa, began to increase during this time. In a time of retrenchment, US aid provision was also subject to greater conditionality, with curtailment of flows based on poor recipient performance on democratization, debt service, and non-proliferation.

The most recent period of the US foreign aid program, from 2001 to 2021, has been shaped by the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. This involved a massive expansion of the aid program, which was initially planned as part of the US commitment to the Millennium Development Goals but ultimately conditioned to support the GWOT. Aid flows to South Asia and the Middle East increased significantly, focused on stablishing conflict zones and strengthening civil society. As this security threat has waned in significance, the aid program has continued to expand, responding to perceived threats from China and Russia and strengthening US presence in Africa.

Economic Motivations for US Aid

Compared the role of economic motivations with that of other large donors, the US aid program has the hereditary advantage of having been created at a time when the US enjoyed an international competitive advantage in the production of most manufactured goods. In the immediate postwar period, France and the United Kingdom used aid to maintain ties with their colonies.

The later development of Japan's aid program would focus largely improving relations with East Asian states based on deepening trade ties.[21] The US, on the other hand, was actively seeking the dismantlement of imperial preferences and the construction of open trading system through the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs process. Economic motivations were not emphasized as the benefits of aid were perceived to be security-related.

There were early indications that aid might be used as a carrot to encourage liberalization by recipients. At meetings in Mexico City (1945), Rio de Janeiro (1947), and Bogota (1948), Secretary of State, George Marshall repeatedly stated that there would be no Marshall Plan for Latin America, which would have to seek private capital for development instead. Coupled with the insistence that Latin American states should join the US in removing barriers to trade and investment, this may have indicated a potential willingness to use aid to compensate those embracing open trade. However, the combination of the intransigence of states committed to import substitution and the shift in aid focus during the Kennedy Administration meant that this strategy was not pursued. Meanwhile, US aid in Southeast Asia was focused directly on its security implications.

In the 1970s, as mentioned above, the US became concerned about the potential use of aid resources for export promotion by its trading partners. In the wake of persistent payments deficits, the Nixon Administration had called on economists for advice on export subsidies and been told that they could not be expected to remedy balance of payments problems. While the US continued to tie most of its aid to domestic procurement (a practice that can reduce the real value of aid substantially) as other donors did, it pursued disciplines on export subsidization through the OECD Arrangement on Officially Supported Export Credits in 1978. When this competition leaked into the foreign aid realm, the US pushed for the Helsinki disciplines on tied aid in 1991. Notably, by this point, the international financial institutions had begun to engage in structural adjustment lending conditional on the adoption of Washington Consensus reforms. This would obviate the need to use US bilateral aid to seek market access.

Consistent Role of Food Aid

Where economic motivations have seen a more consistent role in US aid is the Food for Peace program. The US is the largest bilateral donor of food aid, providing nearly USD 2.3 billion in food assistance in 2021, a year in which the World Health Organization reported that 828 million people suffered from chronic hunger. The combined strain of the disruption of COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine, one of the largest wheat exporters in the world, have likely exacerbated the problem.

However, the program remains controversial. When the US sends large agricultural surpluses to countries experiencing food crises, critics suggest that local production is undermined and the poor in these countries may

potentially suffer if they rely on agriculture for income. Scholars have also suggested that food aid increases the likelihood and duration of civil conflict.[22] Although empirical evidence is limited to assess these claims and some do find that poor households benefit,[23] a number of food aid recipient countries have gone from being net food exporters to net food importers.[24] Moreover, aid NGOs have increasingly lobbied for changes to the program.

Despite these concerns, US food aid, which began in the 1920s, continues due to its strong domestic support. The purchasing of domestic surpluses is part of a broader agricultural strategy of maintaining prices while balancing the interests of consumers/taxpayers. This means of supporting agriculture also does not imperil market access abroad for exporters as it has not been challenged under the WTO Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures. In response to criticism, under the Obama Administration, USAID began to use more market-based assistance (e.g., cash transfers and regional sourcing). However, in-kind aid remains central to the program and provisions like the requirement that 50 percent of the surpluses be transported on US ships reduce its efficiency.

US Aid in South Asia: Past, Present, and Future

South Asia after 2001

Although US security interests in Asia shaped its aid allocation through the 1960s, the end of the Vietnam War was accompanied by a shift in regional focus, which was further enhanced by the end of the Cold War in the 1990s. As Figure 9.4, US aid activity in South Asia was rather minimal in the decades leading up to 2001. In response to the Asian financial crisis, USAID funding increased, supporting economic recovery programs in Indonesia, the

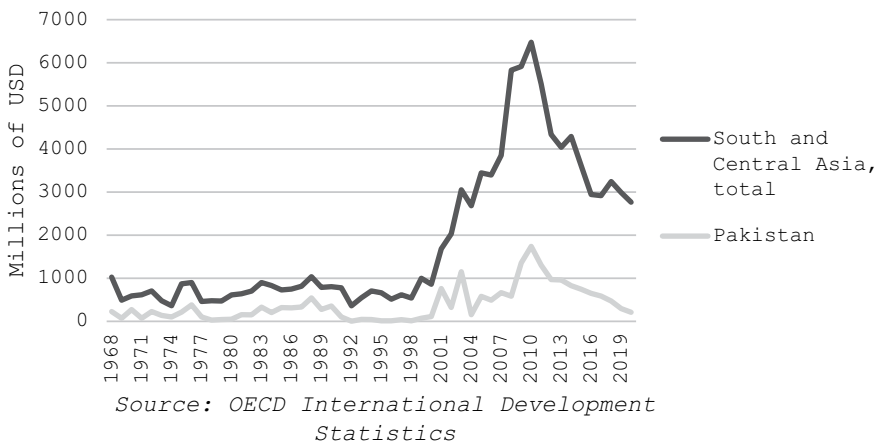


Figure 9.4 US Aid Commitments to South Asia.

Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. US assistance to the region accelerated after the September 11th attacks, as the advent of the GWOT and the war in Iraq radically reshaped US strategic priorities. Aid to Pakistan, the Philippines, Indonesia, and India was viewed as crucial, given concerns about the potential rise of extremist groups.[25]

As such, aid was used as a "carrot" to promote what the Bush Administration called transformational development, or the promotion of democracy and economic growth, and rewarding good performance by recipients through greater access to funding from the Millennium Challenge Corporation. Particular attention was paid to whether countries "govern justly, invest in their people, and encourage economic freedom."[26] Aid has also been used as a "stick" through restrictions on recipients with poor performance or retrenchment on democratization (coups), non-proliferation, and payment of foreign debts.[27]

As Figure 9.4 shows, aid flows to South and Central Asia declined dramatically after 2010. Although this was largely driven by a reduction in US aid commitments to Afghanistan (aid dropped by two thirds from 2011 to 2020), Figure 9.2 shows that this was part of a regional rebalancing of aid allocation by the Obama Administration that ultimately favored Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, and Central America.

Aid to Pakistan

As with other South Asian states, Pakistan was not a priority of the US development assistance program in the 1990s. After failing to certify that Pakistan did not have nuclear weapons, President Bush suspended most aid to the country in 1991. Moreover, the US placed further restrictions on non-humanitarian aid in the late 1990s in response to its nuclear testing, the seizure of the government by Pervez Musharraf, and falling into arrears on US debt obligations. While this aid dramatically increased after 2001, it followed a pattern similar to that of the region as a whole as the US wound down its presence. In 2018, the Trump Administration suspended aid in response to what it perceived was insufficient effort to combat the Taliban. This included military assistance, as shown in Figure 9.5. This pattern is consistent with both the US use of aid as a tool of conditionality and changes in recipient leverage associated with perceived reduction in strategic importance. That the US failed to achieve its desired outcome in terms of Pakistan's policy choices highlights the role of complex politics in recipient countries.

The Future of US Aid in Pakistan and South Asia

While US focus has shifted from the GWOT, the growth of its rivalry with China ensures that the US will still continue to be engaged in South Asia. As China threatens expansion both militarily in the South China Sea and economically through the Belt and Road Initiative, the US can be expected to use its foreign aid program to solidify relationships with states in the region.



Figure 9.5 US Military Assistance to Pakistan.

Moreover, the rising security threat will likely indicate that recipients will be subject to less conditionality on other policy dimensions as the US seeks to gain their support.

What shape should this aid take and what shape will it take? Recent events– e.g., the catastrophic flooding in Pakistan and the devastation of the mango harvest in India – point to the increasing impact of climate change in the region. The UN Climate Change Conference Copenhagen produced an agreement by developed countries to supply developing countries with USD100 billion annually to support the adoption of carbon mitigation technologies. While progress toward this goal has been disappointing, the rise of carbon pricing systems, such as the one adopted by EU, create the possibility that developed countries will be incentivized to finance clean development in order to gain offsets.

Unfortunately, both the Copenhagen pledge and carbon pricing systems focus on mitigation, neglecting adaptation to the now unavoidable impacts of climate change. Enlightened provision of aid in South Asia by the US would focus on building resilience to potentially catastrophic natural disasters and agricultural disruptions. However, the history of US foreign aid suggests that such a move will require the US to have a continued vital security interest in the region and sufficient domestic political support for the program, which seems to have vanished in the aftermath of the failed adventure in Afghanistan. For Pakistan, Islamabad's alleged support of the Afghan Taliban has raised concerns inside the US about the continuation of military assistance and even financial aid and assistance. Moreover, the Trump administration has implemented rapid and dramatic changes in US foreign policy including, at the time of this writing, the proposed dismantling of USAID and substantial cuts to US provision of ODA. Whether the rift between Pakistan and the US and the shift

in the US orientation toward foreign assistance are transitory or long-term phenomena remains to be seen.

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Part IV

Moving Away from the Shadow of Geopolitics


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10 New Pathways in Pakistan-US Ties
Addressing Human Security Concerns

Sadia Sulaiman and Mustansar Klasra

In the past 75 years, the major focus of the relationship between the United States (US) and Pakistan remained primarily on security issues. However, recently there has been an emphasis on other issues of cooperation between the two, such as energy, trade, health, and climate change. Unlike many other states, the US has always remained indispensable to Pakistan mainly for two reasons. First, it is one of Pakistan's largest foreign direct investment sources, and second, one of Pakistan's largest export markets.[1] If we look into the past 20 years, the US remained on the top as a leading investor in several sectors in Pakistan. The US and Pakistan celebrated 75 successful years of the bilateral relationship in 2022. This is particularly a good moment to look back and explore why both countries could not evolve better-placed bilateral ties and explore new avenues of cooperation other than security to enhance people-to-people contacts.

Within this context, this chapter focuses on two relevant yet highly significant collaboration domains between Pakistan and the US, i.e., health and the climate change. Both these sectors have remained largely neglected in the discourse on bilateral ties between the two. However, post-Covid-19 pandemic, the unprecedented US assistance in providing vaccination to help curb the pandemic opened the door for a more vibrant and diverse health sector cooperation between Washington and Islamabad. Similarly, in the summer of 2022, massive floods in Pakistan resulted in the realization within Pakistan and across the globe regarding the looming threat of climate change. Therefore, both countries have a common human security threat to address that would not only help these two countries but may provide incentives to other such states facing the acute challenges of climate change.

Health Care in Pakistan

Health plays a crucial role in shaping any country's human capital and economic fate, as good health increases the production capacity and efficiency of the labor force, leading to economic growth and human welfare. The World Health Organization (WHO) has defined a health system as "all organizations, people, and actions whose primary intent is to promote, restore or

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maintain health."[2] In Pakistan, there are broadly two forms of health care systems, i.e., private and public. The private sector caters to nearly 70 percent of the population, which usually outperforms the public sector due to better facilities and services.[3] The overall status of the healthcare system could be more encouraging as it is marred with several challenges. According to the UN Millennium Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Status Report 2021, Pakistan has shown modest progress in the health sector (SDG 3). According to the report, the number of mothers dying during pregnancy and childbirth reduced by 32.6 percent from 2007 to 2019.

Similarly, births attended by skilled health personnel increased by 10 percent in the five years from 2013 to 2018. Moreover, national vaccination coverage improved by 11.5 percent from 2013-2018.[4] However, due to the massive population growth and lack of financial resources, the health infrastructure remains under pressure to meet the needs of people in both rural and urban areas. Access to essential healthcare services is limited in rural locations due to a lack of health infrastructure. The WHO estimates that more than half of Pakistan's population lacks access to basic healthcare services. This lack of access contributes to high mortality and morbidity rates among children under five, pregnant women, and individuals over 65.[5]

The inefficient healthcare delivery and lack of trained health workers, particularly in remote areas, is another acute problem. In Pakistan, the competence and productivity of health workers are questionable, as only a few medical schools provide quality education and training. Healthcare workers have very less incomes and are forced to do double jobs affecting service delivery. There is also a depletion of the health workforce due to emigration.[6] Along with these issues, malnutrition, lack of clean drinking water and associated water-borne diseases, and poor infant mortality rates are the challenges that Pakistan's health sector faces. Especially the number of basic health units (BHUs) and hospitals is insufficient for Pakistan's rapidly growing population. Pakistan is still fighting diseases which have vanished long away from the rest of the world, especially Polio. At the end of December 2022, there were 20 documented polio cases in Pakistan, with several not registered.

US-Pakistan Bilateral Collaboration in Health Sector

The US has been a longstanding global health security leader. In 2014, the US helped launch the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) to strengthen the world's ability to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease threats. Now, more than 70 countries, as well as international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and private sector entities, are united in a common goal of measurably strengthening global health security – with the target of strengthening country capacities by 2024 for 100 countries in at least five specific technical areas.[7] Pakistan and the US also remain strongly committed to implementing the multilateral GHSA to achieve the global capacity to

prevent, detect and respond to infectious disease threats. To implement this commitment, Pakistan is developing a mutually agreed five-year roadmap to achieve the targets of the GHSA. In 2016, in cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO) and other partners, the US and Pakistan agreed to undergo and share an external evaluation of the country's capacity to achieve GHSA targets and implement the core capacities required by the International Health Regulations.[8]

USAID' Role in Pakistan's Health Sector

The USAID's role has remained vital in improving the healthcare facilities across Pakistan. In this regard, its support for family welfare and reproductive health have remained priority areas. According to reports, since 2010, USAID has trained over 31,000 healthcare workers who serve over 4.3 million community members throughout Pakistan. Among program beneficiaries assessed in 2014, this has resulted in a 52 percent increase in prenatal care visits and a 20 percent increase in deliveries with a skilled birth attendant. Between 2013 – 2017, the USAID provided over 7.8 million women and children with quality maternal, child, and reproductive health care services. During the same years, it trained more than 47,000 people on new healthcare interventions for women and children. It supported governments in Sindh, Punjab, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to set aside USD 97 million of health funding to meet women's family planning needs.[9]

In January 2016, US Ambassador David Hale and Sindh Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah inaugurated the USAID-funded Jacobabad Institute of Medical Sciences. The facility was planned to provide modern health services to approximately 1 million people.[10] The US government also funded USD 3.44 million construction of a 60-bed obstetric/gynecological ward and training facility at the Karachi Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Center (JPMC). Completed in 2012, the ward offered outpatient care for obstetric and gynecological clients, comprehensive emergency obstetrical services, normal deliveries, episiotomies, caesarean sections, and fistula repair. Additionally, USAID funded the construction of another 120-bed maternity ward to replace the 80-year-old maternity ward at JPMC in 2016.[11] All these steps, as mentioned above, show the potential for health sector cooperation on bilateral bases between the two countries. However, after President Donald Trump took office in January 2025, the USAID missions were stopped all across the world including Pakistan. The decision will have serious implications for the feeble health care system in Pakistan that relied heavily on USAID.

US Support to Pakistan during Covid-19 Pandemic

It is beyond doubt that the US health cooperation prepared Pakistan to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic in a much better way than many other countries

worldwide. United States donated nearly 80 million high-quality and effective vaccine doses during the pandemic. It also invested USD 80 million to help Pakistan combat the pandemic while building infrastructure and resilience for the future. Through USAID, the US government donated USD 7.5 million worth of medical oxygen supplies to the Pakistani Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations, and Coordination. The support also provided training to 163 hospitals across Pakistan to increase their capability to treat patients suffering from severe COVID-19 and other associated conditions. Addressing Ministry of Health officials at the ceremony in Islamabad, the US Ambassador to Pakistan, Mr Donald Blome, stated,

> *This assistance that started at the very outset of COVID, continued throughout the pandemic, and is now addressing the lasting effects of the floods on health is a prime example of the long history of US assistance to Pakistan. The US was there initially, and we will continue to find ways to support Pakistan as it recovers and rebuilds from disasters, whether a global pandemic like COVID-19 or a flooding disaster like Pakistan just experienced in 2022.*[12]

US-Pakistan Health Dialogues 2022

On the eve of celebrating 75 years of bilateral diplomatic relationship, the US and Pakistan initiated the Health Dialogue in July 2022. During that first dialogue session following seven themes came under discussion[13]:

i) Establishment of a Pakistani Center for Disease Control (CDC)
ii) Global Health Security
iii) Childhood immunizations
iv) COVID-19
v) Bilateral regulatory engagement
vi) Maternal and Child Health
vii) Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)

Pakistan and the US have pledged to greater exchanges of information, expertise, and best practices in fighting diseases. Meanwhile, the US appreciated Pakistan's successful handling of COVID-19, for which the US provided 80 million vaccines. Both sides reiterated their commitment to continue close collaboration in the themes mentioned earlier and regularly monitor progress in agreed areas of cooperation.[14] All these joint ventures and cooperation indicate the significance of bilateral relations between Pakistan and the US.[15]

Climate Change: Where Does Pakistan Stand?

Diverse topography, ecosystems, and climate zones characterize Pakistan. The country is rich in natural resources, including fertile agricultural lands,

natural gas reserves, and mineral deposits. Pakistan also faces challenges balancing competing objectives between economic development and environmental protection. A semi-industrialized country, Pakistan has grown from a primarily agriculture-based to a mostly service-based economy where the service sector constituted 49.4 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2019. As of 2019, agriculture remained the largest employer, occupying 42.6 percent of the workforce. As of 2013, approximately 29.5 percent of the population still lived below the national poverty line, and 12.3 percent (2018) remained undernourished. The majority of Pakistan's 216.5 million people, as per 2019 data, live along the Indus River, an area prone to severe flooding in July and August due to monsoon rains. Major earthquakes are also frequent in the mountainous northern and western regions. The government of Pakistan established the Ministry of Climate Change and issued its Second National Communication on Climate Change in 2019.[16]

National Climate Change Policy recognizes that while Pakistan is working on a strategy to conserve energy, improve energy efficiency and optimize fuel mix to support global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the more immediate and pressing task is to prepare itself for adaptation to climate change. Pakistan ratified the Paris Agreement on November 10, 2016, and submitted its Nationally Determined Contribution to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2016.[17] Pakistan faces warming rates considerably above the global average with a potential rise of 1.3°C–4.9°C by 2090s over the 1986–2005 baseline. The range in possible temperature rises highlights the significant differences between 21st-century emissions pathways. Rises in the annual maximum and minimum temperature are projected to be stronger than the rise in average temperature, likely amplifying the pressure on human health, livelihoods, and ecosystems. Changes to Pakistan's rainfall and runoff regimes, and hence its water resources, are highly uncertain, but an increase in drought conditions is likely. The frequency and intensity of extreme climate events are projected to increase, increasing disaster risk, particularly for vulnerable poor and minority groups.

An increase in the number of people affected by flooding is projected, with a likely increase of around 5 million people exposed to extreme river floods by 2035–2044 and a potential increase of around 1 million annually exposed to coastal flooding by 2070–2100. Projections suggest yield declines in many key food and cash crops, including cotton, wheat, sugarcane, maize, and rice. Temperature increases will likely strain urban dwellers and outdoor laborers, with increased risk of heat-related sickness and death likely under all emissions pathways. The above indicators and possible repercussions should be seen in the context of high and persistent levels of undernourishment and deprivation. There is an urgent need for further research and delivery of effective adaptation and disaster risk reduction measures in Pakistan.[18]

US-Pakistan Bilateral Cooperation over Climate Change and Disasters

For decades, the US-Pakistan relationship has put a premium on counterterrorism priorities in Afghanistan. Still, a steady decline in security cooperation makes generating new common ground for long-term engagement critical. The US needs to reorient its relationship with Pakistan toward collaboration over climate change.[19] By prioritizing long-term disaster relief and debt swap guarantees for Pakistan, US policymakers can open avenues for a more productive relationship, effectively address anti-Americanism, and deliver on Washington's commitments to climate action in the developing world. Biden administration designated climate change as an important foreign policy goal, and was aware of Pakistan's deep climate vulnerability. However, how does the current regime under President Trump in the US deal with Pakistan's climate security concerns is yet to be seen. For years, US governments have applied a narrow lens to Pakistan, framed through contentious security issues and Afghanistan. This is why, when Washington invites 40 nations to a climate summit, Pakistan won't cut.[20] Such trust deficits also need to be dealt with accordingly.[21]

U.S-Pakistan Climate and Environment Working Group

A virtual meeting was held on 21 September 2021 to mark the inauguration of the US-Pakistan Climate and Environment Working Group. The purpose of that initiative was to work together to address the issue of climate change. It was a significant step in the green development vision of both countries.[22] Speaking at the occasion, the then Special Assistant to the Prime Minister of Pakistan on Climate Change (SAPM), Malik Amin Aslam, said Pakistan was committed to climate change and supported global climate action initiatives. He welcomed the cooperation between the US and Pakistan on climate change. Within that context, the 10 billion Tree Tsunami project, Clean Green Pakistan, E-Vehicle Policy, Nature Performance Bonds, and Recharge Pakistan were some of the initiatives taken in the direction of meeting the objectives of climate change policy in Pakistan. The then US Chargé d'affaires Angela P. Aggelar virtually attended the session. She lauded Pakistan's efforts for environmental protection, especially the 10 billion Tree Tsunami and Clean Green Pakistan. It was applauded by the US that such programs created awareness among the public. The programs also demonstrated Pakistan's determination as an active player in the fight against climate change. The US at the occasion expressed that since climate change was the cornerstone of the US foreign policy, therefore extended all-out support for Pakistan in that regard.[23]

US Assistance for 2022 Floods across Pakistan

Pakistan's unprecedented flood disaster was a wake-up call for governments and international institutions to build a worldwide response to the

disproportionate burden of climate change on nations of the Global South — a challenge that Pakistan's foreign minister underscored to US officials and foreign policy analysts at USIP on September 29, 2022, In the same address, the then Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari urged policymakers to lead an international effort to use the Pakistan crisis as a catalyst for a more effective international effort to help the country's most vulnerable proportion of the population to climate change.[24] The flooding from the 2022 monsoon showers of rain had one-third of Pakistan, an area larger than the United Kingdom, and displaced 33 million people, close to the population of Canada.[25] Pakistan was neither prepared nor equipped to deal with one-seventh of its population becoming climate refugees overnight like several other countries.

The USAID expressed grave concern over the floods as it realized that the 2022 floods created a crisis that would extend for years. Multiple health issues emerged in post-flood scenarios, such as malaria, typhoid, and other diseases, which were spread unprecedentedly and would continue to spread in the years to come as millions of Pakistanis rely on unsafe water. The flood destroyed almost all of Pakistan's economically essential cotton crops, wheat, rice, livestock, and other food sources. Experts expected food shortages to spike prices further after reaching an annual rate of about 25 percent in July 2022. It was feared that the health, housing, food, and economic crisis in the aftermath of the floods would push a new influx of impoverished, rural Pakistanis into the country's already overburdened urban areas. As head of the US delegation to the International Conference on Climate-Resilient Pakistan, USAID Deputy Administrator Isobel Coleman announced that the US pledges an additional USD 100 million to continue supporting Pakistan's recovery efforts from the devastating 2022 floods.[26] The US provided USD 97 million in flood relief, disaster resilience, and food security assistance provided in 2022 and USD 4.8 million in financial support from US International Development Finance Corporation, bringing total US commitment to more than USD 200 million.[27]

The post-flood USD 100 million pledge included both new and redirected funding. USAID provided USD 79.3 million to prioritize urgently needed support for agriculture, food security, health, economic growth, education, protection, and governance. The funding included USD 20.7 million in State Department resources that provided humanitarian assistance to help flood-affected Afghan refugees and host communities in Pakistan and assistance to restore damaged justice sector infrastructure, including courthouses, police stations, and training facilities a result of floods.[28] The high-level US officials also visited the flood-affected areas to show solidarity with the people of Pakistan in that hour of need. The Late US Congresswomen Sheila Jackson Lee and Congressman Tom Swazi visited Pakistan in August 2022. Congresswoman Sheila stated at the occasion, "Our delegation brought hope

that the US will be an effective and consistent partner in helping Pakistan work through this human crisis!"[29]

The US has a long history of standing with Pakistan when disaster strikes, helping Pakistanis recover from severe climate shocks, stave off disease, feed their families, and rebuild their lives. For example, after the October 2005 earthquake, the US provided an initial and immediate contribution of USD156 million (PKR 3 billion) for emergency relief in Pakistan, and teams from the US were the first on the scene to deliver assistance. The USAID launched a five year Pakistan Earthquake Reconstruction Plan, worth USD 120 million with a sole focus on reconstruction of schools and health facilities across earthquake affected areas.[30] Since 2009 till 2014, the US emerged as the largest provider of civilian humanitarian assistance to Pakistan and USD 1 billion were committed by the USAID in that regard.[31]

Challenges in US-Pakistan Relations

As stated earlier, the US and Pakistan ties have remained security oriented throughout the 75 years of their diplomatic relationship. However, the Covid-19 pandemic and the 2022 floods provided two major opportunities to walk away from the history of troubled ties and look into the possibilities of expanding the bilateral ties. These two opportunities were instrumental in opening up avenues to broaden people–to–people contacts. However, there are still challenges in expanding the ties, especially in health and climate change. The first challenge is the approach by the incumbent President Trump towards the issues of climate change and humanitarian assistance, which does not allow US money to be spent on such causes. Secondly, increasing security concerns due to the revival of the threat of extremism in the post-US withdrawal scenario from Afghanistan in 2021 both the countries may find it challenging to set aside security-centric engagement and focus more on human security concerns. Moreover, over Pakistan's growing and allegedly dubious role in its commitment to War on Terror, increasing concerns are expressed in the US about its relations with Islamabad. Though some US officials still think that Pakistan has played its role and Washington needs to continue engaging with the country, some officials want Washington to revisit its terms of engagement with Islamabad. In this context, when lawmakers asked if it was time for Washington to reassess its relationship with Pakistan, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken had to assure Congress in 2021 that…

> *This is one of the things we're going to be looking at in the days and weeks ahead – the role that Pakistan has played over the last 20 years but also the role we would want to see it play in the coming years and what it will take for it to do that.*[32]

Pakistan has always wanted that rather than taking the country alone for fighting ad hoc battles against threats and terrorists, Washington should give

Pakistan equal status as an ally and a sovereign nation like it gives others. Former Prime Minister Imran Khan said in an interview in June 2021 that the relationship between the US and Pakistan was lopsided and that because the US felt that they were giving aid to Pakistan, they felt that Pakistan had to do US' bidding. Former Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi had also told his US counterpart in May 2021 that Pakistan wanted better ties based on close economic cooperation, enhanced regional connectivity, and a common vision for a peaceful South Asia.

Given that approach of Islamabad in which leaders of the country demanded that the US treat Pakistan as an equal partner, the US approach remained the other way round, dealing and treating Pakistan in a transactional manner.[33] If we look into the history, ties between the two countries have had an on-and-off trajectory. From the beginning of the 1950s, they have been established on ad hoc bases as transactional ties in which the US has been guaranteed security in exchange for money by Pakistan. Once the security threats vanish, the relationship returns to a position where they hardly share a common interest that would bind them to cooperate.

Pakistan safeguarded American interests in this part of the world for seven decades, ensuring that the US achieved all its strategic goals in this region. Although Pakistan extends a warm hand of friendship to the US whenever it needs support, the US always steps back when it no longer needs a Pakistani role in an issue, and relations decline. Pakistan has faced some of the toughest and strictest US sanctions in history. The US believes in transactional relations, whereas Pakistan expects an all-weather, all-time, all-dimensions, and everlasting friendship, above any materialistic gains or visible interests. The two countries have always cooperated on their common goals and interests, though the US has failed to value Pakistan's interests and has kept making demands. "Do more" has been the message of the US leadership in recent years, without understanding Pakistan's capacity to comply or its interests. Of course, some concerns exist on both sides, some of which may be genuine, but some are based only on misunderstandings. It requires a comprehensive dialogue to understand each other's points of view and resolve all differences amicably.

Way Forward

Considering the huge potential for vibrant and dynamic bilateral ties between the US and Pakistan, avenues for possible but durable and long-lasting cooperation must be explored between both countries. Within that context, the visa regime needs to be relaxed, travel advisory may be removed, and the exchange of scholars, intellectuals, and think tanks may be enhanced. In the field of the health sector, Pakistan and US should encourage the exchange programs of health care facilitators between both countries with the objective of capacity building. The local nurses, doctors, laboratory technicians, paramedics, and pharmaceutical specialists must be well-trained and

well-equipped, especially in Pakistan's local public sector hospitals and BHUs. They must be part of the training and exchange initiatives between the US and Pakistan. There is also a need for Pakistan to remain disaster or pandemic prepared.

The US training and assistance in this regard can be very beneficial to tackle any unexpected situation with the massive human and material toll like the 2022 floods. Pakistan may face several such natural disasters in the future and should work on plans to construct more dams in the flooding zones for water preservation. Both countries can work in the direction that will help generate local employment opportunities and address the challenge of anti-Americanism in the long run. Similarly, both countries need to remain engaged with each other through various tiers of dialogue between government officials, diplomats, the business community, youth, civil society, and women activists. These key stakeholders on both sides can identify the areas of mutual concern and cooperation with climate change and human security as top priorities and a major focus of their bilateral ties. Climate change and disasters are closely linked with the challenges of food security, economic security, energy security, and health security for the common people. Pakistan needs to convince President Trump of its vulnerabilities to climate change and associated disasters, making it an effective moment to initiate multi-dimensional dialogue at people-to-people and government-to-government levels to mitigate various challenges to human security.

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11 Contributions of the US Fulbright Program in Knowledge-Based Economy in Pakistan

Ayesha Siddiqa

Knowledge has always been a source of survival in human cultures and societies. Francis Bacon first observed that "knowledge is power", and from Thomas Hobbes to Michel Foucault, it has been rephrased in several ways.[1] In a knowledge-based economy, however, knowledge is of critical value where innovative ideas, rather than capital or natural resources, are keys to growth and development. Knowledge economy (KE) is a system of production, consumption, exchange, and distribution of research, knowledge, and information that is grounded in intangible assets such as intellectual capital (education, skills, and knowledge) and informational goods and services (patents, copyrights, proprietary software) as opposed to tangible or fixed assets like physical or natural resources, as sources of economic growth. The World Bank's Knowledge Economy Framework provides four pillars that are needed to support a successful knowledge economy.

This chapter focuses on "Education" as the core pillar of KE and its role in the US-Pakistan relations. Indeed, formal education, vocational training, lifelong learning, and robust research are the prerequisites of economic progress in the KE that help modernize agriculture and industries and affect a transition towards informational systems. While advanced economies have consistently shifted towards research, training, and information technology over the past few decades, factor-driven, developing economies like Pakistan still depend on agriculture and labor-intensive industry. This research, therefore, outlines the role of education in the knowledge economy in Pakistan, with its primary focus on the contribution of the US Fulbright Program. The study argues that while Fulbright has made a significant contribution to Education and Training as the core pillar of KE by promoting international student mobility; building academic and professional networks; and shaping culturally diverse knowledge workers in Pakistan, the program needs to enhance *reciprocal* academic mobility that encourages more US scholars to visit Pakistan in line with the principles of an egalitarian global knowledge economy. At this crucial juxtaposition when both the US and Pakistan are trying to reset their ties, it is important to reflect on both the achievements and aspirations in this regard. People-to-people contacts lie at the core of US-Pakistan relations, and Fulbright has played a pivotal role over the past

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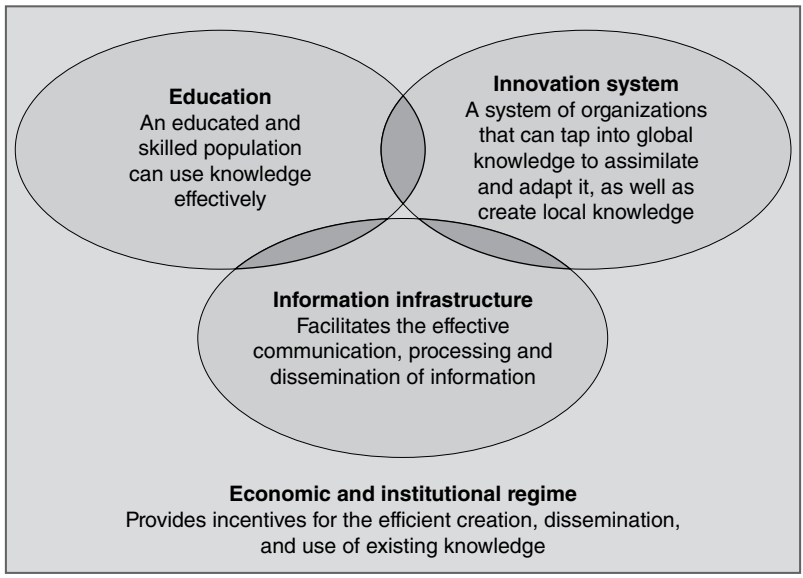


Figure 11.1 The Four Interactive Pillars of the Knowledge Economy.

Source: Aubert et al., *Building Knowledge Economies: Advanced Strategies for Development*, WBI Development Studies, 2007.

73 years in strengthening these links through educational exchanges. This essay attempts to appreciate the longstanding US-Pakistan partnership in education and to reflect on the possibilities of deepening this relationship for a shared future.

Origins and Definition of the Knowledge Economy

While Knowledge Economy could arguably be traced back to the industrial revolution in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, which was marked by economic expansion through technological innovation, it is Fritz Machlup and Peter Drucker who are credited as the pioneers of the concept, with their focus on the rise of innovative industries and their impact on economic change.[2] The literature available on KE can be divided into two waves of studies. The first wave that started in the 1960s includes the works of Machlup, Drucker, Una Mansfield, D. Bell, Marc U. Porat, and Michael R. Rubin. The second wave that started in the mid-1990s onwards includes the works of Ikujiro Nonaka, Hirotaka Takeuchi, Georg von Krogh, Thomas H. Davenport, Laurence Prusak and S. E. Völpel, J. Van Dijk, Manuel Castells, and the publications of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Besides shaping the writings in the second wave, works produced during the

first wave have significantly contributed to the understanding and description of the KE in the US, Europe, and other countries.[3]

Drucker coined the term "Knowledge Economy" in his books *The Effective Executive* (1966) and *The Age of Discontinuity* (1969). From Machlup and Drucker to the recent developments, several terms have surfaced to capture the phenomenon, including knowledge society, information society, information economy, post-industrial economy, services economy so on. However, most publications (76 percent) use the term "knowledge economy". While UNESCO prefers the term "knowledge society" to emphasize the "social, cultural, economic, political and institutional" dimensions to advance "a more pluralistic and developmental perspective" on transformation. The OECD instead uses the term "knowledge-based economy" to define the "economies which are directly based on the production, distribution and use of knowledge and information" that contributes to an overarching knowledge-based economy.[4] The World Science Forum broadened the definition by referring to a "knowledge-based society" grounded in innovation and life-long learning and comprising a community of knowledge workers and research networks that produce high-technology goods and services.[5] While various definitions focus on different aspects of knowledge, all converge on education's critical role in the KE. This chapter uses the term in context of education's critical role in economic development for betterment of bilateral ties between the two countries using the case study of the US-Pakistan relations.

Education and the Knowledge Economy

The knowledge economy has centralized the role of higher education in economic activities through formal education, lifelong learning, and robust research. Research has consistently reinforced the link between investments in education and training and economic performance,[6] while higher education, in particular, has a direct correlation with GDP growth.[7] Zeb studied the role of KE in Asian businesses in 45 countries from 2000-2019 with a specific focus on education, innovation, information communications technology (ICT), economic incentives, and institutional regimes. The study showed a strong correlation between the KE indicators and the success of the Asian economies in the business sector and poverty alleviation. Dima et al. observed that innovation and education are critical predictors of economic growth, with research and development (R&D) and lifelong learning as markers of competitiveness in the European Union (EU). There are several examples where HE institutions and ICT innovations are fundamental to capacity development, thus necessitating interventions in HE and R&D institutions. Focusing on 9 economies in the context of KE and the globalization of education, Bogoviz et al. showed a positive correlation between the globalization of education and the advancement of KE.[8] The effects of educating one generation on the subsequent ones regarding their attitudes towards learning and education are studied by Wantchekon et al. to show the

importance of knowledge transfer, otherwise uncommon in uneducated families. Several other studies have shown a positive relationship between investments in education, innovation, information and technology, and KE's growth.[9]

Therefore, advanced and developing economies have started restructuring their education systems over the past three decades in response to the changing needs of education and research in KE. The OECD and the World Bank have also provided important policy agendas in this regard that focus on increasing primary, secondary, and tertiary education enrolments; introducing ICT infrastructure and syllabi across all levels of education. It also focuses on promoting a diversified education system that includes formal education, technical and vocational training, and entrepreneurship education; developing world-class universities and centers of excellence especially in science and technology.[10] Within this context, implementing the Triple Helix model of innovation by establishing industry-university-government collaborations to foster research, education has a critical role to play.[11]

Despite a consensus on the need for intervention in the above areas, scholars have differing views on how education may be redesigned to meet the KE needs and challenges. For instance, while the World Bank "favours the market and individualism as the means for developing knowledge and skills," the OECD proposes "an institutionally embedded liberalism to overcome the problems posed by tacit knowledge".[12] Roberto Unger argues that KE is marked by an "insular or confined vanguardism" controlled by "an entrepreneurial and technological elite". He instead proposes an "inclusive" or "radicalized vanguardism", which is an "experimentalist, knowledge-intensive practice of production and innovation" that "requires a higher order of capabilities" and "a specific kind of education". Such an education, for Unger, has four characteristics whose "value" transcends "economic benefits and touches every aspect of life and consciousness in a democratic society." First, it "give[s] priority to analytic and synthetic capabilities" and "to the powers associated with the imagination." Second, its content prefers "selective depth to encyclopedic superficiality" or "memorization" to prioritize "the deployment of information in the future". Third, it encourages "cooperation in teaching and learning over the juxtaposition of authoritarianism and individualism". Fourth, such an education is "dialectical", just like a "high-energy democracy" in which everything is presented from "at least two contrasting points of view" and where structural change does not necessitate "ruin or war". Such a "radicalized and disseminated knowledge economy is both the cause and the consequence of a change in our mental life as well as in our economic activities." Shifts in economic practices alone cannot guarantee this, for it will come about through "renewal in the character, conception, and method of education".[13]

David Guile agrees that the educational policymaking in the KE is marked by "comforting illusions" that "fail to engage with the real issues". He stresses the need for "a total reconceptualization of the nature of learning" away from "the *acquisition* of knowledge" towards "learning" "as a form of

participation in a 'community of practice'. The focus should be on "the situated, social and dynamic character of the learning process (rather than on a decontextualized body of knowledge), that is based in "the capacity to *transform* 'communities of practice."[14] Likewise, in deliberating on the role of higher education and research in the KE, Marginson argues that the former "is not limited to fostering the economic development of nations and the provision of opportunities for individuals," but "it also extends to the promotion and harmonization of cultural diversity, political democracy and … international cooperation." For him, higher education based in the global exchange of knowledge plays a critical role "in the formation of a world society, which is a next great challenge facing humanity".[15] As evident from the discussion above, there has been a consistent shift away from the purely technological conceptions of education in the KE towards pluralistic, democratic principles of education grounded in community engagement.

Education and Knowledge Economy in Pakistan

Pakistan is among the countries that still need to transition to deploying knowledge as a development tool. As per the KE index 2021, which gauges a country's performance in the four pillar categories, Pakistan has posted lower rankings across all sectors. The country ranks 123rd out of 154 countries in the Global Knowledge Index (GKI) 2021 and 20th out of 27 countries with medium human development. While the GKI world average is 48.4, Pakistan stands below 37.9. Pakistan's areas of strength include Researchers in higher education: Labor underutilization rate, Ecological footprint per capita, Market concentration, Completion rate in upper secondary education, and gender parity, while areas of improvement include Peace and stability, trade, Individuals with standard ICT skills, ICT Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) patent applications (per 100 billion GDP).[16] As for Sectoral Indices, Pakistan ranks 126 in Pre-University Education; 100 in Technical & Vocational Education & training; 86 in Higher Education; 118 in Research, Development, & Innovation; 114 in Information & Communications Technology; 110 in Economy; and 144 in Enabling Environment, thus falling short on both world average & medium human development across all indices except Higher Education.[17]

Despite this development in higher education, the HE system in Pakistan needs to catch up to the international standards of research, skill development, and technological advancement that are the prerequisites of KE.[18] While Pakistan began its higher education journey with a single university in 1947, today, there are over 100 universities under public sector and as many under private sector.[19] However, the financial means to sustain them still need to be improved. The issue is addressed by increasing enrolments, which further deteriorates the quality of education, hence continuing the vicious cycle. Likewise, there is a focus on producing a certain number of scientists,

doctors, engineers, and PhDs per million population. As a result, while the number of PhDs has risen from 300 in 1998 to over 15000 today, more research being produced at most HE institutions is needed to contribute to the advancement of KE. Besides, there needs to be more focus on promoting technical and vocational education and training for producing a skilled workforce for KEs.

While Pakistan's educational system faces many challenges ranging from lack of resources, inadequate policymaking, insufficient infrastructure, ineffective institutional structures, and lack of advanced curriculum, syllabi, and teacher training, a key underlying issue is the educational system's focus on memorization to the neglect of critical thinking, innovation, and creativity that are integral to knowledge production. A recent study exploring the role of higher education in developing a knowledge economy in Pakistan analyzed Pakistan's progress on different economic indicators to conclude that investment in higher education has not supported "a shift like the economy in Pakistan". The study, therefore, underscores the need for an "overall restructuring of higher education policy and procedure of its implementation" in light of local and international economic and financial contexts.[20]

The first major step to promote KE in Pakistan was Vision 2025, rolled out by the Planning Commission of Pakistan in 2014. The 12-year vision had seven pillars with several quantitative targets for each. One of these pillars was a Knowledge Economy that was to be achieved through innovation and education; a sizeable increase in public expenditure on higher education from 0.2 percent of GDP to 1.4 percent of GDP; and expansion in higher education enrolment from 1.5 million to 5 million.[21] The Vision envisaged a literacy rate of 90 percent and a primary school enrolment rate of 100 percent by 2025. However, there needed to be more progress made on those fronts. A major development, however, has been the establishment of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) in 2002, which is responsible for the finance, management, certification, and quality assurance of higher education and research in Pakistan in line with international best practices. While there are several issues with the implementation and execution of the HEC policies, the system offers great potential for transforming HEI as per KE principles. An important milestone in this regard was the Knowledge Economy Partnerships Pakistan-UK 2014-15 by the British Council and the HEC (and the follow-up programs) to promote Knowledge Exchange activities and strategic thinking in HEIs through partnerships between Pakistani and British universities.[22] Among more recent developments has been the foundation in Haripur of the Pak Austrian University of Applied Science and Engineering (Pak Austria Fachhochschule) in 2020, in collaboration with eight international engineering institutions from Austria and China focused on providing education in line with the KE principles. Finally, HEC foreign scholarships, the Fulbright Program, and other foreign government-sponsored scholarships rolled out over the last few decades have significantly added to Pakistan's knowledge workers' pool.

Role of the US Fulbright Program

The US Fulbright Program is the government's flagship international academic exchange program that fosters mutual understanding between the US and other countries. Presented as legislation by Senator J. William Fulbright of Arkansas in the US Congress, President Harry Truman signed the Program into law in 1946. While the major funding for the program comes from the government, host governments, higher education institutions, private organizations, and corporate partnerships, individual donors also make significant contributions. Since its commencement, over 400,000 Fulbrighters from 166 countries have participated in teaching, training, and research programs worldwide, besides enhancing people-to-people ties. Among Fulbright alumni are "61 Nobel Prize recipients, 75 MacArthur Foundation Fellows, 89 Pulitzer Prize winners, and 40 current or former heads of state".[23] The program was launched in Pakistan by establishing the United States Educational Foundation Pakistan (USEFP) in 1950. Fulbright Pakistan offers a wide range of exchange programs, 11 for Pakistani nationals and two for US citizens. Since its inception, more than 8,882 Pakistanis and around 1008 Americans have participated in the USEFP-administered exchange programs (Figure 11.2). With the world's largest alum network in Pakistan, Fulbright is contributing to Pakistan's socio-economic landscape in significant ways (Figure 11.3). In what follows, I review Fulbright exchange programs in the context of KE education in Pakistan.

Predoctoral, Fulbright Scholar, and Fulbright Specialist Program

The Predoctoral and Fulbright Scholar programs coincided with the launch of Fulbright in Pakistan in 1950. While the first allowed doctoral students to

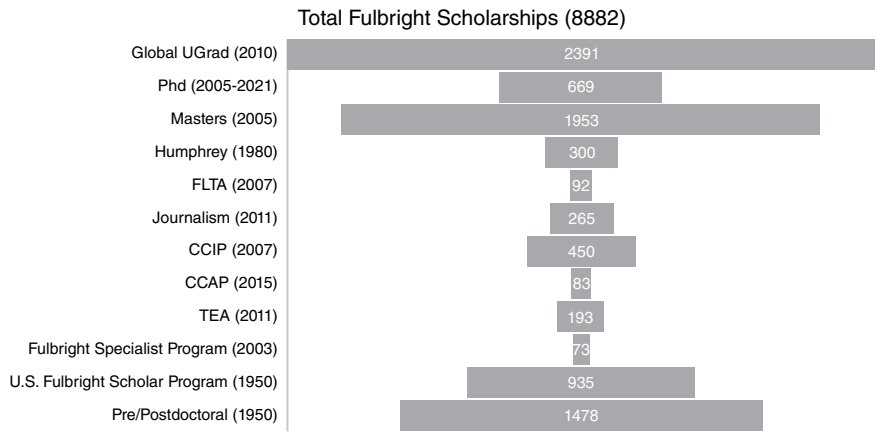


Figure 11.2 Awarded Scholarships under the US Fulbright Programs.

Data Source: Data collected by the author in an interview with the Director Alumni, USEFP on September 6, 2022. Published with the permission of the USEFP.

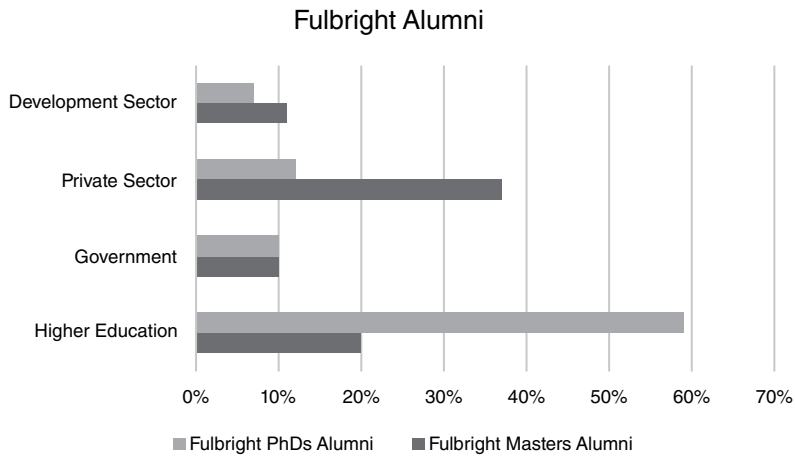


Figure 11.3 Sector-Wise Distribution of Fulbright Alumni.

Source: Data collected by the author in an interview with the Director Alumni, USEFP on September 6, 2022. Published with the permission of the USEFP.

conduct pre-doctoral research in the US for 6-12 months, the second is aimed at senior US and Pakistani academics who receive up to one-year grants for lectureship and/or postdoctoral research in the US or Pakistan. The aim is for Pakistani and US scholars to contribute to development in Pakistani academia and foster mutual understanding. Since its inception, there have been 935 beneficiaries of this program. The Fulbright Specialist program started in 2003-4 and has since sent 73 senior US scholars and professionals to Pakistan for 2-6 weeks of collaborative projects at Pakistani universities. In developing linkages between Pakistani and US researchers, universities, libraries, museums, and even hospitals, these programs directly address the *innovation* pillar of KE that is focused on tapping into and adapting "the growing stock of global knowledge" for "local needs".[24]

Global UGrad, Masters, and PhD

Launched in 2010, the Global Undergraduate Exchange Program is a recent yet most popular Fulbright program. It funds a one-semester, non-degree program at US universities for undergraduate students in the 14th or 15th year. Like a split-site program, the grantees return to their respective Pakistani universities to complete their degrees. Since its inception, the Program has sent 2391 Pakistani students to the US. The Fulbright Master's and PhD Programs started in 2005 and fund graduate study in the US In June 2015, the US and Pakistan established an Education, Science and Technology Working Group (ESTWG) under the Bilateral Strategic Dialogue as part of which a US-Pakistan Knowledge Corridor was established. The Corridor is focused on enhancing bilateral educational cooperation to create high-level

human capital per Pakistan's Vision 2025 policy. The Plan envisaged ten thousand Pakistani scholars joining US universities in the next ten years as an effort of the Government of Pakistan to train its faculty resources in targeted areas.[25] Since then, the HEC and Fulbright have jointly funded the PhD program. Fulbright Master's and PhD programs have awarded a total of 1953 and 669 scholarships since 2005. While higher education is directly linked to economic growth in knowledge economies, the role of HE also extends to the "promotion of cultural diversity, "political democracy", and "international cooperation".[26] In involving extended participation in HE in the US, these programs produce competent knowledge workers for Pakistani academia and industry and foster diversity and collaboration that underlie US education and the Fulbright program.

Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship & Journalism

Established in 1980, this Program funds a year of graduate-level non-degree academic coursework and professional development activities for distinguished mid-career professionals. The program is aimed at future leaders and policymakers who receive ten-month academic and professional training in various organizations. Once again, this program provides the groundwork for long-term collaborative links between Pakistani and professionals. Universities are carefully chosen to ensure that participants have the requisite institutional resources, support, and supervision per their areas of interest and fields of specialization. In its focus on creating direct links between university, government, and industry, the program aligns with the Triple Helix innovation model in KE discussed above. Humphrey Fellowship has so far funded the endeavors of 300 professionals. *Journalism* is another recent program established in 2011 to bring together journalists from both countries to share their respective experiences in media reporting and build strong professional relationships. Grantees spend four weeks in a US newsroom and other activities that familiarize them with US life, culture, and society. The program has funded 265 journalists' professional endeavors up until 2021. This program's contributions have been significant given mass media's centrality in developing a knowledge-based economy.

Teaching Excellence and Achievement Program (TEA) & Foreign Language Teaching Assistant (FLTA)

Launched in 2011, the TEA Program aims to train Pakistani teachers professionally from government schools and funds 8 weeks of academic and professional activities in the US. The program provides training in pedagogical methods and practices, lesson planning, subject area content, and the use of ICT in teaching. TEA alums are expected to assume the role of teacher leaders, who extend their knowledge and experience to their colleagues and students through training programs. To date, 193 Pakistani government

schoolteachers have benefited from the program. A related program, the FLTA is focused on providing training in teaching English as a second language to young teachers from Pakistani universities. FLTA grantees also teach their native language at US universities and share knowledge about their culture and society as an important aspect of language teaching. A nine-month, non-degree program, FLTA has, since 2007, sent 92 English teachers to the US. TEA and FLTA also provide opportunities for community engagement through conversation groups, outreach projects, and extracurricular activities. Given the significance of STEM education for KE at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels,[27] the importance of early education for socio-economic development, and the dearth of teacher training at government schools in Pakistan, FLTA and especially TEA, with its focus on public school teachers, are among the most critical programs vis-à-vis KE. Indeed, TEA can be more beneficial if it is expanded to include short- or long-term partnerships between the US and Pakistani schools at primary and secondary levels, like the University Partnerships Grants Program 2020-2023.

Community College Initiative Program (CCIP) & Community College Administrative Program (CCAP)

The CCIP started in 2007 to provide young professionals from Pakistan an opportunity to participate in a one-year non-degree program at community colleges in the US in Engineering, Business Studies, Agriculture, Media, Tourism and Hospitality Management, Public Safety, and Early Childhood Education. The CCIP has so far funded the professional development of 450 young people who, on their return, contribute to economic growth and development in Pakistan. The CCAP, on the other hand, is a six-week program that provides training in HE planning to administrators from post-secondary vocational and technical institutions. This exchange comprises a one-week Executive Dialogue and a five-week Community College Seminar organized by Florida State University and Santa Fe College. As part of the former, grantees meet legislative leaders and senior policymakers to understand the community college system and explore the potential for Pakistan to develop such colleges for training professionals in business and industry. Community College Seminar, however, trains administrators from higher education planning and post-secondary vocational and technical institutions in Pakistan in community college policy and governance, focusing on its relevance for the Pakistani context. The CCAP started in 2015 and has since funded the professional development of 83 Pakistani executives, including senior Ministry of Education officials and community college administrators.

A quintessentially American institution, community colleges are among the strengths of the US educational system with "a long tradition of supporting their local communities" through "shifting demographic, educational, and economic trends".[28] Focused on "improving people's ability to function as members of their communities," community colleges provide the kind of

"education and training [that] increase social cohesion, reduce crime, and improve income distribution".[29] Given the centrality of community college education to knowledge economies in developing countries,[30] both CCIP and CCAP are Fulbright's major contributions to promoting vocational and technical education, one of Pakistan's most neglected areas of KE education.

Fulbright Alumni

Given the high return rate of Fulbrighters (76.6 per cent globally),[31] one of the program's strengths has been its alums.[32] Over the past few decades, Fulbright alums have significantly contributed to Pakistan's socioeconomic development through participation in the public and private sectors. As per a recent survey conducted by the USEFP (Figure 11.3), 59 per cent of PhD and 20 per cent of Master's alums are currently employed in the higher education sector in Pakistan; 37 per cent of Masters and 12 per cent of PhD alums work in the private sector; 10 per cent each are employed in the public sector; and 11 per cent of Masters and 7 per cent of PhD alums work in the development sector. Hundreds of examples of Fulbright alums working in key areas of the Knowledge Economy, including Education; however, space allows me to mention a few. Sarah Farooq cofounded low-income schools that leverage technology to provide quality education. Bushra Rahim initiated a women-led enterprise that works for women and children in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in women empowerment, social entrepreneurship, girls' education, social justice, and literacy. Humphrey Fellow Dr Aziza Khan is uplifting the literacy rate and girls' access to schools in Balochistan. Abdul & Aqsa collaborated with STEM Education in Pakistan to launch a website that provides leadership courses and opportunities in higher education for women and girls in Pakistan that over 2,000 women have benefited from.[33]

In knowledge economies, "the more networks' individuals have, the higher the value of relationships".[34] In this context, a key strength of the Fulbright Program is its strong pool of alums actively and productively engaged by US-Pakistan Alumni Network (PUAN). PUAN is one of the world's largest and most active USG exchange alum networks, with over 37,000 registered members and 14 local chapters throughout Pakistan. It was launched in 2008 to allow committed alums to make meaningful contributions to Pakistan through community service projects, conferences, mentoring etc. PUAN offers two major funding opportunities: the Alumni Small Grants (ASG) and the Alumni Engagement and Innovation Fund (AEIF), which encourage alums to deploy their exchange program learning to create projects that have an impact at professional, organizational, and community levels. The AEIF, particularly, is focused on bringing together local and international alums from diverse fields to generate collaborative projects to benefit local communities.

Together, all 12 Fulbright programs and the alum network address key Knowledge Economy areas such as international student mobility; international research collaborations, vocational and technical education; community

engagement and service; science and technology & ICT education; the triple helix model of industry, university, and government linkages; and collaborative networks through alum networking initiatives. However, Fulbright's single most significant contribution is international academic mobility, a "component of transnational higher education" with "the greatest socioeconomic, cultural, and political implications" for KE. First, transnational academic mobility showcases goods and services internationally that help form the global market. Second, mobility allows new acquaintances and relationships that evolve into "R&D networks, both scientific and technological, business partnerships, and new forms of organization for the production of and trade in goods and services." Third, international scholar mobility promotes "science and rational, critical human thought, which form the core of today's global civilization". Cross-border movement of scholars is accompanied by the transmission of "ideas, ideologies, and cultural values with them" that give rise to "an internationally shared set of values, including democracy, respect for human rights, freedom of expression, and freedom of enterprise." These shared set of values is "now an integral component of the global civilization"[35] and are prerequisites of a "radicalized and disseminated knowledge economy".[36] However, Fulbright needs to expand *bilateral* and *reciprocal* academic mobility by ensuring scholar mobility both ways. In contrast, 8,882 Pakistanis have travelled to the US on various exchange programs, and only 1008 Americans have visited Pakistan, 11 per cent of the number of Pakistani exchange alums. This imbalance needs to be addressed in line with the principles of an equitable global knowledge system that neither valorizes specific knowledge systems nor reinforces an unequal global landscape.

Tacit Knowledge and the Impact of Fulbright

Michael Polanyi's famous assertion that "we can know more than we can tell"[37] laid the foundation for the distinction between explicit and tacit knowledge. However, with the rise of knowledge-based economies and greater interest in understanding the concept of knowledge, this distinction has come to be critically examined in related fields. Explicit or codified knowledge involves "know-how that is transmittable in formal, systematic language and does not require direct experience of the knowledge being acquired." On the contrary, tacit knowledge "represents disembodied know-how acquired via the informal take-up of learned behavior and procedures." Hence, tacit knowledge may be learned unconsciously. Polyani called tacit knowledge "indwelling", which is "the process of assimilating to ourselves things from outside".[38] A practice of "learning-through-interacting", the "tacit dimension of knowledge exists in the background of our consciousness"; is held by specific communities and is conveyed through face-to-face interactions in interpersonal relationships and informal social settings.[39] While Fulbright's contribution to codified knowledge is reflected in the data-driven analysis above, for me, one of the most valuable contributions that

Fulbright is making to Pakistan's social, cultural, political, and economic landscape is through tacit knowledge based on intercultural fluency empathy, and critical thinking.

Many scholars have pointed out an overemphasis in KE policy discourse on science and technology to the detriment of non-technical knowledge. As Rooney et al. note: "Knowledge embodied in culture, the arts and humanities, the social sciences, social skills, entertainment, spirituality and many other aspects of everyday life are not currently considered central knowledge policy concerns".[40] Likewise, Davenport believes that understanding KE requires that we move away from technological definitions to focus on people: "The ability to learn and to interact with others, to learn from others, is at the heart of individual success in the knowledge economy".[41] It is important to understand KE not simply as an opportunity to become more technologized and commercialized but as an opportunity to use knowledge across the entire spectrum of human activity in society. A coherent cultural base with socially sound ethics and values is at the heart of the knowledge economy.[42] By making cultural exchange an integral part of the Fulbright program, Fulbright foregrounds the value of culture and cultural practices to any form of knowledge. The result is knowledge workers with a broader concept of knowledge that is integral to fostering a strong, vibrant, open, and tolerant society and culture. Indeed, one tolerant voice in academia, one democratic mind in governance, and one innovative head in the development sector can be the first step in converting tacit into explicit knowledge.

Such transformation in a society like Pakistan will have positive implications for the overall economic growth of the country and for the relationship with the US as well. People's exposure to the US educational system and knowledge and experience which they bring back creates conducive environment for enhanced people-to-people interactions. All of the Fulbrighters after completing their degrees and fellowships are required to serve in their respective fields in Pakistan and share the knowledge and experience gained in the US. Such interactions prove myth busting regarding the US and motivate many students to avail such opportunities. There is need to increase the number of American scholars, educationists and academics to come and stay in Pakistan on more frequent basis. Such interactions would be important for developing an understanding about various aspects of Pakistani lives among Americans. This would not only prove beneficial for the cultural cooperation but would help diversify the bilateral ties between the US and Pakistan moving beyond the unifocal security lens.

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12 Diaspora and Public Diplomacy

A Case Study of Pakistani-American Software Developers

Saira Aquil

Financial ties have driven the bilateral relations between Pakistan and the United States (US) even during their lowest due to massive prioritization of geostrategic security concerns. The US is "Pakistan's largest bilateral export market and a cardinal source of foreign direct investment".[1] The US has provided monetary assistance to several small and medium business projects across Pakistan as both countries believe in economic cooperation and creating favorable business opportunities in the US and Pakistan. Various state and non-state actors and platforms are being used to expand the economic cooperation between the two. However, the governments on both the sides have dominated the economic activities between Washington and Islamabad.

In this era of technological revolution and massive digitization, state-centric economic ties are resetting, reinventing, and rejuvenating with the new economic challenges and growth opportunities alike. The technologies like artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and quantum computing transform the global economic landscape. Technologies have immense power to address the economic challenges of vulnerable countries. Furthermore, individuals and private entrepreneurs are central to this new digital revolution and shifting the relationship between states and human fellows. Therefore, states are not the only actors in this transformation process; rather non-state hi-tech companies and tech entrepreneurs are part and parcel of the global economy. The US is a leading giant in this new tech world. According to Bremmer, "generations of the world's most successful entrepreneurs and business leaders have been American-many of them immigrants and the children of immigrants who came to the US seeking commercial opportunities they couldn't find anywhere else".[2] The highly educated immigrants contributed to the US's technological innovation and economic growth and became a source of wealth, investment, and knowledge for their country of origin as well. America is home to several hi-tech giants such as Amazon, Facebook, Apple, Alphabet, Netflix, and Google. Transformation in global markets, new technologies, cloud services, and a large amount of data required more experts and hiring in the US software industry. Therefore, US companies opened the doors for scientific youth and engineers across the globe. Identity is superseded by talent and technical expertise that contribute to the growth and

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competition in the US tech giants. According to Saxenian, "By 2000, over half (53 percent) of Silicon Valley's scientists and engineers were foreign-born".[3] Indian and Chinese made the largest cohort of foreign-born engineers and entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley.[4] They also hold senior positions in management.

Many Pakistani universities graduates and skilled coders migrated to the US for better career opportunities at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the new millennium. The Pakistani-American diaspora is a highly skilled immigrant community in the US but their number in the giant hi-tech companies is less than other nationalities. Historically, both nations made limited success in engaging the Pakistani-American diaspora in the state-centric relationship. They remain at the fringes of these ties. The realization to engage the scientific youth and tech-savvy diaspora community in strengthening the nation's relationship and economic growth and massive contribution to the origin country's economic developmental journey is also a missing link in the discussion on resetting ties after the US withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021. Former Pakistan Ambassador to the US, Masood Khan, claimed that "Pakistani diaspora in the US is a national asset and equal partner in Pakistan's socio-economic development".[5]

Pakistan's government wants to increase the export of Information Technology (IT) products and services to the US.[6] Therefore, the role of Pakistani-American software developers and entrepreneurs is significant in changing the American tech investor and mega innovators' perception of Pakistan. This diaspora is an important asset for Pakistan regarding monetary flow, investment, entrepreneurial activities, knowledge transfer, and capacity building of Pakistani youth in new technologies (web 3.0) and job opportunities across the globe. They are an agent of development for the host and country of origin.

But the reality is complex and requires an in-depth understanding of the IT diasporic community perceptions, interactions, and presence in the US mega tech giants and giving back to their home country in the globalized world. This chapter explores the role of Pakistani American Software entrepreneurs and developers in Pakistan's economic development and also evaluate how they can open up new vistas of cooperation between the two countries. The chapter discusses Pakistani American software entrepreneurs and developers' constraints in transferring knowledge and ideas to start-ups in their home country so as to sensitize the policy quarters about the possible future challenges that Washington and Islamabad have to jointly mitigate.

Methodological Limitations

The Pakistani-American diaspora working as software developers and entrepreneurs is not a publicly visible entity in the US hi-tech giants and mid-range companies. Most academic studies on the Pakistani-American diaspora and migration patterns are based on the Pew research institute and international

migration policy reports. According to Younis Samad, "for official data, the US estimating the Pakistani population is not straightforward".[7] According to the latest US census data, the ratio of Asian Americans in the US population is 6 percent (18.6 million).[8] According to the 2019 census, Pakistani-Americans are 30.5 percent of Asian Americans. In contrast, Indians and Chinese are 47 percents of Asian Americans. The accurate data on Pakistani-Americans still needs to be determined due to the non-availability of an exclusive check box in the census form. Although, in 2020 inclusion of Asian American category with six ethnicities have a check box in the official census form.[9] Pakistani-Americans are put in the 'other Asian' category check box. But some sources argue that Pakistani-Americans are the second-largest growing community in the US.[10] They are affluent, and many Pakistani-Americans hold bachelor's degrees. They are part of the scientific immigrant force in the US.

Traditionally, Pakistani-American scientific community comprises people working in the medicine. They are more formally interconnected inside the US and recognized for their professionalism in American society and philanthropic activities at home. In contrast, software developers and entrepreneurs are new entrances to the Pakistani-American scientific community. Electrical engineers and young computer scientists came to the US in the 90s and joined leading hardware and software manufacturing companies. From 2000 onwards, we see a mushroom growth of young software developers with the establishment of private and public sector universities, all having computer science departments. To have better career opportunities and yearning for advanced education from US universities led to the university graduate software developer's movement to the US. Brain drains of the skilled labor force witnessed different waves of migration from Pakistan to the US in the last two decades.[11]

The diasporic process of software developers remained in the shadows of Pakistani-American scientific community. The job nature of the software developers and the competitive tech environment kept them more entrenched in their jobs and made them invisible entities. Growing competition in the hi-tech/software world and the Indian and Chinese super tech achievers in numbers, innovation, and entrepreneurship in Silicon Valley and giving back to home country in terms of investment, business start-ups, and innovation received considerable attention from academics and policymakers in their country of host and origin. In contrast, Pakistani-American software developers and entrepreneurs still need to be acknowledged and studied as a small but effective, vibrant community in the US and their contribution back home.

Furthermore, the unavailability of numerical data, comprehensive academic studies, and lack of a collective forum of software developers made it difficult to conduct an in-depth study of their role and contribution in the home country. I adopted the 'referral chain method' to address this gap by conducting semi-structured WhatsApp online interviews of US-based Pakistani software developers and entrepreneurs. The chain referral method

is mostly used to gather information on sensitive issues and helps to locate people with the same identity, interests, characteristics, and work environment. Referrals are made during the interview about other people who are the subject of research. At times, informal discussion can lead to another reference for another interview. It works like a snowball effect.[12] It increases the pool of people to be contacted and interviewed to have information about the diasporic group less studied in a certain country. It helps to understand the perceptions of the diasporic group regarding the subject of inquiry.

Today, diasporic studies are interdisciplinary and multifaceted and focus on the role of the diaspora as transnational actors and drivers of the global political economy.[13] Classical diasporic studies were more inclined toward the Jewish diaspora settling globally. Developing countries' diaspora received less attention in Anglo-Saxon studies for a longer period. But the trend changed with the shifting of population from third world countries to western nations due to intra- state conflicts /civil wars/ and better living conditions, education, and careers in the cold war era/post World War II. According to Reis, the contemporary 'global social movements of diasporic communities are indeed the by-product of political upheaval and political system collapse'.[14] However, the millennial diaspora is also opportunity seekers and can be described as the 'hybrid diaspora'.[15] The diasporic process of specialized skilled labor is more attributed to opportunities and study abroad, especially in the Western hemisphere. Old and Young techno-migrants preferred to settle in the US. A consequence of scientific labor migration resulted in a brain drain for developing countries. But modern-day scientific diaspora is the source of remittances for the home country and transmits ideas and best practices to their host country.

Brain Circulation: Concept in Practice

In the technological era, intelligentsia and policy discourse changed the direction of diasporic studies toward the linkage between emigrants and development at home. The debate is no longer confined to brain drain but brain gain for the home countries.[16] Some explain it in the context of brain circulation.[17] Latter is defined as highly skilled emigrants giving back to their home country in multiple ways.[18] Secondly, brain circulation does not require that the people involved permanently move back to the country of origin (COO). Rather, it involves constantly engaging with the COO so that the benefits of immigration are available to both countries.[19] The diasporic community and the home country establish a mutually beneficial relationship. A relationship becomes stronger when the diasporic community becomes politically active in the host country and attempts to influence the host country's external relations with the home country. Diasporic networks are a source of cultural knowledge for entrepreneurs who want to expand their businesses in their mother country. Diasporic communities are the drivers of investment and trade for their host country. They are building strong transnational linkages

between their country of residence (COR) and COO. Under the brain circulation concept, highly skilled diasporic community activities in the country of origin are multifaceted and beyond the monetary flow factor.

US-based foreign born hi-tech skilled labor and entrepreneurs are the game changers for emerging economies in the South. For example, Indian and Chinese living in the US acted as 'angel investors, 'upskilling' the local youth and 'nation branding for their home countries in the post-Cold War era.[20] The policy elite in their home countries incentivized hi-tech skilled labor working in Silicon Valley and related technologies to do business back home. High-skilled labor (software and hardware developers) became founders of technology and hi-tech entrepreneurship in their homeland. Taiwanese, Israelis, and South Korean highly skilled diaspora followed the path of giving back to their home country. In contrast, other diasporic communities working in the tech giants and software companies made limited contributions to their country of origin's economic and technological development. Although globalization and the availability of the internet has changed this trend, brain circulation is gaining momentum among minority communities. However, the prerequisites for hi-tech diaspora brain circulation are limited in the host and home countries. Home countries' fragile political and economic systems are serious impediments to the growth of brain circulation in the global south. With the emergence of new technologies and changing nature of the

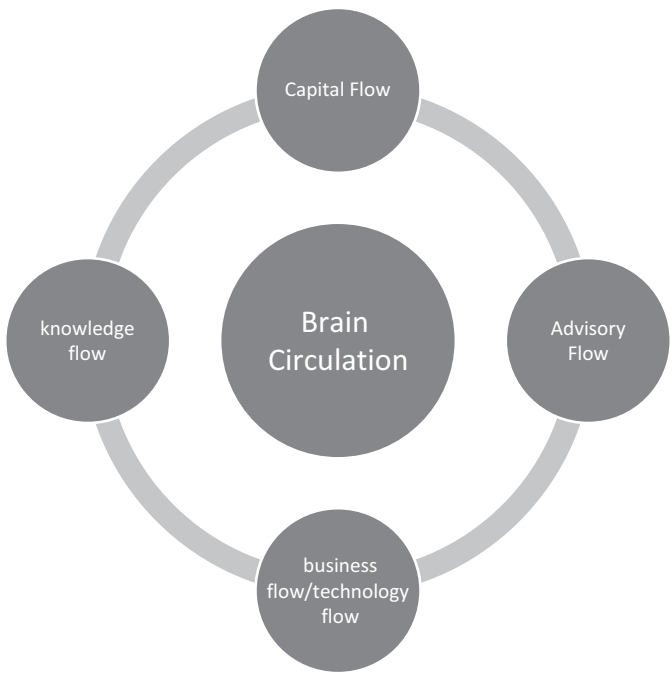


Figure 12.1 Benefits of Brain Circulation.

global economy, governments must initiate sustainable long-term policies to engage the highly skilled diaspora in the economic development of the countries.[21]

Several developing countries, international organizations, and policy leaders are in the process of engaging the hi-tech diaspora. In the given context, Pakistan's scientific emigrants can be a huge source of human and monetary capital for the home country's economic development. The most visible positive aspect of the Pakistani diasporic community is sending remittances through foreign exchange. The number of remittances has grown with every passing year. According to the State Bank of Pakistan, the "Remittances inflows during July 2022 were mainly sourced from Saudi Arabia (USD 580.6 million), United Arab Emirates (USD 456.2 million), United Kingdom (USD 411.7 million) and United States of America (USD 254.3 million)".[22] Pakistani-Americans are highly diverse professionally and are known for their charity activities back home.

Software developers and entrepreneurs are a relatively new entrance into the Pakistani-American highly skilled professional diaspora. They work in different hi-tech giants like Amazon, Microsoft, Google, Meta, and US-based tech companies. Pakistani-American entrepreneurship phenomena are in the embryonic stage. Still, efforts are being made by the US-trained American-Pakistani software developers holding managerial positions in Google and Amazon to launch tech businesses, capacity building, advisory roles, and build digital Pakistan. One good example of brain circulation is of *Paklaunch.com* initiative founded by Pakistani-American, Aly Fahd on April 16, 2020. Aly worked for a year in Amazon Lab126 as Senior Global Sourcing manager, Supply Chain and Compliance. Now, he is head of Sourcing (Strategic Silicon) in Motive. Under the supervision of Aly, this forum has conducted webinars and training sessions and organized the largest Tech conference in September 2021. In the online interview, Aly reveals that the Paklaunch has achieved a lot quickly; it helped 70 start-ups raise USD 70 million since January 2021 in Pakistan.[23] He has worked with different think tanks in Pakistan and US and has written policy papers on IT Pakistan. He is a staunch supporter of semiconductor manufacturing and research in Pakistan. The Paklaunch initiative is a forum for professionals, investors, and entrepreneurs. According to Aly, this forum allows highly skilled tech youth to make connections with successful entrepreneurs, and it is also helping in the capacity building of professionals. This forum has helped get work placement for skilled Pakistani youth globally. This forum is building bridges with other hyper-achiever nationalities in the Tech world through webinar series building bridges with the global Indian tech achievers in Silicon Valley US and based in India. Virtual space is for all.[24]

Organization of Pakistan Entrepreneurs (Open) Silicon Valley is also playing a significant role in mentoring and helping young entrepreneurs in start-ups in technology. Their core objective is to hold events not only in the bay area to unite members and create investment opportunities in Pakistan and

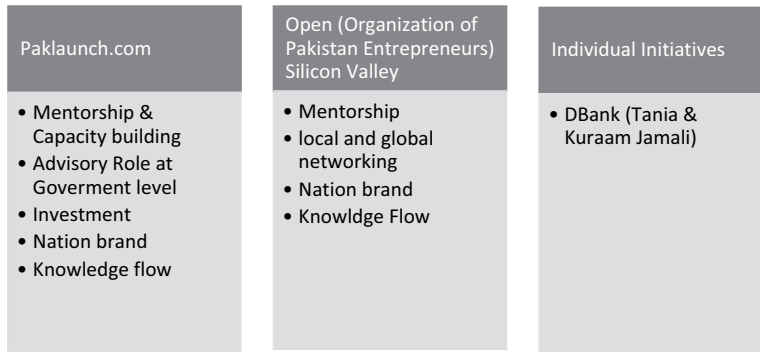


Figure 12.2 Major Initiatives by Pakistani-American Software Developers.

the US. They also collaborate with elite universities like Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), the National University of Sciences & Technology, and the Institute of Business Administration to hold multicity conferences at LUMS.[25] Knowledge transfer and new ideas can flow from Silicon Valley to Pakistani universities in the virtual world. They are also working for the brand Pakistan. Another example is Tania Aidurs, who worked for Google as a former Chief of Staff and Head of Strategic Initiatives on the Next Billion Users team.[26] She was the Chief digital officer of Imran Khan's "digital Pakistan" initiative.[27] She briefly worked as a special advisor to Prime Minister Imran Khan in his cabinet. Recently, She and Khurram Jamali Co-founded Islamabad-based fintech startup Bank and can "raise USD 17.6 million in the seed round, co-led by Sequoia Capital Southeast Asia and Kleiner Perkins".[28]

Subsequently, these organizational and private initiatives benefit skilled Pakistani youth in different aspects at home and in finding job opportunities and start-ups across the globe.

Impediments in the Growth of Pakistani-American Software Entrepreneurship

Pakistani-American software developers are reservoirs of money, ideas, and future technologies. But most Pakistani-American software developers working in senior positions in various hi-tech companies in the US are reluctant to shift to full-time entrepreneurship.[29] The change of professional role is considered risky and requires a team for a start-up in the residence country. A similar concern is shared regarding a start-up in the home country. Secondly, the need for more professionalism in the host country is a pull factor for them.[30] Furthermore, in the institutional system, they are trained, and work in the COR is not available in Pakistan. Corporate sector transparency and merit gets challenged at various levels.

Pakistan government initiatives to create an entrepreneurial ecosystem for tech developers are challenging. Infrastructure and uninterrupted energy supply are unresolved challenges for the incumbent and previous governments. Even building university science and technology parks is a small positive step. However, the administrative hurdles and rigidity in the system are not a welcoming factors for Pakistani-American hi-tech professionals who would like to give back to their country by transmitting knowledge to the young generation. They are a good source of Silicon Valley knowledge and start-ups in Pakistan.

Moreover, the country's political instability and dire economic situation make it less attractive for foreign direct investment and entrepreneurship for new start-up diaspora and US-based companies to come and invest in Pakistan. The change of government and policies lead to shifting economic priorities causing uncertainty and slow progress in the projects. It also becomes difficult for Pakistani-American software entrepreneurs to convince US-based tech companies' CEOs to create new tech ventures in Pakistan. Their only interest is to buy already profit-making Tech businesses that could be transported to other countries in the global South, particularly the MENA (the Middle East and North Africa) region.

Furthermore, Diasporans' role in creating Pakistani DNA in the software world is in the initial phase. A key limitation is the absence of collectiveness among Pakistani-American software developers and entrepreneurs. The non-existence of Pakistani-American IT forums in the US makes them an invisible public entity in American society and Pakistan. A comprehensive forum acts as an official link between the COO and COR. In contrast, the old generation of Indian and Chinese engineers and computer scientists formed associations of IT professionals in Silicon Valley. Such associations worked as breeding grounds for investment and mentoring for young Indian and Chinese entrepreneurs in new technologies in the COR and COO.[31] The Chinese and Indian professionals and entrepreneurs based in San Francisco Bay Area do share information about new tech, job opportunities, and upcoming business ventures in Silicon valley.[32] Mentoring, investment, and policy advising in the home country were made frequently by the immigrant professional generation who moved to the US in the late 80s and early 90s.

Pakistani-American working in Meta tried to convince the meta decision-makers to consider Pakistan. Still, meta-refusal was attached to the non-existence of Pakistani talent in international forums. Pakistan only exists in top talented countries.[33] Although, Meta pick and measure talent through the Meta hacker cup. This competition is used as a common yardstick for top talent in the world. Pakistan's participation increased by 400 percent in Meta hacker cup 2022 (01 percent to 04 percent), while India's participation decreased by 20 percent (23 percent to 19 per cent).[34] Pakistani-American software professionals' community is small compared to other nationalities but less ambitious and more focused on giving financial support to their family members and relatives back home. For the majority, remittances are the

only source of contribution to the economic development of the mother country. The flow of money is significant for Pakistan's GDP and uplifting of the communities, but future economies are all tech-based. Economic survival and status in the technological era are linked with highly skilled human capital and entrepreneurship.

A Way Forward

Pakistani-American software developers and entrepreneurs are a key component of the Pakistan scientific diaspora in the US. They are spread across the US, but many live in the Bay Area, California. A large majority work as principal software developers in the US tech industry. However, Pakistani-American software developers and entrepreneurs' visibility in tech giants and Facebook, Amazon, Netflix and Google (FANG) is minor compared to Indian, Chinese, South Korean, and Taiwanese. These other nationalities have built strong linkages between Silicon Valley and domestic entrepreneurship in transferring knowledge, businesses, investment, and creating workplaces for their home country youth in Silicon Valley and the country of origin. Pakistani-American software developers and entrepreneurs are lagging in the brain circulation process. Initiatives like *Paklaunch.com* and *Open.com* are a very few examples of brain circulation.

What steps are required to harness the potential of Pakistani-American software developers and tech hyper achievers in making Pakistan's tech industry grow and work for the home country's economic development? And secondly how can this segment of diaspora community can play a role in improving and diversifying economic ties between the US and Pakistan? There is a need to prioritize the information technology industry in bilateral dialogues and business contracts and both Islamabad and Washington should focus more on bringing investment into this sector. It is high time that Pakistan should consider the Pakistan-American tech achievers as strategic partners in the country's economic development. Formal connections need to be established between the tech professionals especially of Pakistani origin within the US.

One key reason to miss on this particular aspect of the cooperation between the two countries is the absence of information and dataset of Pakistani-Americans working in tech giants and related companies in the US. There is a need to create an official dataset by the government of Pakistan. Moreover, the government should encourage initiatives like Paklaunch.com. Such private actors and entrepreneurs can work to bring the tech community on one platform for public visibility and to get recognition in the host and home country. Making Pakistan talent more visible at the places that hi-tech giants know about and will show their interest in establishing their offshore extension in Pakistan and picking talent for their organization.

Pakistan's government should work for an entrepreneurial-friendly environment for foreign investment and encourage Pakistani-American software

developers to invest in domestic start-ups. Furthermore, Pakistani-American software developers and CEOs of tech companies based in the US can build linkages with their Alma Maters in Pakistan. Knowledge sharing and holding regular webinars and physical meet up once a year can be motivational for university students. Charity activities are good, but money can be channelized to setting up research labs and software parks in public sector universities. Such small leap forward can pave the way for long term and sustainable relationship grounded in people-to-people contacts between the US and Pakistan.

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13 The Role of Entrepreneurial Ecosystem in Advancing US-Pakistan Economic and Cultural Ties

Alicia R. Dean

Commercial trade has played a significant role in shaping the United States-Pakistan relationship over the past 75 years. The United States (US) is Pakistan's top export market,[1] with USD 488 million in goods from Pakistan being imported between 2021 - 2022. The US exported USD 286 million in goods to Pakistan during the same time. While large-scale trade and investment command much of the focus of bilateral talks between the two nations, on the sub-national level entrepreneurs in the US and Pakistan are redefining the future of US-Pakistan business relations with innovative commercial and creative ventures that are contributing to the growth of local innovation ecosystems. Led by tech-enabled startup founders, mentors, and investors representing the Pakistani diaspora, this evolving trend provides local governments with an important roadmap for developing strategic initiatives that facilitate increased collaboration among startup communities in the US and Pakistan to advance economic development goals.

Austin-Pakistan Entrepreneurship and Innovation Initiative (ATX+PAK), a City of Austin, Texas, global business initiative, looks at this theory in practice. In this chapter, from my perspective as the program founder and manager, I shall explore how Pakistani diaspora helped shape the program's development, the City's approach to convening a network of public and private sector partners in Texas and Pakistan to connect startups and investors through immersive market exploration experiences. I shall discuss the long-term impact of the program through the voices of participants whom I interviewed in 2013 and 2022 to showcase their vision and expectations on the one hand and to project the future of such ventures on the other. It is a crucial aspect of the bilateral ties where such programs play an important role in fostering deeper cross-cultural understanding through direct people to people connections. However, in the academic discourse such aspects are often missed under the burden of geopolitical emphasis in the US-Pakistan relations.

Early Innovation Influencers Connecting Austin and Lahore

When I met Abbas Yousafzai and Babar Ahmed during a tour of Zacky Farms on the outskirts of Lahore in January 2013, The University of Texas at

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Austin graduates had followed separate entrepreneurial paths home to Pakistan and shared a vision for cultivating the fertile ground of creative and technical talent they found when they returned. "We have really high-powered engineering teams here in Lahore. The dedication, intelligence, amount of commitment and experience is fantastic. You cannot find that anywhere else," said Yousafzai, an entrepreneur with more than a decade of experience in launching successful technology startups such as Conrad Labs.[2] His simultaneous working schedule in Austin and Pakistan broadened his company's access to exceptionally skilled talent providing a valuable strategic advantage in the marketplace.

Babar Ahmed took a big gamble on Pakistan's community of mobile game developers when he left a career in Austin to start Mindstorm Studios in Lahore in 2006. Mindstorm was among several gaming studios founded by the Pakistani diaspora returning from the US, which fueled both a culture shift[3] and growth of the ecosystem driving Pakistan's mobile gaming market, which has a projected revenue of USD 41.6 million in 2022.[4] "There are a lot of these pockets of brilliance that come to life in Pakistan that just do these amazing things," said Ahmed, whose calculated risk paid off.[5] Mindstorm produced best-selling game titles such as Mafia Farm, Whacksy Taxi and Cricket Revolution, which helped increase Pakistan's visibility in the US as a hub for game development. "Giving people that opportunity, to provide them that chance to try and compete and succeed globally, that's fulfilling," said Ahmed,[6] who believed, along with Yousafzai, that such opportunities provide a foundation for more formalized mentorship and US-Pakistan startup ecosystem exploration programs that contribute to the professional development of entrepreneurs and the long-term success of their businesses. While entrepreneurs could and were doing the work of bridging US-Pakistan innovation ecosystems, they should not have to do it alone. During that conversation, Ahmed and Yousafzai's insights planted the seed for the idea to grow into the ATX+PAK Entrepreneurship Program. This initiative would play a key role in strengthening commercial and cultural ties between Austin, Pakistan, and beyond and the growth of participating entrepreneurs in ways never imagined.

A Foundation for Collaboration

The City of Austin created the ATX+PAK Program to increase connectivity between the vibrant community of entrepreneurs, creatives and investors in Austin's startup ecosystem and the emerging innovation ecosystem in Pakistan. The framework for the US Embassy Islamabad funded program was developed on the premise, proven by Ahmed and Yousafzai, that inter-ecosystem collaboration could provide entrepreneurs in both countries access to potential partners and resources to help them position their businesses for long-term growth. ATX+PAK is part of the City's broader strategy to center the entrepreneurial experiences and expertise of diaspora communities to

build partnerships and trade relationships in global emerging markets with industries, goods and services that align with Austin's priority industries and reflect the diversity of the City's increasingly international population.[7] Phase I of the program, ATX+PAK Launch (Launch), focused on achieving the following goals:

- Introducing Austin entrepreneurs to Pakistan's creative talent, production, and potential growth opportunities.
- Providing formalized opportunities for Pakistani startups to introduce their company to potential US investors, venture capitalists, private equity firms & mentors to grow their businesses domestically and internationally.
- Providing a platform for entrepreneurs & start-up incubators/accelerators in Austin & Pakistan to collaborate on projects that strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystems in their respective communities.
- Providing Austin Startups with a platform to explore expansion opportunities in Pakistan in collaboration with Pakistani entrepreneurs.

The City's operational partners, the Greater Austin Asian Chamber of Commerce (GAACC) and the Punjab Information Technology Board's (PITB) Information Technology University (ITU) in Punjab, Pakistan, played a key role in implementing as well as galvanizing support and participation when programming activities launched in 2016.

Over the course of two years, representatives from nearly two-dozen promising early-stage startups, selected from ITU's highly competitive Plan9 incubator and PlanX accelerator programs, travelled to Austin for an immersive three weeks of advanced training, mentorship and strategic networking opportunities while in residence at Tech Ranch and Capital Factory, two of the Austin's leading startup accelerators. The startups were selected based on the strength of the idea, business model, the potential for growth in Pakistan and other markets, and fit with strong vertical markets in Austin's startup ecosystem, such as gaming, multi-media music and entertainment, e-commerce, and software as a service. The launch cohort of startups highlighted some of the ways Pakistan's younger generation was disrupting the delivery of traditional products and services or creating new niche markets capitalizing on an increasingly mobile device connected population.

ATX+PAK Launch Startups:

- Patari – Pakistan's first music-streaming platform.
- Wifigen – Free Wi-Fi branding and monetization for businesses.
- Travly – On-demand rickshaw hailing.
- Pantera Energy – Residential and commercial solar solutions.
- Autogenie – Doorstep delivery, on-demand auto maintenance services.
- Affordable. pk – Pakistan's first fashion classified marketplace to buy & sell clothing.
- B clothing.t. pk – Online marketplace for infant and children's products.

- BookMyUmrah.pk – Online travel services for hajj/Umrah pilgrimages.
- Club Internet – Improving internet accessibility for underserved communities.
- Mangobaaz.com – Online Pakistani information and entertainment company.
- VirginTeez.com – Design, buy and sell custom T-shirts online.
- WebDealer Solutions – A platform for proactive automotive customer engagement.
- RepairDesk – Cloud-based smart software business management solution for mobile device repair shops.
- EuphoriaXR – Customized mixed reality content and platforms for businesses.
- DIY Geeks – Expanding DIY Culture in Pakistan through electronic DIY Kits.
- Automation – Process Automation – Automation of repetitive computer tasks.
- NearPeer.org – Providing students easy access to online classrooms, digital curriculum and study materials.
- Ticket Kataao – Crowd-sourced fleet advertising.
- Neurostic – Smart health monitoring devices & prosthetics.
- Clique Technologies - Smart home devices.
- Car Chabi – Car control via mobile device app.
- CampusFeed – Anonymous campus social network.

GAACC leveraged its strong community connections and access to a diverse mix of member businesses to coordinate activities for the Launch cohorts that prioritized space for mentorship and knowledge exchange between Pakistani entrepreneurs and Austin community members. Activities included attending Austin Startup Week and South by Southwest (SXSW) conference panels on Pakistan's emerging innovation ecosystem, networking events, public pitch sessions, visits to youth organizations and Austin's schools for the blind and deaf. The launch phase of ATX+PAK also included two innovation opportunity tours of Pakistan with delegations of entrepreneurs, startup founders, startup accelerator leaders, investors, and university educators from Austin. The tours offered a deep-dive look at PITB's investment in co-working spaces that doubled as learning centers for the early phases of the E-Rozgaar program, which provided under-represented communities more equitable access and to the startup/innovation economy by providing skills training in services popular in digital freelance markets including graphic design, content creation, software development, etc. The tours also explored growth and collaboration opportunities target industry verticals Austin and Pakistan have in common, including cultural tourism, creative ventures (music, film, gaming, wearable technology), fashion (design, production/manufacturing, fashion startups) and transportation innovation. Conference-style workshops, seminars, and mentoring sessions featuring the delegates organized by the ATX+PAK planning team. Each visit was a core element to broaden the program's reach beyond the cohort and delegation participants.

The highlight of those sessions was "The Mix Festival" in 2017, an SXSW convergence conference exploring the intersection of tech and innovation, art, culture, and music, which attracted approximately 20,000 attendees.

Launch Outcomes and Impact

ATX+PAK Launch raised the profile and strengthened the growth capacity of Pakistan-based startups, with 72 percent of participants who completed the program collectively securing investment funding of more than USD 1.3 million. The relationships built during the cohort visits to Austin and Pakistan tours inspired new inter-ecosystem collaboration agreements beyond the program's scope. The City of Austin and the Government of Punjab signed a Science City Partnership agreement, establishing a framework for long-term collaboration to create jobs and increase trade & investment in Science, Technology, and Arts: Engineering, Math, and other key sectors in the innovation economies of Austin and Lahore. ITU's Plan9 partnered with Austin-based entrepreneur development and startup accelerators 3Day Startup, Capital Factory, and Tech Ranch to launch collaborative virtual training sessions, pitch events, skill-building workshops, and mentoring sessions accessible to all its entrepreneurs in incubation. Austin and Pakistan-based entrepreneurs who met through the program also formed new partnerships and ventures. In post-program follow-up interviews conducted for this chapter, entrepreneurs leading some of those new ventures shared how relations developed through ATX+PAK changed the trajectory of their businesses and their perceptions about the value of collaborating with their American or Pakistani counterparts.

EuphoriaXR, Chocolate Milk & Donuts and InterApp – A pathway to USD 1.2 Million

When the first Launch delegation visited the Plan9 incubator in 2016, it was just the sort of professional break the team running Lahore based augmented reality (AR) marketing startup EuphoriaXR needed to build their business. They met Ricky Holm, founder of Chocolate Milk and Donuts (CMD), the then Austin-based Augmented and Virtual reality video production company. The opportunity for mutually beneficial collaboration between the startups was clear. EuphoriaXR had the AR/VR software and content design expertise could benefit from access to hardware and clients. Chocolate Milk and Donuts had the hardware and access to US clients looking for unique marketing tools to elevate customer experiences and brand engagement. CMD could benefit from having access to a skilled team that could deliver those high-quality experiences to help this company expand its creative capacity. The two startups formed a partnership and secured projects across the United States, which have expanded to include designing the AR-enabled presentation of Comcast's award-winning.[8]

Lift Zones Initiative at SXSW as well as an AR Trail Explorer App[9] for the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority added an interactive learning component to a new hike and bike trail in Austin. The CMD partnership helped the EuphoriaXR team validate their business model and gain skills and experience that influenced the startup's 2017 selection into the Launch Austin training and mentorship program.

"ATX+PAK proved to be a game-changer for Euphoria," said co-founder Ahmed Malik.[10] "We went from being a company with negligible revenue to having multiple partners in Texas and the US with approximately USD 500,000 in revenue."[11] The launch program would also prepare them for another transformative partnership opportunity later that year. A visit to the Seattle Space Needle inspired InterApp co-founder and CEO Will Brown's idea to develop a digital tech tool that could transform the graphics and collateral his printing company produced into virtual experiences offering his clients creative new solutions to increase customer engagement with their brand and message. The Sacramento, CA-based small-business owner said his search to find someone to help him develop the concept wasn't promising. "I was getting quotes from people, you're looking at USD 100,000 just for the app, not the full package, but just an app just to scan something and pull up an AR experience," Brown said.[12] He was worried about an important proof of concept that was beyond his reach. "Today's day and age, you need a proof of concept even to get funded. So, I can't even afford the proof of concept." Hiring a freelance app designer also proved to be a costly dead-end. Everything changed when EuphoriaXR co-founder Ali Ahmed reached out with an intriguing pitch. "He was selling Pakistan, primarily the talent that comes out of Pakistan," said Brown, who was sold on EuphoriaXR's skills and shared values. "He made me feel very comfortable doing business because he's like, 'We're Muslims. We are very faith-based people. I don't believe in ripping people off; it doesn't get us anywhere.' You know, I'm a Christian. I believe in that."[13] Ahmed also told Brown he wouldn't have to pay any costs upfront, only when the prototype was delivered.

Most importantly, Ahmed listened and understood Brown's vision to create a platform that enabled creatives to develop AR experiences easily and affordably and embed rich media content, videos, photos, images, hyperlinks, and 3D content into their artwork, branded apparel, printed graphics, or other materials. A little more than 30 days later, Ahmed and team EuphoriaXR delivered a functioning prototype app for Android and iPhone that Brown successfully debuted at the Afrotech Conference – the largest gathering of Black tech innovators in the United States. "I come from a brick-and-mortar business. I've been blessed to work with tech startups in my line of work. But to now *be* a tech startup and have an app in the App Store was a huge milestone for me personally," said Brown, appreciative of Euphoria's investment in time and technical knowledge to bring the project to life. He was never charged for the prototype. In return, he poured his extensive marketing and client development skills into Euphoria. "We were growing at that time, and

we needed capital. This project helped us generate some revenue, hire more team (mates) and scale," Malik said.[14]

That was just the beginning. The InterApp/EuphoriaXR team worked together to expand the platform and create experiences for high-profile companies and brands such as SlimFast, SXSW and Rap Snacks-a line of snack products inspired by Hip Hop music icons. The InterApp platform turns the artwork on the packaging of featured varieties of rap snacks into AR experiences at customers' fingertips. InterApp secured USD 1.2 million in early-stage investment to fund further development of the platform. Brown said the joint venture with EuphoriaXR was critical to that achievement. "You, potentially through your program (ATX+PAK), changed our lives. You guys help me build a product that I probably would never get off the ground had it not been for them (EuphoriaXR)," Brown said.[15]

He believed what they had accomplished, illustrates how providing pathways for small businesses and startups in the US and Pakistan to explore partnership opportunities can have an exponential impact. "Being able to invest internationally gets you outside of the box with trying to find talent and develop your proof of concept", Brown said.[16]

Turning a Gem of an Idea into Emerald Labs

Ali Syed and Faizan Mahmood, co-founders of tech product development startup Emerald Labs, also understand the value of collaboration and having a team with a global presence. "The ability of Emerald Labs to leverage the technology talent in Pakistan while supporting US business has led to massive growth for the company and our clients. It would not be possible without teams in both locations," said Mahmood, who met Syed while supporting ATX+PAK Launch. Syed is the International Program Manager at Capital Factory, Mahmood, leading ATX+PAK programming activities in Pakistan. Long hours of coordination of training and activities for ATX+-PAK startups and visiting delegations have led to friendship. The two kindred entrepreneurial spirits with experience launching - their successful ventures decided to team up to bring Emerald Labs to life. The company has grown from a team of two to a company of thirty-five in three years. Mahmood believes his ATX+PAK experience helped him expand his professional network and grow as an entrepreneur. "I interacted with various entrepreneurs and industry leaders and was exposed to learnings from leading US universities which broadened my horizons and enabled me to capitalize on global opportunities".[17]

Leading By Example: Women Founders Driving Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Culture Change

When Wajiha Ghazal sees a problem, she sets out to fix it. When she had no safe and reliable online space to sell her children's gently used clothing, she

created one. "Classified websites have credibility issues in Pakistan. People take advantage of system weaknesses to rob customers," said Ghazal.[18] She developed a solution and bootstrapped a prototype for Pakistan's first online apparel resale marketplace, *Affordable.pk*. She developed the site while running her independent business marketing firm, Concept Beans. *Affordable.pk* earned her the top spot at a global pitch competition in Finland. She applied for the Launch program in Austin for an opportunity to connect with seasoned mentors who could offer insight on how to position her platform for long-term growth. "The program was a blessing because it provided access to experts with deep knowledge and expertise. I was able to achieve success by applying the advice and best practices they suggested rather than through random experimentation," Ghazal said.[19] Those tangible changes included a fine investment pitch and more targeted key performance indicators and customer personas she could develop after seeing real examples of how US Customer behaviors influence sales. The experience positioned *Affordable.pk* to secure a USAID Small and Medium Enterprise Growth Grant of USD 25 thousand to expand her customer and product base. Affordable.pk traffic increased to one million visitors in two years, with more than forty-five thousand products available on the site.

Ghazal is leveraging her company's growth to provide a pathway to greater financial stability, through micro-entrepreneurship, to women in underserved rural communities. *Affordable.pk* now offers authentic hand-embroidered regional apparel created by women artisans across Pakistan who now have access to a digital marketplace. She developed a flexible model that removes some cultural and physical obstacles preventing women from starting businesses. "A woman can start her business and get paid on her phone without leaving her home; that's why many handicraft women are part of Affordable.pk," Ghazal said.[20] She also travelled the country conducting free in-person training sessions in small cities and villages. She believes the direct connection is vital to creating more equitable access to Pakistan's innovation economy. It is an approach she hopes to see adopted on a regional and national level. "Government Institutions and Incubation Centres are making an effort (in the ecosystem), but there's an injustice with those who aren't part of an incubator or institute who aren't getting a share of the opportunities or funding,"[21] said Ghazal in the meantime, is leading the way to bridging the equity gap with her new venture Dropsey, a drop shipping platform for Pakistani manufacturers and vendors to promote made in Pakistan products internationally.

A Laughter Movement that Helped Build a Village

Lahore-based psychologist Yasmeen Butt wanted to spark therapeutic innovation in Pakistan, so she started laughing. "Laughter therapy was my first attempt to do something new in the field of psychology and test it out in a startup style," said Butt.[22] She was assessing her theory that when people laugh more, they feel more productive and are a healthier version of themselves. She also wanted to transform workplace culture. "We spent probably

like 60 to 70 percent of our lives in the workplace, and most of the time, it's a huge source of stress for us as well," said Butt,[23] who launched a startup called the support group that would offer laughter therapy as a healthy stress reliever. The support group quickly grew a network of paying subscribers. Butt applied to the ATX+PAK Advance program to explore ways to scale the model. The impact was immediate, starting with the name of her startup. "Laughter Therapy was something people really liked. Through mentorship, I came to understand the company brand should be more specific and have laughter in it; that's how I came up with the Laughter Movement," Butt said.[24] Program mentors also provided key introductions that led to Laughter Movement demonstrations for high-profile organizations such as British Petroleum and the US Army.

As a female founder Butt says having a network of mentors and collaborators in the US provided validation for her business model and her value as an entrepreneur and innovator. Now based in San Francisco, Butt is finalizing the sale of the Laughter Movement to a Boston-based company for nearly one million dollars. She's exiting the business to focus on her new venture called Founders Village, the largest active community of founders, engineers, and investors in Silicon Valley.

Inspired by the story of other entrepreneurs who hosted house parties to raise investment when their companies were turned down for funding, Butt decided to channel her discouragement about her own unsuccessful investment pitches into something positive. "I was like, wait for a second. I can do that. I am good at bringing people," said Butt, who recruited her roommates to help her host a backyard party called Founders Night with homemade sandwiches and a USD 17 grill. Hundreds of people showed up to the event. That was a low-stress way to network and included a space for 60-second micro-funding pitches. The events raised USD 100,00 in eight weeks; within 13 weeks, they had signed up more than 8,000 members. Butt knew she would have to make a tough decision "We were growing just so fast, and somewhere in the middle of it, I was like, wait for a second. I love Laughter Movement, but I have another business which is working and solving a great problem for founders," said Butt, who believes she has found her purpose in empowering entrepreneurs through the community. She advocates for creating more opportunities for women to participate in inter-ecosystem market exploration programs. "Very little contribution can greatly impact someone else's life. Like for me, an ATX+PAK trip into a USD 1,000,000 exit and maybe another lifetime of success".[25]

Advancing Inter-Ecosystem Expansion and Trade

The ATX+PAK Advance program that Yasmeen participated in was Phase II of the ATX+PAK Entrepreneurship Program, which launched in 2018 with two programming tracks: Global Market Access Program (GMAP): A two-year acceleration initiative designed to help growth-stage startups from

Pakistan scale their international business operations into the US via Austin. Fashion Forward Initiative (FFI): focused on increasing trade between the US and Pakistan in fashion and textiles. As the program evolved, so did the mix of implementing partners, which included Innovation District 92(ID92), Superior University's startup incubator, Fashion by Texas, the parent company of Austin Fashion Week, Austin-based business accelerator Capital Factory, the Institute for Art and Culture (IAC), and Fireshow Media.

Global Market Access Program

The ATX+PAK Advance team conducted applicant recruiting sessions and workshops around Pakistan from Abbottabad to Karachi to make program content accessible to a broader scope of entrepreneurs and startups. Following the nationwide search, twenty-five startups were selected to participate in a three-day in-country GMAP selection boot camp run by Capital Factory mentors. Content covered diverse topics, including perfecting the perfect elevator pitch, the realities of investment fundraising, customer acquisition, and design-thinking methodologies. Each startup also pitched its business plan for expansion into the US. In May 2019, ten companies were selected to advance the final GMAP phase, a four-week US market immersion visit to Austin, which included a customized expansion blueprint and curated partner meetings. The GMAP goal was for each finalist to have initiated or completed US expansion plans for these companies by the program close in the fall of 2020.

Fashion Forward Initiative

FFI provided customized experiences for entrepreneurs, creatives, and educators to explore partnerships beyond borders. "This program is the ideal medium for industry and academia to collaborate in bringing sustainable outcomes for people and community, where everyone benefits," said Lahore, Pakistan-based arts educator and FFI participant Salman Afzal,[26] who led community textile design workshops in Austin, when we spoke about FFI's impact in 2020. FFI experiences also included trade and discovery tours of Pakistan. Austin-based business leaders and educators could see the entire fashion and textile supply chain in action, from raw cotton to legacy textile design to mainstream retail-ready apparel. "These trade missions are quite frankly life-changing for the business. It is changing the whole scale magnitude at which we operate," said Musa Ato, CEO of Austin-based luxury menswear brand League of Rebels, in a conversation[27] during an Austin delegation visit to Lahore in 2019. Ato maintains strong ties to Pakistan through the League of Rebels design office that he launched in Lahore and a production partnership he established with a Faisalabad apparel manufacturer.

Reciprocal business development missions to Austin provided Pakistani fashion designers, educators and major retailers with curated meetings and events to explore new target markets in the US. Shop South Asia, an

immersive marketing and customer insight pop-up retail shop, was the centerpiece of FFI program activities in Austin. The pop-up shop provided a platform for Pakistani designers to connect with customers and receive invaluable shopper insights in real-time on products exclusively designed for the US Market. Afzal said Shop South Asia was a powerful networking and active learning tool. "Principles we were teaching in the classroom, we were able to demonstrate them for students in practice," Afzal said.[28] Shop visitors also had a chance to learn the origin of apparel featured at the pop-up, with virtual tours of designer studios and workshops illustrating each brand's design and construction process.

Pandemic Pivot

The Coronavirus pandemic forced a shift to virtual programming in 2020-21. Despite being disruptive to the original programming, the pandemic pivot provided an opportunity to expand the reach of ATX+PAK content via digital platforms. The 2020 Virtual ATX+ Global Entrepreneurship Summit brought together ecosystem builders and influencers from around the world for a series of live panel discussions and Q&A sessions exploring a range of topics, including adapting business models during the pandemic, the State of Pakistan Startups, women's journeys through entrepreneurship from startup to scaleup, how to thrive as a social entrepreneur in an evolving economy, building an international fashion brand from Pakistan, and more. The three-day event, which provided an important space for entrepreneurs to connect and share during the pandemic, attracted more than 14,000 viewers.

The City of Austin partnered with Austin-based Fireshow Media to launch a re-designed virtual GMAP Program. Sixteen entrepreneurs representing 11 startups completed ATX+PAK Market Entry Acceleration Masterclass and Mentorship series conducted by Fireshow Media CEO Mubariz "Moby" Hayat. GMAP US market acceleration training and mentoring directly contributed to double-digit increases in several key indicators monitoring the growth, capacity, and business development competency of the participating startups:

- Increased capacity for participating companies: 15 per cent
- Increased knowledge of business, marketing, and product development: 25 per cent
- Increased scaling capacity regarding entrance into foreign markets: 15 per cent

The Fashion track also went virtual. More than 2,000 people viewed the FFI Designer Talks and workshop series featuring four Pakistani fashion designers. At the same time, Shop South Asia evolved into an AR/VR-enabled virtual pop-up experience, including 360-degree tours of brand boutiques in Pakistan. The temporary mixed reality brand discovery and e-commerce

microsite was designed as a market research tool to help participating designers gain key insights from mainstream retail apparel customers in the US on product pricing, selection, perceived value, brand image, etc. The participating brands offered a small snapshot of the diversity of Pakistan's fashion landscape, from bespoke block-printed apparel to contemporary accessories to luxury menswear. Data gathered from customer feedback surveys on the microsite showed that target customers fell into three age groups 35-44, 45-54, and 65+, with a salary range of USD 75,000 to USD 150,000+. Most respondents said they needed to familiarize themselves with Pakistani fashion brands before visiting the site. Overall, feedback was positive, with above-average ratings for the selection of brands and products.

Conclusion

ATX+PAK concluded grant-funded activities in September 2021, but its impact still resonates through the growth of the businesses and partnerships it inspired and the innovative ways alum entrepreneurs are advancing ties between US-Pakistan Entrepreneurial ecosystems. Ties build on a foundation more valuable than any currency. Will Brown and Ahmed Malik sum it up best when describing their special bond? "It extends beyond just business; you develop a brotherhood with people because if you guys can grow together, you could be successful together," said Brown.[29] Malik agrees. "That is why we now call each other 'brother from another mother'.[30] Those lasting people-to-people connections underscore the vital role such programs can play in advancing subnational US-Pakistan business relationships for the next 75 years.

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Part V
The Future Pathways


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14 The Future of the US-Pakistan Relations

Continuity and Change

Hassan Abbas

The relationship between Pakistan and the United States of America (US) has never been an easy one.[1] Geopolitics, the regional balance of power dynamics and global security developments significantly impacted it over the last 75 years. Pakistan was once called by the US President Dwight Eisenhower the "most allied ally of the US," and more recently, President Trump lambasted that despite billions of dollars in aid, Pakistan, in return, gave the US "nothing but lies and deceit".[2] In Pakistan, the US has often been dubbed as "arrogant, short-sighted and chronically unreliable".[3]

Few bilateral relationships in the international relations arena are as dependent on such changing variables as is evident in this case, making the relationship a bit unpredictable, inconsistent and, at times, toxic. Yet, despite recurrent ups and downs, and a constant back-and-forth dynamic, the relationship has continued to be an incredibly important one for both sides. After a relatively downward trend in recent years, there is a renewed hope that the relationship can be reimagined and can have a reset.[4] The post-pandemic world, economic crises, and a severe climate change challenge have changed the relationship's scope. A new vision for a more stable and mutually beneficial relationship is possible only if new realities are kept in view rather than allowing history to dictate the nature of engagement. This needed realization is equally relevant for both sides. This essay first glances through some of the challenges and hindrances in the relationship before offering suggestions to overcome the weak spots and build on the relationship's strengths.

Problems of History

Security considerations for the US have almost always driven the relationship with Pakistan. Some of its major expectations in that realm were met, such as in the case of Pakistan's support for the anti-Soviet Jihad in the eighties. In 1981, US President Ronald Reagan declared Pakistan a "frontline state" in the fight against communism.[5] It cannot be denied that Pakistan's support for the Afghan Taliban during the Soviet Afghan war in the 1980s was a turning

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point in its history and laid the groundwork for its current situation. At the same time, some were quite notably not met, for instance, as was the case in helping the US fight the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan. The challenge, however, stems from the fact that Pakistan viewed many of these expectations as contrary to its core security interests. This complication essentially serves as a major source of tension for the two – whether they can get past this will determine the future greatly. Pakistan was an active member of US military campaigns for decades, both during the second half of the twentieth century and in the post 9/11 terrorist attacks timeline and resultantly remained a beneficiary of advanced US military equipment. The consequent strength of the military-to-military relationship emerged as the major pillar of the relationship with attendant advantages and disadvantages. Pakistan often looked towards the US for military cooperation due to its insecurity from India being such a large and dominant neighbour, with whom it had many -serious differences, including the territorial dispute over Kashmir. However, India's close relationship with the former Soviet Union and later Russia almost naturally propelled Pakistan to work with the US. Procurement of advanced weaponry to militarily compete with India, with whom it fought two major wars (1969 and 1971) and many limited (e.g., 1948 and 1999) encounters, was a core national security goal, and Pakistan's closeness to the US served that well.

The relationship between the two reinvigorated after 9/11 after a dull period of the nineties when the end of the "Afghan Jihad" and US sanctions targeting Pakistan's nuclear program had downgraded the relations considerably. Pakistan blamed the US for ditching it once its interests were served. At the same time, the US argued that its repeated warnings about Pakistan's nuclear ambitions were ignored, leading to pulling back in relations. The feelings of distrust were mutual. The fact that the relationship resurrected in late 2001 was no ordinary development. Despite Pakistan's role in supporting the Afghan Taliban, it sided with the US in the War on Terror and faced public backlash. It also greatly suffered from terrorism on its soil, with over 80,000 civilian and military casualties, millions of displaced people, and severe economic impact. The US, however, found the Pakistani support halfhearted in many areas regarding its objectives. In Washington, Pakistan was seen as playing both sides: receiving US money and supporting some US goals while simultaneously supporting the Taliban, who were actively fighting against the US and NATO presence in Afghanistan. Pakistan was also seen as not doing enough against militant groups that targeted India. Despite such serious reservations, both sides continued to work together in the counterterrorism arena, where Pakistan pursued Al-Qaeda. The US supported Pakistan by eliminating many leaders of the Pakistani Taliban (Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan – TTP) who had created havoc in the country. The point of referencing this history is to emphasize that both sides learnt to work together despite differences, which is something positive to build on in the future.

The Public Opinion Challenge

With such a complicated history, emotions run high on both sides, whether publicly expressed or not. In Pakistan, the US policies towards Pakistan have been viewed by many as condescending and insensitive, which has resulted in an increase in anti-American sentiments within the country. The American policy towards Pakistan is believed by many ordinary citizens to be characterized by a long-standing history of interfering in the country's internal affairs and pursuing its interests, leading to suspicion, lack of trust, and the perception of the US as an unreliable and self-serving ally.[6] Furthermore, there is a lack of comprehension on the US's part regarding the intricacies of Pakistan's history and culture, which has led to misunderstandings and misconceptions about the country. As a result, Pakistani nationals feel they are often unfairly judged and misrepresented by American policymakers and the public. Pakistanis believe they were never fully compensated for supporting the war on terror. Pakistan has suffered immense losses in human lives and economic damage due to its involvement in the war on terror. However, the aid provided by the US has been seen as insufficient and often conditional, leading to further resentment and distrust towards the US.

The vast flow of information available to the American public, owing to the US's extensive engagement in various regions of the world in its war on terrorism, plays a crucial role in shaping the public's perception of certain regions and peoples of the post-9/11 world. The general perception of Pakistan among the American public is often shaped by the extensive media coverage of Pakistan's involvement in the war on terrorism and its perceived ties to terrorist organizations. The Americans also believe Pakistan has been duplicitous in its relations with the US. Such malicious media coverage and accusations of dishonesty are a major barrier to warming up people-to-people relations. The list of grievances and complaints towards each other – unfortunately, many of which are accurate – is open. Essentially, the relationship is trapped in a negative public opinion cycle on both sides (more so on the Pakistan side). For multiple reasons, Pakistan continues to hold a controversial reputation in US policy circles. In Pakistan, the US is seen as overly controlling, manipulative and only offering aid in exchange for what they want. Whatever the truth of the matter, it is important to understand both sides. Any Pakistani politician who takes a dig at the US can draw favorable public attention. The case of the former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan, attests to that. Public opinion and sentiment in both the U.S. and Pakistan hinder building a strong relationship and must be treated as a priority if the essence of the relationship has to change.

The China Factor

A major source of a relatively new complication in the relationship has been the role of China, a close partner and next-door neighbours of Pakistan and

a major adversary and competitor for the US. While Pakistan has always had a great relationship with China, today, they lean even more towards China after it has invested tens of billions of dollars in infrastructure. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, benefitting from a Chinese investment of around USD 25 billion (out of a planned USD 65 billion), extends the land and maritime routes that connect the two countries through Gwadar port and a network of approximately 2,000 miles of railways, roads, and pipelines.[7] China also serves as a likeable partner for Pakistan as it avoids criticizing Pakistan publicly (even when they are angry at something). China also is Pakistan's trusted friend when tackling India, given the growing China-India economic rivalry and late border tensions. More so, China usually goes with the flow irrespective of who is ruling Pakistan. At least, that is the perception.

However, there are some competing facts as well. While Pakistan's military recognizes and appreciates China, their appreciation and attachment to Made in America military equipment and F-16s come out on top. Generally, Imran Khan aside, the Pakistani elite favors the US even as its public reputation suffers amongst the people. It is evident from their strong favorable leaning towards educational institutions in the US and UK compared to China. From a cultural and linguistic lens, Pakistan has traditionally been Western. Those who can afford to vacation abroad often head towards the West (and the Middle East) rather than China. Pakistan also is keen that its policies should not be deemed an extension of Chinese foreign policy.

The Return of the Taliban and India-Pakistan Relations

With the Taliban back in power in Kabul, the counterterrorism challenge for the US and Pakistan is far from being eliminated. It is a moot point whether the Taliban in power now offers strategic depth to Pakistan or vice versa. The hard reality is that Kabul's expected help to Pakistan in tackling TTP is still awaited while the security challenges posed by the Islamic State of Khorasan are growing significantly, equally worrying both the US and Pakistan. The value of intelligence sharing between the US and Pakistan remains relevant in this context. Afghanistan's humanitarian crisis is another challenge that potentially impacts both countries, especially Pakistan, which still hosts millions of Afghan refugees.

The India-Pakistan relations are going through a rough period where diplomatic engagement is minimum, and mistrust remains entrenched. While the confrontational rhetoric from both sides follows an unpredictable ebb and flow, a positive ceasefire in Kashmir has held up since February 2021. Unpredictable events can derail any progress quickly, and that's why the 2019 Pulwama-Balakot crisis and the 2022 accidental Indian missile strike have shown that managing an India-Pakistan military escalation – that could potentially lead to a nuclear crisis as per the US calculations - remains a key interest.

Five Recommendations to Resurrect the Relationship

1 Clarity of the relationship in terms of nature and scope of engagement is critical to reset the transactional nature of the relationship that has been going on for a long time. Expectations and offerings must be clearly explained and have the backing of the whole government. Secret undertakings, though at times needed in the security domain, can complicate public perceptions, which can be very damaging eventually for a healthy relationship.
2 Long-term and sustainable relationships can never be built on institution-to-institution links alone or around one item-agendas, whatever those may be. Cooperation and collaboration thrive when broader people-to-people engagement is involved, keeping values, ethos, and cultural avenues of communication in view.
3 The US – Pakistan relationship must surpass India-Pakistan and US-China rivalry considerations. This may sound idealistic, as geopolitics and global rivalries always influence policy making, but avoiding expecting the partner nation to compromise on its key interests and partnerships is doable. The frailty and vitality of their relationship extend far beyond China or India.
4 Borrowing the metaphor of the Silk Road, a broad exchange of ideas ranging from expanding trade networks and transmission of knowledge to intellectual and cultural dialogues can lead to better understanding and cooperation. And both states have attempted such avenues in the past. Even today, Pakistan receives the highest number of US Fulbright scholarships, a valuable educational avenue for human resource development.[8] Collaboration in building climate change resilience for Pakistan and pursuing clean energy offers new avenues.
5 President Obama had said in his inaugural speech in 2009: "To the Muslim world, we seek a new way forward, based on mutual interest and mutual respect."[9] This sums up an approach that can work wonders for the US-Pakistan relationship.

Final Thoughts: Considerations Worth Keeping in View

With the struggling economy, the return of the Taliban to Kabul, and the devastating impact of climate change, Pakistan is incredibly vulnerable. The resurgence of TTP and the rising challenge of the Islamic State of Khorasan (ISK) in Afghanistan and its links with some extremist organizations in Pakistan in parallel can create major security issues for Pakistan in the coming years.[10] These security challenges concern the US as well. It is especially interested in the security and safety of nuclear weapons and materials in the country and in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons technology. Investment in building a partnership in combating illicit drugs, human trafficking, and transnational crime is a practical law enforcement capacity-building approach and

a way to build trust. Similarly, development support for ongoing Pakistani efforts in mainstreaming the Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA), incorporated in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province a few years back, and assistance for initiatives like the Kartarpur corridor that promote religious harmony in South Asia are worth considering. The Kartarpur corridor – is a 2.5-mile pathway connecting two sacred locations for members of the Sikh faith across the Indian-Pakistani border in Punjab, allowing Sikh pilgrims from India to visit the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Pakistan without visa restrictions.

It is pertinent to mention that the US continues to be Pakistan's largest trade partner – as over 25 per cent of Pakistan's annual exports (around nine billion dollars) go to the US – and in times of crisis, the US often offers substantial help.[11] The most recent examples are around USD 100 million in humanitarian aid in the aftermath of the 2022 devastating floods in Pakistan and earlier the US donation of over 50 million COVID-19 vaccines (the single largest donor of these vaccines).[12] These are important considerations for Pakistan which, according to the United Nations Development Program, face debilitating challenges such as 45 per cent of Pakistani children under age 5 being malnourished, 43 percent of Pakistanis over 15 being illiterate, and just 46 per cent of children being receiving secondary education.[13] With all these things at play, Pakistan is witnessing an early stage of a developing consensus among its defense establishment and major political parties recognizing that Pakistan needs to pursue regional peace and look inwards to stabilize its economy and governance. A vibrant relationship with the US can help it on this path – such as foreign direct investments and technical expertise needed to modernize the economy – but expectations must be realistic. High hopes can lead to great disappointments if the foundation of the relationship is weak. Today's big question for the US and Pakistan is whether they can put their past grievances aside. If both states wish to give this relationship a new lease on life, they must learn to leave history's baggage behind and rework the relationship. We can see some normalization of relations, but whether this can grow and prosper into a stable, positive dynamic – only time can tell. Whatever the buzz of the policy circles or the echoes of the public outbursts – the two countries have much to benefit from each other as in many instances.

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15 Can Pakistan and the US Move Away from the Shadows of Geopolitics?

Sadia Sulaiman

The dawn of 21st century witnessed immense reliance on technology across the world. The advent of technology has profoundly transformed international relations in several ways, reshaping how states interact, how power is exercised, and how global issues are addressed? The relevance and importance of 'geopolitics' as essentially a 'territorial' paradigm in the global interactions has been questioned.[1] The contemporary international relations are "increasingly depicted as affected by non-state and de-territorialized threats."[2] This delocalization of the threats can negatively influence the economy and security of the entire world. Especially the "rise of digital media is among the most cited critiques of classical geopolitics, as it is employed as a tool and means for political mobilization and digital diplomacy."[3]

It is a fact that influence of technology will be difficult to evade, however the relevance of geopolitics cannot be eroded completely as "geographic structures that are not mobile and which cannot be overlooked, ranging from resources to emotionally relevant historical sites, locations, and regional/neighboring relations"[4] will always remain relevant with considerable changes in the classical connotation of the concept of 'geopolitics'. Alfred Thayer Mahan's historical analysis of the rise of the British Empire was the starting point for the geopolitical debate in international relations. He presented the theory that "there was a tendency for maritime trade and colonial possessions to be controlled by one well-positioned maritime state."[5] The debate moved forward with the advent of the railroad when Mackinder posited that "land power would trump sea power."[6] That debate about geopolitics kept going, revealing the very fact that geopolitics would always be a reality of the global politics affecting states' interaction with each other and US-Pakistan relations are no exception. The role and prevalence of geopolitics have shaped the foundation of their relationship and the geopolitics will always influence their ties.

After the US withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021, there was a general perception in both Islamabad and Washington that with the end of War on Terror the regional geopolitics would no longer influence the two countries to engage each other. However, both the US and Pakistan are struggling with emerging geopolitical complexities in the South Asian region, and they are

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struggling to give a more bilateral focus to their ties amidst these emerging geopolitical trends. In the light of the discussion in the book three major trends or scenarios are dominating the geopolitical landscape of South Asian region which would affect the US-Pakistan relations in future.

Scenario One: The Changing Relevance of Afghanistan

Afghanistan has remained the key source of alliance between the US and Pakistan since 1979 Soviet invasion. Post-US withdrawal in 2021, with Afghanistan going out of context, Pakistan has been grappled with the dilemma of 'relevance' to the US. The US direct contacts with the Taliban and its reliance on Qatar for engaging Taliban has minimized Pakistan's significance for Washington. This has been viewed with concern in Islamabad.[7] The stability of Afghanistan, including issues related to terrorism, refugee flows, and human rights are some of the areas of common concern between the US and Pakistan, however these issues may not be a priority area of engagement between the two.

Afghanistan is becoming relevant for the US not for its associated security issues rather due to the Chinese increasing interests in engaging Taliban for exploration and exploitation of mineral resources in the country. China's cozying up with Afghanistan has been viewed in Washington as overtures to fill in the vacuum that was left behind after its infamous withdrawal from Afghanistan. Pakistan being caught in 'geopolitical irrelevance dilemma' tried to adjust to the situation by shift in policy from geopolitics to 'geoeconomics'.[8] However, due to Pakistan's internal economic strife, political turmoil and poor security situation, it could not sell well the idea of Pakistan being a 'geoeconomic pivot'.

Pakistan in the foreseeable future would be struggling to attract the US attention towards its security concerns emanating out of Afghanistan. Pakistan needs financial and military assistance from the US to counter terrorism on its Western border with Afghanistan and the extent and volume of US assistance would indeed be one of the determining factors in their ties.

Situation Two: New Role of China in the Region

South Asia has been through a decisive shift in geopolitical context due to the close geographic proximity and outreach of China in this region. Especially its relationship with Pakistan has kept the US always in touch with Islamabad. Increasing China's investments in South Asia, including Afghanistan, often involve resource extraction and infrastructure projects. The US is concerned that China's increasing economic footprint could give it leverage over regional resources and strategic routes, impacting US economic and strategic interests. China's investment in ports and bases in South Asia and the broader Indian Ocean region is seen as part of a strategy to secure strategic maritime routes and resources. This has implications for the US naval and strategic interests in the region.

A cause of concern for Pakistan amidst this strategic competition between the US and China is Washington's preferential treatment of India, which is being viewed by the US as its ally in this intensifying geopolitical contest in South Asia. With President Donald J. Trump coming into power as the 47th President of the US and his clear pro-India stance it is yet to be seen how far both of Washington and New Delhi can go in countering China's increasing influence in the region. In the meantime, Pakistan needs to be prepared for this geopolitical competition, which might have direct bearings for its ties with the US. As Pakistan would be playing a delicate balancing act between the US and China on the one hand and managing India's increasing intrusions into Kabul and intimacy with Washington on the other, therefore adding further complexity to the ties with the US.

Situation Three: Increasing Fragility and Instability in South Asia

While embracing geostrategic confrontations and competitions, the South Asian region is getting into fragility trap due to internal political and economic issues in almost entire South Asia. For example, the World Bank estimates that about 400 million people in South Asia are at risk of food insecurity due to climate change impacts. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reports that South Asia accounted for 27 percent of the global undernourished population in 2020-2021, with approximately 199.2 million people experiencing hunger.[9] Pakistan, ranked among the top ten countries most affected by climate change according to the Global Climate Risk Index 2021.[10]

The South Asian region overall needs to be prepared to deal with such human security challenges having long-term security and stability implications. This would require regional states to work together while forgetting their bilateral tensions and issues. Especially, India, Pakistan and Afghanistan need to embrace this reality that the region cannot afford their confrontation and strategic competition. However, the simmering tensions between Afghanistan and Pakistan, along with tensions between China and India and Pakistan and India may not allow a smooth transition of perspectives from geopolitical confrontation to geoeconomic cooperation for ensuring human security. All such issues are of prime concern for Pakistan, which expects US help in bailing it out of current financial crisis due to soaring debt burden of the country. How far the US and Pakistan can go in dealing with the human security concerns in South Asia amidst tough geopolitical scenarios is yet to be seen. The US retreat from its humanitarian agendas after President Trump came into power in January 2025, will further impact the human security situation in this region, having detrimental impacts for the US and Pakistan relationship.

Policy Solutions

It is indeed a tough ride for both the US and Pakistan to disengage themselves of the past and the burden of the third parties and strengthen their bilateral

ties, however, it is not impossible. The '4 Ps Framework' suggested in this book provides certain crucial guidelines in this regard.

Prioritization

At policy level, adherence to bilateral focus in the US-Pakistan relationship is very important considering the long history of troubled ties between the two countries. Setting priorities is always a challenging task considering the fluid nature of regional and international politics. The foreign policy priorities need to be clear but at the same time such priorities should be flexible enough to be altered according to the changing situation. For example, in case of US-Pakistan relationship, the initial euphoria of Taliban takeover of Afghanistan has been vanished in Islamabad due to the stubborn policy approaches by the Afghan Taliban. The uptick in terrorist events by Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) inside Pakistan in the past few years since August 2021 has once again made security as a priority concern for Pakistan. For addressing this threat Pakistan needs the cooperation from regional countries especially China and from the US as well, since this threat has regional context. But while mitigating this security challenge the US and Pakistan should maintain the essence of comprehensive bilateral ties alive through engagement in the fields of education, health, economic development and socio-economic reforms.

Partnership

Both the US and Pakistan need to initiate continuous dialogue at government-to-government level, business-to -business level and people-to-people levels in order to overcome the 'equality' dilemma. All the crucial decisions should be reached at bilateral level while engaging the relevant stakeholders. The Parliamentary debates on the key security, economic and political issues are important in this era of information flow and access to the information. Such transparency in engagement is important to develop trust between the states. The utility partnership should be converted into popular bonding between the two.

Participation

The mistrust and misperceptions in the US-Pakistan relationship grew because of the lack of peoples' engagement on both the sides. It is true that US Fulbright program and USAID played a crucial role in maintaining the ties even during the lowest of the US-Pakistan relationship. However, there is need to not only broaden the scope of this program but also to diversify the people's engagement on both the sides. Civil society, private entrepreneurial ecosystems and Pakistani-American diaspora can be of immense help in this regard. Moreover, there should be a deliberate effort to discuss and debate common problems and issues faced by the people on both the sides to strengthen the bonding between the people of the US and Pakistan.

Table 15.1 Four-Ps and Future Trajectory of US-Pakistan Ties

Four P's	*Challenges*	*Input*	*Actors*
Prioritization	Shift in geopolitics Changing Threat dynamics	Role of government actors to clearly identify priorities	Foreign Office Diplomatic Staff
Partnership	No history of equal relationship Pakistan's increasing economic reliance	Changes in perception through official engagement	Government Foreign Office
Participation	People's opinions diversified – Constant pressure on policy making domain	More participatory model	Media Civil Society Diaspora Private entrepreneurs
Persistence	Fluidity of situation	Consistency in approach	All of the above mentioned actors

Persistence

It is a fact that in international relations there are no permanent enemies and no permanent friends. However, in this era of globalization and increasing interconnectedness states cannot afford to disrupt their relationship at the cost of their stability. Same is the case with Pakistan and the US – they are allies for more than seven decades and most of the time this relationship has been viewed as transactional in nature. While both countries are trying to reset their ties it is important to add more bilateral content with popular consent and participation so that it can endure any geopolitical shock, which may come around anytime. Such preparedness would keep them flexible and ready for any unforeseen unlike the past.

Notes

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Appendix A

Fundamental Rights in the Constitution of Pakistan:

Article 16. Freedom of assembly

Every citizen shall have the right to assemble peacefully and without arms, subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of public order.

Article 17. Freedom of association

1 Every citizen shall have the right to form associations or unions, subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of the sovereignty or integrity of Pakistan, public order or morality.
2 Every citizen, not being in the service of Pakistan, shall have the right to form or be a member of a political party, subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of the sovereignty or integrity of Pakistan and such law shall provide that where the Federal Government declares that any political party has been formed or is operating in a manner prejudicial to the sovereignty or integrity of Pakistan, the Federal Government shall, within fifteen days of such declaration, refer the matter to the Supreme Court whose decision on such reference shall be final.
3 Every political party shall account for the source of its funds by law.

Article 19. Freedom of speech

Every citizen shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression, and there shall be freedom of the press, subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of the glory of Islam or the integrity, security or defense of Pakistan or any part thereof, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of court, 33[commission of] 33 or incitement to an offence.

Article 19A. Right to information

Every citizen shall have the right to have access to information in all matters of public importance subject to regulation and reasonable restrictions imposed by law.

Article 25. Equality of citizens

1 All citizens are equal before the law and entitled to equal protection.
2 There shall be no discrimination on the basis of sex 35[] 35.
3 Nothing in this Article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the protection of women and children.

Appendix B

Fundamental Rights in the Constitution of the United States

Amendment 1

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Amendment 14

Section 1. All persons born or naturalized in the US and subject to the jurisdiction thereof are citizens of the US and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

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