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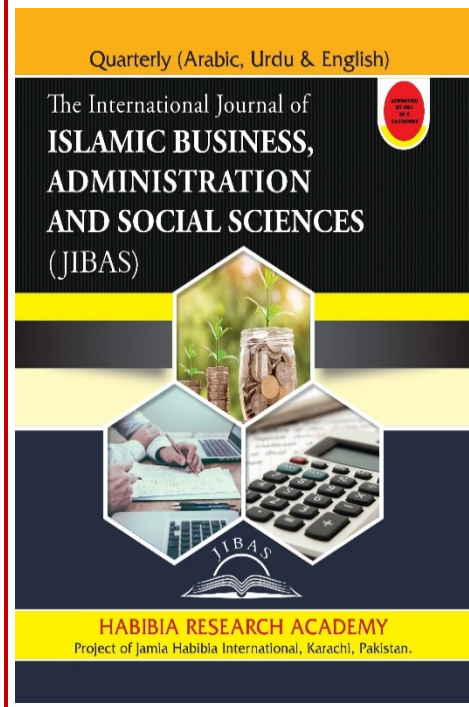
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TOPIC:
PAK US RELATIONS DURING JOE BIDEN ERA (AN ANALYSIS)

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PAK US RELATIONS DURING JOE BIDEN ERA (AN ANALYSIS)*Syed Shoaib Hussain,**Mamnoon Ahmed Khan,***ABSTRACT:**

The relations between the United States and Pakistan experienced many ups and downs since the inception of diplomatic relations. Both countries had worked together against the Soviet Union in the Afghan war and the war on terror for almost twenty years. Unfortunately, suspiciousness always existed between them. The US blamed the double game on Pakistan whereas Pakistan sees US-India relations as a threat to her interests in the region. The US also has questions over close Pakistan and China relations that the US see as against her interests in the Indo-Pacific region. The United States is promoting India as a regional and global ally. The relations between both countries during the Joe Biden regime are unluckily not favorable for Pakistan. Moreover, both countries can work together to boost their relations by diverting them from geopolitics to geo-economics.

KEYWORDS: *Diplomatic relations, War on Terror; Indo-Pacific region, Losses in the war on terror, Environmental changes.*

INTRODUCTION:

The relations between the countries depend on their variable interests in the specific period; yesterday's enemies can sit together on a certain mutual interest. In Pakistan-US relations there have been too many ups and downs. Pakistan has been a close ally of the United States since 1954-55 once following the wishes to join the US camp by some ruling elites of Pakistani civilian and military establishments. Although, at that time Pakistan was in dire need of consistent foreign assistance in terms of economic support as well as defense equipment to counter the immediate threat from neighbor India. However, it could not be on the cost of non-alignment that had been pursued till the signing of the defense agreement under the US umbrella. Pakistan continued its support to the Western block till the disintegration of the country in 1971. Interestingly, Pakistan had always been a victim of US sanctions and embargos in any war situation with India whereas the former USSR extended its full support towards India in terms of economic support as well as supply of weapons and on diplomatic channels USSR also vetoed resolutions on Kashmir issue at the UN security council.

USSR intervention into Afghanistan had provided another opportunity for both countries to work together extensively including closer cooperation between their spy organizations that lasted till the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan in February 1989. The demise of USSR changed the world politics

from bipolar to unipolar. Similarly, both countries had also worked in the last twenty years in the war against terrorism. Pakistan faced a huge loss of its citizens' lives and infrastructure. During that war against terrorism, terrorists targeted schools, government buildings, defense personnel and its installations, citizens, etc. The use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) by the US in the war that started during the period of former President Obama increased the terrorist attacks in Pakistan that seriously caused huge losses of human lives and loss of other livelihoods.

Pak US relations after 9/11:

After the tragic incidents of 9/11, Pakistan and US came together again to counter so-called terrorism. The war against terror was fought for twenty years in Muslim countries i.e. Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen, and Pakistan. Brown University evaluates the most recent studies on fatalities of the war on terror that estimated 3.6 to 3.7 million indirect fatalities that have occurred in post-9/11 combat zones including Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen. Though the exact mortality rate is yet unclear, the death toll in these battle zones might be at least 4.5–4.6 million or more. While some individuals lost their lives during the battle, the ripple effects of war, such as the spread of illness, have killed much more people, particularly children and older people in war zones.

Pakistan entered into the alliance in the war against terrorism since start in October 2001. At that time there was no other option for Pakistan to choose except join that war led by the US and its allies. Pakistan had also suffered huge losses in the war against terrorism as discussed above and the targets were not only the security forces but also the civilians. Since the war on terror started in October 2001, Pakistan had experienced around \$152 losses whereas the US support only \$20 billion in the coalition support fund, the human cost of war is around 70,000 lives in Pakistan. Security forces of Pakistan had also conducted different operations in tribal areas of KPK and also other parts of the country that had resulted from the huge migration from the war-affected areas towards the comparatively secure areas of the country. Internally displaced persons within Pakistan from the tribal areas of the country that are the most affected areas in the war on terror around 3.7 million people. The situation is more worsen because Afghan migrants around 3 million already residing in the tribal areas and other big cities of Pakistan since last more than forty years, reportedly they are involved in crimes in big cities.

China Factor:

The US had always seen China as a potential threat to its interests in the Indo-Pacific region and international politics in a larger view. China is the second largest and the fastest growing economy in the world and no doubt is challenging US domination in the international political economy. The US sees India in the region as a natural ally against China's growing interests in the Indo-Pacific region and supports India as a critical partner there. Recent Modi's visit to the US is the best example of close cooperation; both countries signed several agreements of civilian nature like renewable energy, space, and defense nature, etc.

Pak US relations under Biden:

The relationship between the Biden administration and Pakistan started off rocky. The recently released National Security Strategy from President Biden has been criticized for being "ambitious and unrealistic about America's place in the world." The strategy plan outlines the objectives of the US president's security and foreign policy, according to Marwan Bishara, a prominent political journalist for Al Jazeera in Doha. These aims are listed in the papers, along with competing with Beijing and containing Putin. Biden acknowledged India as a partner, mentioned China as a problem, and completely disregarded Pakistan in the 48-page document.¹ Senior US officials also made it abundantly clear to Pakistan during their visit to Islamabad that the relationship between the two nations has been degraded under the Biden administration. On the eve of her trip, Wendy Sherman, the deputy secretary of state, attended a public event in Mumbai to lay out the new rules for US-Pakistan relations in clear terms, stressing that there would be no comparison with Washington's deepening ties to India. Sherman said that the trip to Islamabad was made for "a very specific and limited purpose"—to discuss Afghanistan and the Taliban. We don't anticipate developing a close connection with Pakistan.² Given Pakistan's nuclear status and the description of Biden as the most dangerous country in the world last year, it was evident how the two nations' ties were faring under his presidency. Pakistan's response to his comments was apparent, and the Pakistani Foreign Office phoned the US envoy to ask for an explanation. Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, the foreign minister of Pakistan, voiced his "astonishment" at Biden's comments during a news conference. I believe that a lack of engagement leads to precisely this type of misunderstanding.³

Under the Biden administration, there has been a change in US foreign policy away from the Middle East and toward the Indo-Pacific area. The primary motivation is to restrain China's expanding influence in both Asia and Central Asia. The United States and India's objectives in these regions are at odds with China's expanding influence in Asia and Central Asia. In order to limit China's expanding influence, the US and India have been collaborating on a strategic relationship. The US has been touting India as a regional strategic ally. Since India has been a strategic partner and close ally in recent years, the US must understand Pakistan's vulnerability, particularly its concerns over India's growing military strength that could ultimately be used against Pakistan. The growing strategic partnership between the US and India is increasing India's military capabilities, creating an imbalance in the region and exaggerating the security concerns of Pakistan. The setting has mostly been the war on terrorism and Afghanistan policy throughout Biden's administration. Unfortunately, the US has consistently criticized Pakistan for its involvement in the Afghan conflict and its position as a mediator in the peace talks with the Afghan Taliban. Due to its excellent location as a gateway to South and Central Asia, Pakistan continues to play a significant role in South Asia's power dynamics.⁴ Even before the US left Afghanistan, geopolitical factors were drastically shifting as China stepped up its diplomatic and economic engagement and announced its Belt and Road Initiative through Pakistan. It includes significant Chinese investment in Pakistan's energy, infrastructure, and other development projects. China and Pakistan are extremely close friends in terms of strategy. With this tight collaboration, India and the US are not pleased. However, Islamabad also hopes to forge a more stable and robust partnership with the United States; in the past, the two nations had developed a tight working relationship solely for security concerns. The US always traveled to Pakistan when it was necessary for US interests in the area, but the US has never been eager to forge a close strategic alliance with Pakistan for the same reasons that the Indo-US strategic alliance was founded.⁵

Shifting from Geopolitics to Geo-economics

James M. Lindsay, Senior Vice President of the Council on Foreign Relations, also discussed the challenges of repairing Pakistan's relationship with the US at a briefing. According to him, the Biden administration aims to improve upon the current status of American ties with Pakistan. The relationship between the two nations has historically seen numerous ups and downs; the Biden administration

likewise has these relationships from the past. Future Pakistan-US ties would undoubtedly require political will, tenacity, intelligence, and credibility on both sides. It is up to the leaders on both sides to restore confidence and put initiatives to increase trust in place that can change their relationships from patron-client to partners in progress. Furthermore, "if Pakistan wishes to transition from geopolitics to geo-economics, it must establish some understanding with Washington on strategic and security matters; otherwise, these will keep crashing into the chances of economic cooperation." Of course, shifting from geopolitics to geo-economics will result in future events that benefit both sides equally.⁶

New pathways

The threat of terrorism is no longer the primary concern for the United States, but Pakistan is still dealing with it on its borderlands with Afghanistan. As a result, the US is not giving Pakistan the same kind of attention as it did in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. Pakistan is willing to create new methods for collaboration with the US in order to strengthen foreign direct investment and increase exports to the US. To obtain cooperation from the US, Pakistan also participates in discussions at various levels with the US on security, counterterrorism, cyber security, anti-money laundering issues, environmental issues, poverty reduction in Pakistan, education, etc. These views are motivated by the leadership of Pakistan's pragmatic recognition that, as the US withdraws from Afghanistan, the country cannot take the US's support for granted. Pakistan has suggested a new approach to ties with the US that is cantered on Pakistan's economic issues and aims to cooperate with the US on a range of non-security issues, such as climate change, science, and technology, and many more. Making this new approach, a reality would need a lot of work because Pakistan has trouble keeping its own economic house in order. Pakistan's economic plight has worsened since the floods of last year.⁷

US Assistance for Flood affected areas:

According to a World Bank assessment, the entire amount of economic losses would be close to USD 15.2 billion, and the total amount of damages would be greater than USD 14.9 billion. For restoration and reconstruction carried out effectively, it is anticipated that at least USD 16.3 billion would be needed. The floods affected about 33 million people, and over 1730 people died as a result. More than 8 million people who are now displaced due to various diseases are suffering from a health crisis.⁸ Pakistan has to address its economic problems, including the drop in

overseas remittances and the reduction in help from friendly nations. A \$3 billion loan for nine months was given by the IMF.⁹ In the end, we can hope the relations of both countries will be better on enhanced on mutual interests not only on the wishes of the US pursuing by any dictator or any specific faction. Since the devastating floods of 2022, the U.S. has contributed more than \$200 million to Pakistan as one of the country's top donors for humanitarian and development aid. As Pakistan's citizens recover from the effects of the unprecedented floods, the United States remains by its side.

Conclusion:

Pakistan and United States relations have been experiencing many vicissitudes since its inception. During the cold war, Pakistan worked with the US closely, especially during the Afghan war both countries worked together against USSR. The last more than seventy years proved that once the United States needed Pakistan all the hurdles including sanctions would remove immediately to start working together but if the US don't need Pakistan all previous sanctions were imposed blaming Pakistan for having nuclear capabilities. On the other hand, the US established a civilian nuclear deal with India; Pakistan has been demanding the same deal for its energy needs but it remains unsuccessful. Moreover, the US also promoting India as a close ally in the Indo-Pacific region against growing China influence. China is a reliable ally of Pakistan, both countries are engaged in China Pakistan Economic Corridor. The corridor will help to boost Pakistani weak economy. Relations between Pakistan and US during current President Joe Biden are not excellent as were during the tenure of former President Donald Trump. During the war on terror, Pakistan played a vital role and faced huge losses of lives as well as billions of dollar loss to the country. Pakistan conducted different operations in its tribal areas as well as drone attacks in the tribal areas also caused retaliation. Ultimately, the society of Pakistan suffered and there is no appreciation or acknowledgment from the US.

However, both countries can work together on geo-economics to improve their relations and establish close cooperation on education, environmental changes faced by Pakistan, anti-money laundering and counterterrorism, and more. The US also supported Pakistan in the devastating floods of 2022; the U.S. has contributed more than \$200 million to Pakistan as one of the country's top donors for humanitarian and development aid.

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