

## **United States Dilemma of Strategic Alliance with Pakistan: From ‘Policy of Containment’ to ‘War against Terrorism’**

**Dr. Adam Saud, Dr. Tauqeer Hussain Sargana and Dr. Mujahid Hussain Sargana**

### **Abstract**

This study has questioned the very legitimacy and ability of United States to honor bilateral relations that it commits under strategic partnerships. The investigation makes the point that partner nations with United States are used as a tool to pursue foreign policy priorities in regions of strategic interest. Partner nations are usually vulnerable to United States international influence in political, economic, diplomatic and military domains. United States due to its international leverage most of the time gets an easy way out in the so-called strategic partnerships but at times when partner nations are in need of dire support, Washington prefers to backtrack from its commitments. This paper has considered South Asia as a case study to contest United States context of ‘strategic alliance’ as a mean to pursue foreign policy priorities with Pakistan. The vulnerabilities of Pakistan time and again have allowed United States to positively negotiate best deals for Washington, which in-turn brought political complications for the partner nation. This study makes the point that nature of bilateral relations between Pakistan and United States are multifaceted, whereas the phenomenon of ‘containment of communism’ initially the Soviet and now the Chinese had become the most decisive factor behind their strategic orientation. US failure to attain its objectives from Pakistan had always made India the ultimate choice, which in turn uses Washington’s leverage to craft South Asian political order in its favor. The study has applied inductive method with that of ‘Analytical Eclecticism’ approach to evaluate the ups and downs of the two inconvenient strategic allies and decoded the so-called premises of the Indo-US strategic alliance which is founded on the political orchestration to contain Chinese increasing influence.

**Keywords:** India, United States, Containment, Regional Politics, China, Pakistan, War on Terror.

### **Introduction**

During the two prominent political periods of the contemporary international relations, the Cold War and the post-9/11; South Asia due to its geographical location and proximity of strategic maneuverability in associated regions remained fundamentally decisive for international politics (Brzezinski, 2016). Whether it was containment of the Soviet Communism or engagement of Soviets in Afghanistan; Cold War without Pakistan’s decisive role was unable to achieve its end objectives (Hilali, 2017). Later on, in the aftermath of 9/11 incident the ‘global war against

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\*Authors are Associate Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences (H&SS), Bahria University, Islamabad, Assistant Professor, Department of Politics and International Relations, International Islamic University Islamabad and Assistant Professor at Department of Humanities and Social Sciences (H&SS), Bahria University Islamabad

terrorism' once again sought Pakistan's frontline role that it played with great resilience and marvelous sacrifices (Osborne & Agha, 2016). It is Pakistan's decisive role which has without any doubt helped the international community to contain the forces of terror (Times of Islamabad, 2017).

Today, the world at large is witnessing shift in the United States foreign policy towards Pakistan. The history of political and military ties without any doubt classifies relationship between the both nations as strategic in nature (Dawn, 2012). In South Asia one can categorize Pakistan being the longest strategic partner of United States. Time and again both nations have worked together and successfully turnover the results in their favor. Most of the time the results exclusively favored the US foreign policy and Pakistan without any concrete benefits remained strategic ally in the overall construct of relations. During this process of cooperation, the cost benefit analysis brought more problems for Pakistan as compared to opportunities (Haqqani, 2018). At points during the Cold War period, shifts in US foreign policy highlighted pragmatism in Pakistan's international relations. Most of the time India got benefit from the US distance from Pakistan which in turn was not appreciated by Islamabad (Iqbal, 2016). The journey of opening up strategic relations started during 1950's when SEATO and CENTO were signed and saw its peak in the Afghanistan War during 1980's, when Pakistan and United States closely worked and successfully defeated the Soviet forces in 1979 (Cowanjee, 2011).

The aftermath of Afghanistan war brought turmoil that directly impacted on Pakistan's national security. United States along with its promises were gone and Pakistan had to face enormous pressure of Afghani migrants along with new political landscape of civil war between *Mujahideen* and *Taliban* (Sprung, 2009). The turmoil was not over yet when on September 11, 2001 terrorists attacked on World Trade Centers and Pentagon. This demanded another strategic alliance by the United States which Pakistan without any formal negotiation accepted. The war which was supposed to be fought in Afghanistan got transferred slowly into Pakistan. The country which was supposed to facilitate the 'war against terrorism' had to fight it on its own territory with its own resources. This brought not only difference of opinion on the changing dynamics of war but also highlighted separate strategies to deal with the situation. The climax of inconvenience is still 'ON' under the so-called partnership of 'war against terrorism' where US frustrations in Afghanistan are directly impacting on Pakistan's strategic positioning in Washington (Tisdall, 2018).

Under all these difficult scenarios the context of strategic alliance prevailed between Pakistan and United States but when in 2005 the then US President George W. Bush decided to end-up into strategic alliance with India; Islamabad became skeptical of Washington's clandestine plans (Jaspal & Sultan, 2007). On the one side Pakistan was fighting the US war against terrorism but on the other side its arch rival was receiving the benefits under 'Indo-US strategic partnership'. One of the biggest benefits New Delhi was receiving is the 'Indo-US Civil Nuclear Deal' that Pakistan also demanded

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from the United States (Jamal, 2015). Pakistan was simply denied whereas India was adjusted through Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) exceptional waivers and changes into US domestic legislations such as Section 123 of the US Atomic Energy Act of 1954 which categorically bind the United States not to indulge into nuclear trade with a non-NPT state. An amendment was passed in 2006 under ‘Hyde Amendment’, which has been immensely criticized as a breach to international non-proliferation efforts (Kimball & Reif, 2018).

This breach of confidence did not happen for the first time. Few of the important ups and downs are mentioned in the subsequent sections of this study that time and again created uneasy relations between the both the nations, which brought India into the matrix of South Asian politics as alternative to Pakistan for the United States foreign policy.

To understand the puzzle, a comparative historical outlook to order the United States bilateral relations with Pakistan and India are given in the study. The conclusive section of the study will expose the points that shifted United States policy from Pakistan and made India a choice of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In other words, what initiated United States divorce with Pakistan and created compatibility for an alternative marriage with India? How long an untrustworthy partner would remain successful to hold its alternative marriage or will United States regret about its divorce with Pakistan? Though, family relations are more complex than international relations since there is no option of retreat after the breakup but political relations have no such compulsion. In fact, the context of divorce in international relations is not real in nature rather it is the time-period which comes between divergences to rapprochement. Explanation of above questions and context in fact invites understanding of the strategic orientation of United States bilateral relations with both Pakistan and India through application of realism, liberalism, and constructivism.

### **Theoretical Premises**

Liberalism, realism and constructivism over the period of time had played an important role in U.S. foreign policy towards South Asia. Pakistan’s endurance with United States had mostly postulated realism as the dominating factor of influence that indulged Islamabad into strategic cum security alliance with Washington. For the U.S. realism also became the only lens that pointed out towards geographical positioning of Pakistan as a strategic checkmate to growing Soviet communism. India had been a secondary bidder when it comes to U.S. reliance on South Asian politics. Time and again, United States deviation from Pakistan had allowed New Delhi to best fit in the equation but remained an untrustworthy bidder for Washington. Exceptional arrangements are observed in case of Indo-U.S strategic relations of the 21<sup>st</sup> century that are made up of complicated and convoluted variables and interests. At one end their relationship is bound by strategic and defense objectives under realism, on the other end under liberalism there is an important chunk of economics that engages both

nations to stay intact for the prospects of enduring partnership. Furthermore, the shared values provide a sustainable base to this strategic relationship, which is camouflaged under constructivism. Hence, it would be utterly unfair to disregard any one of the variables. Therefore, with the help of using the idea of analytical eclecticism (Sil & Katzenstein, 2010), a theoretical triangulation on three different vectors has been contested:

- i. **Realism** emphasis on the security and defense cooperation
- ii. **Liberalism** in terms of complex interdependence explain the aspect of economic relations, and finally
- iii. **Constructivism** highlights the construction of shared values around common goals.

Together these three vectors would direct the primary question of the research that is to understand the United States dilemma of strategic alliance with partner nations particularly with Pakistan and its camouflaged anti-China syndrome that makes India an alternative alliance under Indo-US partnership.

Analytical Eclecticism approach indicates that the relationship between United States and Pakistan most of the time had remained outside the ambit of liberalism and constructivism. Their bilateral ties are more inclined towards realism which has been contextualized to explain the ‘policy of containment’ and ‘war against terrorism’. On the other hand, the Indo-US strategic relations point out amalgamation of liberalism with constructivism that under a camouflaged posturing of realism highlight the nature of bilateral relations between the two nations. The investigation has mostly discussed Pakistan’s experience of strategic alliance with United States.

### **United States Politics of Partnership with Pakistan:**

#### **a. Policy of Containment**

When Pakistan signed CENTO in 1955, which was also referred as Baghdad Pact, the U.S categorically mentioned in the pact that this will not provide Pakistan any sort of deterrence against India (Chakma, 2012). Pakistan’s top priority to sign the SEATO in 1954 was not to contain Soviet Communism but deter India (Jabeen & Mazhar, 2011). India immediately after the independence invaded Kashmir and managed to undermine national security of Pakistan. Vulnerable to Indian aggression Pakistan sought opportunity from the US sponsored security pacts. Islamabad knew that the pacts are raised to contain the Soviet Communism but was confident that such pacts would put restraint on Indian territorial aggression against Pakistan. This was true to some extent as the pacts provided sufficient military support to Pakistan along with required technology and training to modernize its armed forces (Ejaz, 1992). The umbrella of international security alliance remained alive only for one year when in 1955 CENTO was signed which decoded the perceived deterrence of Pakistan against India. It is important to mention that along with SEATO and CENTO, Pakistan

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managed to sign great deal of bilateral agreements with Turkey and United States that again helped Islamabad to build its defense forces up to the mark which inevitably curtailed Indian ambitions to threaten Pakistan.

This did not come as a gift. Pakistan paid a great price. Looking into Pakistan security pacts with United States against Soviet Communism, the Muslim world at large did not extended their ideological references to posture the country as part of greater ‘Ummah’. During this time Pakistan actively worked for the developing nations and was an active force behind the 1955 Bandung Conference. When the spirit of conference was converted into ‘Nonaligned Movement (NAM)’ in 1961, Pakistan was excluded due to its security alliances (Rizvi, 2004). Also under a bilateral agreement of 1959, the US got Pakistan’s ‘Badaber Airbase’ of Peshawar. In 1960 a U-2 Airplane flew from the base which was captured by the Soviet Union (Khan, 2011). As a result Moscow marked ‘Peshawar’ with red circle and promised to take revenge of facilitating US spy planes against Soviet Union.

In 1962, India started a war with China which resulted as a failure and humiliation for its military Generals. Considering these developments as an opportunity, the United States leadership decided to engage India. Due to Beijing’s strong defense and the punishment it received from the Chinese military, India immediately jumped into US political support (Athale, 2012). New Delhi not only received US military equipment but also some European nations transported their defense equipments to strengthen Indian defense. John F. Kennedy, the United States President in late 1950’s even on the lines of Japan, South Korea and West Germany extended the offer of ‘nuclear umbrella’ with an offer “to detonate an American device from atop a tower in Rajasthan desert” to deter China. The Kennedy letter that he wrote to Nehru stated that “Nothing is more important than national security” made the justification for India accepting US offer of nuclear detonation before China (Chaudhury, 2018). This offer on the other hand was not accepted by Nehru who in fact wanted its indigenous nuclear weapons program that it hastened in the aftermath of 1962 war with China.

Pakistan was unhappy with the exceptional tilt of United States towards India which received military technology along with political and diplomatic support without signing a formal security pact. In fact, Pakistan received all the military aid in return of signing security pacts which came at a price but India without compromising its relations with NAM, Muslim world, and Soviet Union received an exceptional support. This episode was a clear manifestation of U.S priorities in South Asia. As a result, Pakistan did not abandon its relations with the U.S but introduced pragmatism in its foreign policy and immediately negotiated a border settlement agreement with Beijing around ‘Aksai Chin’ in 1963, which made China the third strategic stakeholder of Kashmir (Cheema, 1986). Pakistan also accepted Soviet support that wanted to resettle its ties with Islamabad. This was a time when Ayub Khan’s ‘Five Year Plans’ project were facing enormous economic pressure as US cut the aid to

Pakistan. Soviet Union pledged its support to help Pakistan continue the projects and also started high level political contacts. In Karachi a Steel Mill was established with the help of Soviet Union (Hasan, 1969).

In 1969, Soviet Union introduced an 'Asian Collective Security Proposal' and wanted Pakistan to become part of it (Horelick, 1974). Pakistan decided not to join the treaty as it considered this arrangement Soviet effort to contain China in Asia (Hilali, 2006). This was deemed necessary to avoid block politics which earlier impacted negatively on Pakistan. Just like the United States, the Soviet Union too found common grounds of anti-China symptoms in New Delhi. Both the countries signed 'Friendship Treaty' in 1971 which under article-9 provided Indian uncompromised Soviet support in any conflict (Menon, 1978). Article-9 of the treaty proved decisively exceptional political step for India during the East Pakistan crises. When on December 5, 6, and 11; Pakistan submitted ceasefire resolutions; Soviet Union vetoed all the three attempts (Mustafa, 1972). This gave ample time to Indian military to enter deep into East Pakistan which later on crossed the threshold and Pakistani forces surrendered on December 16, 1971.

The price of alliance was so high that even neutrality of Pakistan came at a biggest cost to its territorial integrity. Under the arrangements of remaining security ties, United States did promised to send its 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet in the Bay of Bengal to create deterrence (Arpi, 2006). The fleet does sailed in the Bay of Bengal but never crossed the threshold nor was the deterrence created. In fact, it was the Soviet Treaty of Friendship with India and New Delhi's provocation of Article-9 that created deterrence for United States (Mohanty, 2011). Ultimately, it was Pakistan that became victim of containment politics. United States failed miserably and its criminal negligence to leave Pakistan alone to deal with the whole situation of East Pakistan proved that the so-called strategic alliance was only a tool of its foreign policy rather a concrete obligation to shelter its partner nation. Moreover, Pakistan's miscalculation that China would also create deterrence for India through physical intervention proved only a myth (Arpi, 2006).

During the crisis there is no doubt US did all its best to create regional cum international scenario that could help Pakistan sustain its grip over East Pakistan. The frustration of U.S administration over Indian and Soviet nexus to break Pakistan could be gauged through President Nixon and his National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger telephonic conversation. During November 05, 1971 telephonic conversation, President Nixon referred to Indira Gandhi the then Indian Prime Minister "bitch" and "cowards" for the Indians as a whole. During his conversation with President, Henry Kissinger also maintained his anger and used the words "bastards" and "the most aggressive goddamn people" for Indians (Simha, 2011). Regardless of all political maneuvers that the then US leadership wanted to create to help Pakistan went in vain. The one and only thing that could help Pakistan was the decisive U.S decision to enter into the Bay of Bengal with clear indication of showing

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its military mussels to Indo-Soviet nexus. Unfortunately, United States was not ready for such exclusive engagement contrary to Soviet commitment with Indians, who blocked the U.S navy with its naval fleet (Roblin, 2018).

The ‘U.S Policy of Soviet Containment’ was the confusion which altogether influenced its foreign policy towards India. Actually, during the Cold War the U.S so-called alliances with India and Pakistan were a roller coaster that one way or the other comes back to the ‘zero point’. For example, the 1962 tilt towards India was due to Chinese factor which was considered a Soviet ally but the deteriorating relations between Beijing and Moscow during 1960’s created a distinction of good communist and bad communist. The 1971 Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty was the most glaring point of indication that put India into the cluster of states which fall prey to U.S Cold War politics. Now India was differently postured into U.S foreign policy and Pakistan was once again placed into the matrix of strategic alliance. Even with this consideration, U.S ultimately preferred its own national security based on the idea of not engaging with Soviet Union. The dilemma of United States strategic alliances made the states only prey to its foreign policy rather provided concrete security assurances neither gave permanent placement into bilateral political relations.

Contrary to above illusion of U.S strategic alliance, Pakistan had also been victim of Washington’s nuclear priorities in South Asia. For example, when in 1962 war with China, India faced humiliation, the then Kennedy regime not only offered New Delhi great amount of military and diplomatic support but also support to detonate a nuclear device (Chaudhury, 2018). United States justified the Indian nuclear expediency under “national security” but when Pakistan pursued nuclear journey in reaction to glaring threats of Indian aggression, Islamabad’s choice received much criticism and blockade from Washington. It is important to highlight that in 1974 Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) was established to curtail Indian act of violating its commitment of civil nuclear research when it detonated a nuclear device under ‘Smiling Budha’ (Burr, 2014). Unfortunately, the body which was established to punish India in 1974 deviated from its core objective and gave the exceptional waiver to New Delhi in 2008 to accommodate an illegal Indo-US nuclear cooperation. The waiver unfortunately destabilized the regional security and put enormous pressures on Pakistan’s national security (The Express Tribune, 2016). Regardless of staying stick to international non-proliferation regime, the United States used its influence to help India secure waiver at times when Pakistan was fighting its so-called ‘war on terror’ on its own territory. In spite of helping its ally in need, US preferred to engage with enemy of Pakistan. If this tendency of United States does not fall into hypocrisy then what else should it be considered?

Continuing with the pace of roller-coaster kind of strategic alliance, when on December 25, 1979 Soviet forces invaded Afghanistan, United States one again sought opportunity to knock the doors of Pakistan and offered US\$4 billion aid to

contain the soviets. The then Pakistani President General Zia-ul-Haq referred the American aid as ‘peanuts’, which was offered by President Jimmy Carter to fight against Soviet Union in Afghanistan (Ali, 2017). In reference to Jimmy Carter’s offer of aid, it is important to remind that back in April 1979 even months before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the United States had already cut-off Pakistan’s economic and military aid under the Symington Amendment. When it saw Soviets coming to grab Afghanistan to influence their geographical power, the United States had no choice but Pakistan. In the aftermath of new realities, United States seriously wanted to engage Pakistan to contain the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and offered a bigger package. Therefore, the new US President Ronald Reagan, who replaced Jimmy Carter, gave the idea of creating insurgency in Afghanistan that could curtail Soviet forces under the ‘low intensity conflict’ and offered Pakistan a much bigger package which included about US\$5 billion dollars in economic and military aid. About US\$3 billion were also offered to Afghan Mujahideen to get into ‘*Jihadi*’ context of containment (Wright, 2011). It is pity to review the US literature that regardless of accepting American crafting of Soviet *Jihad*, most of the time conveniently criticize and demonize Pakistani intelligence agency ISI that had played decisive role to contain the unstoppable Soviet territorial expansion. Only Hillary Clinton in capacity of Secretary of State had accepted the truth that it was President Ronald Reagan who gave the idea of insurgency in Afghanistan and created Taliban (Dawn, 2009).

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and United States twisted the contextualization of insurgency with that of noble concept of ‘*Jihad*’ to raise a new army of ideological *Mujahideen* which were trained by Pakistan army (Global Village Space, 2017). The plan to contain Soviet Union ended as success which not only pushed the Soviets to retreat but also impacted on its disintegration. During this whole process, Pakistan not only trained the Afghan *Mujahideen* but also host millions of Afghan refugees.

In the aftermath of Soviet retreat from Afghanistan, the Americans abandoned the battlefield. US discarded its commitment to stabilize Afghanistan, which in return gave birth to a prolonged chaos and disorder in the region. Now Afghanistan was on its own, so does Pakistan. Regardless of helping Pakistan to deal with the mess, United States introduced sanctions under Pressler Amendment of 1990 (Mahmood, 199). It also stopped military aid and abrogated the transfer of F-16s, which was a pre-Soviet withdrawal bilateral agreement between Pakistan and United States (Global Village Space, 2017). The already manufactured aircrafts were kept back in America and were not released to Pakistan until next time Washington got engaged with Islamabad to fight ‘war on terror’ in the aftermath of September 11, 2001. The aircrafts were updated and released to Pakistan in 2012 (Syed, 2012).

As a result of Soviet retreat and disintegration, nothing went good for Pakistan. The war termination strategy was not deemed necessary by the United States. Moreover, the master of Soviet insurgency, General Zia-ul-Haq died in a plan accident in 1979 along with US Ambassador (Sciolino, 1988). Neither the commander of insurgency



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was alive nor did the United States preferred to remain in the battlefield, so Afghanistan continued in absence of war termination strategy. This immediately invoked a new civil war in Afghanistan and as a result phenomenon of Taliban emerged that took over Kabul in 1994 (Kaplan & Bruno, 2008). This gave birth to new security challenges for Pakistan which created mess for Islamabad. Due to Soviet war and latter on civil disorder of Afghanistan, millions of Afghan poured into Pakistan and spread around in the country. The *Pashtun* phenomenon along with ideological fault lines vested with militant *jihād* became the lingering sword over Pakistan’s national security. As an effort to bid for peace and security, Pakistan recognized the Taliban regime in 1996 along with UAE and Saudi Arabia, which was not fully endorsed by the United States who earlier on created the mess in Afghanistan and put Pakistan under this situation (Katzman, 2010). Afghanistan existed in isolation and Pakistan alone managed to halt the extremist ideology of Taliban regime perpetuating just outside its borders. Then the incident of 9/11 happened in 2001, which drastically changed the stalemate into abrupt blast of instability in the region.

### **b. War Against Terrorism**

Making of alliances and breaking them to evolve new opportunities is somewhat permanent feature of politics since the very inception of international relations. This not only creates room for foreign policy choices but also help the brinkmanship to discard anomalies vested in their domestic politics with that of complex nature of relations among nations. This is very true for United States who as an important player of international politics has time and again shifted its alliances with clear domestic maneuvers necessary to shift domestic consensus in favor for the brinkmanship. 21<sup>st</sup> century under exceptional circumstances had also evolved a new political environment for the United States which altogether pushed its brinkmanship to form fresh alliances.

In fact, the situation came to surface in the aftermath of 9/11 incident when American nation in particular and White House in general needed a new formation of international relations. Though, the nation did not practically asked for political orchestration of international relations as they were under immense trauma and fear. Rather, it was the White House regime that orchestrated a new form of political orientation around 9/11 incident that clustered the world under ‘good and bad’ politics. The famous Bush dictum that “either you are with us or you are with the terrorists” became the slogan, which created a faded line between righteous forces and the terrorists (Voice of America, 2009). It was the US impression of politics that was about to underscore ‘who is who’ in the international relations. Countries that stood by United States were about to receive title of ‘righteous forces’ and those who may decide not to become part of the Bush dictum due to any genuine national security reasons were threatened by ‘stone age’ mantra (Goldenberg, 2006). Therefore, as a

result four different clusters of states emerged with multiple roles to play in the war against terrorism. The four clusters of states were:

- i. States with Neutral orientation
- ii. States with Major orientation
- iii. States with Strategic orientation
- iv. States with Global orientation

**States with Neutral orientation:** In the cluster of ‘neutral orientation’ were the states who knew that they will never receive any direct impact nor their geography demands any frontline role in the war against terror. Therefore, all these states were mostly appreciating United States way of tackling the new phenomenon of ‘war against terrorism’. These countries have only participated in the United Nations debate and voted to help United States to pass legal jurisdiction of its ‘war against terrorism’. States part of this cluster even did not send their forces in Afghanistan.

**States with Major orientation:** This cluster confined around states which were strong partners of the United States on political, military, and economic order of international relations. This cluster in fact included all the NATO states and the nations around the globe receiving direct military umbrella such as Japan and South Korea. These states from the very beginning of launching ‘war against terrorism’ not only contributed their military troops but also pledged economic resources. Also such powerful and strong states were already part of the western alliance and considered it a moral responsibility to stand with United States at times of security crisis it was going through.

**States with Strategic orientation:** There were only two states part of this cluster, the United States and Pakistan. U.S. being the targeted state in shape of 9/11 attacks became the frontline nation to respond to terrorists ‘will’ and Pakistan being the geographically neighboring state in context to Afghanistan where top Al-Qaeda leadership was hiding became the lifeline nation for the so-called ‘war against terrorism’. United States fought the war against Al-Qaeda and Pakistan provided the routes, bases, and intelligence support to identify the terrorist’s outfits. Initially, Pakistan’s role was limited to these points but later on made the country most decisive factor into US military strategy. This new placement of Pakistan also upgraded its status from a frontline state to ‘non-NATO strategic ally’ (Rohde, 2004). With frontline force to support ‘war on terrorism’ slowly turned the combat on its own soil that almost placed its 250,000 soldiers on border with Afghanistan. Pakistan was now trapped into the situation of ‘do and die’ under enormous security situation haunting its very existence. Without any doubt United States have invested trillions of dollars to initially fight the war and later to stabilize Afghanistan but the role which Pakistan had played against the so-called ‘war on terror’ had no comparison. The war had taken more than 70,000 lives (Jawaid, 2018) and impacted about US\$250 billion dollars to

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its economy, a cost no other nation has encountered (Jamil, 2018). Moreover, knowing the fact that the so-called ‘war on terror’ would bring direct consequences and tremendous pressures on its national security, Pakistan became the strategic partner with United States. Pakistan’s support against the war on terror is ‘strategic’ in all domains that the world at-large must learn to appreciate.

**States with Global orientation:** This cluster involves the exceptional nations who in all circumstances were looking beyond the normal construction of political alliances. In fact, these are the states that forge alliances under the fragile political order. They are the forces which compete within the order to maximize power and diplomatic leverage directed towards squeezing the power of their competitor. These are the ‘Veto Power’ nations such as Russia, China, France, UK, and USA. Since, USA, UK, and France are the powers clutched under liberal order which is why the remaining two Russia and China qualify to contest the international order. The Russian and Chinese saw everything under skepticism but decided to invest into a stable future with more robust international order where role of non-state actors should not be able to outlaw symbols of global power. Though, the immediate response of standing along with U.S. plea of ‘war against terrorism’ later on ended as inconvenience over Iraq, Libya, and Syria.

Due to international influence of United States on global politics, almost every single nation part of the above four clusters decided to get along with the so-called ‘war against terrorism’. The global consensus that came out of ‘2001 Bone Conference’ in Germany slowly faded away and the so-called phenomenon of ‘non state actors’ which earlier was the target of the international coalition became the ideal tool in the 5<sup>th</sup> generation warfare with clear manifestation of ‘sub-conventional low intensity war’. Today, USA and Russia are dropping the most powerful non-nuclear strategic weapons ‘Mother of All Bombs (MOAB)’ (Mashal & Cooper, 2017) and ‘Father of All Bombs (FOAB)’ (Trevithick, 2017) on militant outfits like ISIS/Daesh in Afghanistan and Syria, respectively. The so-called Al-Qaeda is nowhere but the mantra of terrorism is getting pace with the passage of time. This has not only shaped the military doctrines from conventional to sub-conventional but also formed new alliances of powerful states with that of resilient nations.

Orchestration of this alliance based security had somehow mingled the idea of peace and stability with that of national interest which is purely occupied with ‘single nation approach’ rather based on the idea of regional or global security. This creates a dilemma where global order gets breached by the individual states who while remaining outside the ambit of internationalism form bilateral alliances to impeach nations that are resilient to their priorities of ‘national interest’. The dilemma is again contextual to priorities of national interest that one nation formulates or uses to form bilateral alliances. If the very nature of the national interest involves political and economic orientation of relations rather orchestration of clandestine security nexus

then peace and stability becomes the fundamental outlook of strategic relations among nations, regional integration, and global order. Contrary to that if the relations are of more clandestine nature vested with security gambling then the result is obviously fruitful to orchestrate instability and anarchy to some extent. Nations falling prey to such bilateral relations are vulnerable to use non-state actors to fuel instability in regional environments.

This brings the discussion into South Asian environment where India being the ambitious nation has recently entered in a strategic relations pact with United Nations which is normally classified as ‘Indo-US strategic partnership’ (Sidhu, 2013). It is important to understand that the kind of bilateral relations these two nations have established in the aftermath of 9/11 incident are not normal rather should be considered abnormal. They had been at different sides of international politics since the very inception of Cold War and even the post-Cold War relations between the two were due to the very reason of Soviet disintegration. Both nations have not been able to set the course of history on a track which should be considered strategic in nature. For example, during mid-1950’s when Pakistan was signing SEATO and CENTO with United States, India contrary to that was propagating ‘non-alignment’ and establishing its ties with former Soviet Union. Pakistan became frontline state in the ‘Containment Policy’ of the United States along with key western powers in 1954 and continued its resolve to sustain the relationship with frontline state role under ‘war against terrorism’. Islamabad set the discourse of strategic relations with United States almost five decades earlier than New Delhi who for the first time qualified for political equivalence in 2005, when Washington finally decided to set the pace for strategic relations (Gupta, 2005).

At times when Pakistan was fighting the U.S led war against terrorism with enormous security stress on its defense and national security, Washington was getting into new alliances in South Asia. Pakistan knows the consequences of prolonged war on terror and was rightly aware of the fruits of so-called Indo-US emerging partnership that India was about to cherish for a longer period of time. On one side Pakistan’s economic potential was curtailed due to American war but on the other hand India was off shooting its economic potential. All this was happening under U.S. patronage. United States regardless of uplifting its strategic ally was busy crafting new avenues of political cum military nexus with New Delhi. This was not less than stabbing knife at the back of Pakistan, a country that has always stood firm and unshakable when it came to U.S. strategic priorities in South Asia. This dual nature of United States along with exceptional tilt towards India has been considered a breach into strategic alliance that Islamabad and Washington had indulged in 1954.

#### **4. Pakistan’s Objectivity out of Alliance Gambling**

The ups and downs in the strategic alliance mechanism between Pakistan and United highlight the dichotomy of troubled relations. Each of the two partner nations have somehow learned to live in divergences. The marriage of inconvenience put them

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together even with bitterness of differences over strategic orientation of international relations in South Asia. This has more or less allowed both the states to frame their alternative partners. India became an alternative arrangement for United States and Pakistan due to its strategic landscape improved its relations with China. Over the period of time the bilateral nature of relations between Pakistan and China merged into ‘all seasoned’ strategic orientation which raised the emblem of friendship ‘deeper than oceans and higher than mountains’. Fortunately this ended not into political alliance but evolved more into a friendship. Thanks to U.S. deviation from its commitments that shaped the true alliance between Pakistan and China. China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and many other bilateral arrangements in economic, military, and diplomatic fronts are adamant to time tested journey of strategic alliance. United States became ‘blessing in disguise’ for Pakistan and the most likely objectivity out of alliance gambling that Islamabad is putting forward into its politics is ‘no more strategic alliances’.

Pakistan’s unwillingness to contain Chinese economic and political influence in the region had once again made India the alternative choice. The 2005 Indo-US strategic partnership that gave birth to exceptional arrangement of civil nuclear cooperation between the two nations is camouflaged with one and the only interest which is ‘containment of China’. India on the one hand has crafted China as a territorial threat to its national security; whereas, United States is continuously propagating Beijing as an economic and political challenge to its international power. Pakistan’s denial to accommodate any political orchestration that give boost to American or Indian vision of Chinese containment had ultimately brought India and United States together.

### **Conclusion**

Today, the mantra of so-called strategic alliances is not real neither it had potential to plead the security nexus up to its final climax. Partner nations indulged into alliances with strong and powerful states become prey to their strategic interests. Pakistan’s glorious history that helped United States to shape Cold War politics to post-9/11 world order had received nothing other than dictums of ‘stone age’ and ‘do more’. It is really frustrating to highlight that American’s even under the formal alliance mechanism do not feel ashamed of squeezing the very partner nation. Pakistan has faced arms twisting techniques of US policy makers in 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s, and continuous tendency of denouncing Pakistan armed forces in the 21<sup>st</sup> century episode of ‘war against terrorism’. India had remained an important alternative to Pakistan in the U.S. foreign policy. Looking into geographical, geopolitical, geostrategic, and geo-economic landscape of Pakistan, India can only had a secondary role. Though, the Indo-US relations without any doubt have been transformed into bilateral partnership but does it really becomes an opportunity for the US to outlaw Pakistan and China?

The landscape of the regional security is somehow more critical keeping in view the presence of high stakes of China. The Indo-US alliance is vulnerable to that of Chinese growing influence in the region. Geography in fact plays the decisive role in the matrix of strategic landscape. Indian bid to rely on Washington will have to go through the mill of strategic calculations back in United States, while Chinese bid to curtail the Indo-US strategic nexus does not require a continent to travel. Hence, the variable of geography is the key hindrance in the execution of containment of China nor Pakistan had showed any interest to host American bid to sideline Beijing. No country in the world can excuse the bitter truth of geography not even the strategic nexus of India and USA. Even a slight possibility to checkmate the variability of geography could cause such a grave damage to Indian ambitions that no nation would ever think to indulge into gambling of strategic alliance with states situated elsewhere.

Though, the mode of direct confrontation is out of question but the strategic nexus between India and USA has a great potential to stimulate controlled chaos in the region which China could not afford at any cost. Indian ambitions in the region and military modernization along with its overdue presence in South China Sea could cause a permanent turmoil in the surroundings of China particularly for its CPEC and OBOR projects. Moreover, the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) between Afghanistan and USA is a key indication that the future of the region is still not out of context for Washington. The discourse of strategic gambling will define the future politics of this region. Pakistan in this equation becomes the key player to maintain balance in favor of China. If United States becomes successful to secure the neutrality of Pakistan that could cause great damage to Chinese economic, political and military interests in the region. It is important to mention that the study postures Pakistan's active engagement with China due to common national interests. So the possibility of Pakistan opting for neutrality is out of context. Due to Pakistan's active engagement with China, the most foreseeable political landscape of the Indo-US strategic relations suggests a rapprochement between the two blocks (Indo-US vs. Sino-Pak) rather an execution of confrontation. This somehow is dependent on the ongoing peace dialogue in Afghanistan.

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