

Pak-US Strategic Partnership and Controversial Issue of Aid after 9/11

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Abstract

After 9/11 Pakistan became one of the leading recipients of the US foreign assistance to counter the extremist and militant forces in Afghanistan and borderland area. The US financial support was consisting of military, non-military and humanitarian development. The fundamental aim of the financial support to Pakistan was to enhance the ability and capability of the security forces of Pakistan against new kind of war. It was expected that the financial aid will strengthen the Pak-US strategic Partnership but all futuristic silver hopes go in vain when it became a bone of contention between the partners and trust deficit emerged on the issue of mismanagement of financial aid. US leveled a number of corruption charges not only on the civil government of Pakistan but also on the military. The controversy over financial assistance between Washington and Islamabad not only undermined partnership but also damaged security forces' efforts against terrorists in Pakistan as well as in Afghanistan. Thus, the paper thoroughly examines and discusses the controversial issue of US financial aid with critical analysis of different documentary record which provides clear picture of the hardened attitude from both the sides. Moreover, timely study about the issue of aid is essential for strengthening the strategic partnership against the terrorist outfits operating in the region which is in the best interests of both the states.

Key Words: terrorism, USA, financial aid, Pakistan, corruption

Introduction

Since the very inception of Pakistan, her economic growth and development has been dependent on foreign aid. It is estimated that from 1947 to 2001 Pakistan has received \$73 billion overseas assistance from bilateral and multi-lateral sources. In this respect, the US is the single largest contributor of aid to Pakistan's official development which is up to 30 Percent. Arguably, this magnitude of financial assistance made the civil and military leadership inclined towards US to provide strategic coverage to her policies in the region especially against the possible communist expansion. Inking SEATO and CENTO and other military and mutual assistance pacts in 1950s

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and 1960s Pakistan hoped to benefit from U.S. geopolitical support as well as financial and military assistance. Contrary to it, Pakistan was viewed as reliable ally in South Asia against communism (Hilali, 2005, pp. 45-51).

The event of 9/11 not only changed the fundamental fabrics of the foreign policies of the US and Pakistan towards each other but dramatically altered the flow of aid to Islamabad by Washington which was related to civil development in 1950s and 1960's to Pakistan's cooperation in counter-insurgency efforts in Afghanistan and borderland area after 9/11. Strategic focused aid to Pakistan was started in 1979 which continued till 1989. This approach only strengthened the military and its clandestine agencies with no attention to develop people-related institutions and after a short pause the term strategic partnership once again emerged on the surface. According to new marriage of convenience huge amount of aid has been allocated to 'Khaki' establishment to achieve strategic goals in the region (Vanadi, 2002, p. 184).

Complicated Issues of Financial Aid and Role of Security and Non-Security Assistance Programs after 9/11 (2001)

The US provided Pakistan \$19 billion to Pakistan in FY 2001-2010 with the exclusion of Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act 2009. Over the years of 2002-2008 large amount of aid i.e. 75 % were allocated for military purposes and only 10 % was people-centric. Later on, aid for economic development was enhanced but comparatively it was still less than half.

The US supported nearly ninety military operations in Pakistan. Pakistan as a key ally since 2001 in the war against terrorism the US endorsed the military operations in Pak-Afghan borderland area conducted by Pakistan army against the Islamists militants. US also established coalition Support Fund (CSF) to compensate Pakistan army for operational expenditures. Nearly two third of the fund that was provided to Islamabad by Washington was part of CSF. The then US secretary of defence, Robert Gates stated that CSF placed round one thousand soldiers in Pak-Afghan borderland area. Moreover, some other committees and bodies were also created to channelize and keep the funding record accurate but clashes and complaints between Pakistani and American officials to each other gripped one and half decade of this partnership. Yet, the study of working committees, groups, military and non-military assistance and development Plans are significant to understand each other stance and then to analyse the clashing grounds.

The Military Cooperation Committee

The essential function of this committee was to chalk out a plan for Pak-US joint military drills and sale of weapons. For this purposes Defence Consultative Group was formed. Yet, with the passage of time reservations were revealed not only by the Americans but also by Pakistanis about the working of DCG. Public of both the countries criticized the dialogue process as well as the agenda under DCG. The primary concentration under DCG was the provision and sale of the military disposals to Pakistan which caused severe drift between the two states as Pakistan was not ready to use the weapons according to US dictation. This distrust was the core hurdle in fighting against extremists. US officials alleged that Pakistan's interests for the military paraphernalia are merchandised one and she is not willing to abide by the given terms of DCG (Mazari, 2008).

Therefore, both the countries could not succeed to draft a Status of Force Agreement (SOFA) under DCG. When the draft of SOFA was going to be prepared Pakistani authorities leaked some of the provisions which were against the dignity of Pakistan. Anti-America media in Pakistan declared that US has a desire that Pakistan should compromise on her sovereignty (Mazari, 2008). SOFA presents the consent of both countries officials that US personnel will be at liberty to enter into Pakistan's territories without prior permission to authorities. In the meanwhile, military establishment of Pakistan clearly demanded the closure of notorious captive cells such as Guantanamo bay, Bagram Jail and Abu-Gharib which are unconstitutional and against the rule of law. Further, atrocities committed by the American troops in Iraq and extra-judicial trials miniaturized the belief of Pakistanis on the justice system of US courts and military tribunals (Mazari, 2008). Contrary to this, US State Affairs Department express resentment and observations upon Pakistan's criminal legal system.

Pakistan's objections upon the term of SOFA were clear and it was stated that SOFA is derogatory term in negotiating process and proposal must not be entertained by any means. The re-pondering calls were declared by US authorities regarding the SOFA negotiating process that is based upon the technical team of experts. While on the Pakistani side, it repeatedly sabotages the process. Pakistan wanted tangible proof of an enduring US commitment. The SOFA importance was depicted in terms of one of the pre-requisites for the fulfilment of such agreements with Pakistan. It would not be wrong to say that the long-term bilateral relations were ignored for

the sake of transient preferences by Pakistan being one of the allies (News G. , 2011).

The progressive negotiating table was annually arranged chiefly in 2002-2003 and 2006. However, the declaration of the state of emergency by the military dictator Musharraf also caused the cancellation of the negotiating meeting in 2007. US official procrastinated the next DCG meeting till the political stability in Pakistan. Yet, during this phase the American officials were trying to improve the accounting measures for the coalition Support Funds (CSFs) to ensure the Congress requirement for the fiscal year 2008 that out of \$300 million at least \$250 million must be allocated for counterinsurgency endeavours. Despite this, for discussing the counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics and border security, human trafficking and other related issues the joint working group on counter-terrorism and law enforcement (JWG-CTLE) were established in 2002 after DCG-JWG-CTLE officials meeting in the US state department. Other meetings took place in Islamabad with the members of interior ministry (Mazari, 2008).

It is important to understand that trilateral military commanders' (Pakistan-Afghanistan-USA) commission was formed with the fundamental motto to figure out the Afghan insurgency problem near Pak-Afghan border and inside Afghanistan. It was declared that this commission will lead towards the construction of mutual interests and will build confidence between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Later on, the NATO and ISAF forces were increased under the agreement in Afghanistan. In 2009, a number of the meetings were held in Kabul. Inclusion of chief of army staff (COAS), and Chief of General staff (COGS) by Pakistan in trilateral relation commission further strengthened the position. The participants expressed their level of commitment by saying that this kind of commission will definitely build more confidence between Pakistan and Afghanistan. (News G. , 2011).

Security Assistance Programs

Agreement between the two countries to root out the threat of terrorism massive amount of compensations were allocated to Pakistan's law enforcement agencies under the designated CSF program with the aim that the participation of Pakistan in war on terror is in the best interest of America's goals. It has been argued earlier that the fundamental function of CSFs was to re-imbrues the cost of expenditures which Pakistan is bearing against militants rather than capacity building. Yet, the security vanguards used the amount to purchase the military equipment rather used for counter-terrorism efforts. (Times L. A., 2008). This assistance included the re-imburements, sales of various sorts of weapons and to enhance the internal security measures. Furthermore, the percentage of

amount that was spent upon the development of different welfare program was \$3.1 billion. The spending audit of the development program funds was pleaded from the US side, yet on the contrary the US authorities received offensive reaction by Pakistan regarding the audit of funds (Perlez, 2007).

Military Reimbursement

It is worth mentioning that an immense amount of the US aid was rendered to Pakistan for the strength, empower and military actions against insurgents near some of the Pak-Afghan border territories. Pakistan is one of the largest recipients in the US war against militancy which is 81% amongst the allies in terms of reimbursement. (Johnson, 2008).

The main reason for the issuance of large amount of funds of CSFs was to collaborate in the military activities of the forces of Pakistan and expenditure of war in borders. More, the program provides more increase of the amount upon the more part-taking actions against insurgents; these funds were restricted only for mega or surgical actions against the insurgents and not for the casual operations. Pakistan's demands were placed before the US officials:

- Air support and patrol gasoline for air assistance
- Air traffic control and air supplies to the affected areas
- Maritime interests and patrols
- No involvement of US forces in FATA. (Johnson, 2008, pp. 7-8)

In fact, for the more conspicuousness regarding funds of CSFs accountability and audit the US defence controller given the constructive guidelines to Pakistan. It was demanded that for incremental costs of support documentation is essential and it is also pivotal the documents which support and envisaged the mechanism of calculation.

"Few of the Pakistani claims we reviewed met the criteria contained in the Comptroller's Guidance. [The U.S. Department of] Defense reimbursed Pakistan more than \$2.2 billion, or 76 %, of Pakistani army claims from January 2004 through June 2007, without obtaining sufficient information to support how the costs were calculated". (Johnson, 2008, pp. 9-10)

According to New York Times one of the Bush's official expressed his view regarding CSF program that number of critique says that the CSFs funds go directly to the ministry of finance where the usage of the funds is in accordance with the presumptive government needs and desires even giving the gross amount of payment to Pakistan is more than hush money to have little part in global war against militancy (Chollet, 2007).

There is no denial to the fact that the US state officials criticized the dubious role of Pakistan army and inflicted corruption

charges, yet all allegations were skilfully neutralized by the DoD and provided information with strong justifications that annual budget system of Pakistan is insufficient to produce the factual facts in documents. DoD further said that the information and assurances that no increase or decrease of CSFs took place with regards to the infantry deployment of FATA areas (Perlez, 2007).

Training of Military and Sale of Weapons

US funds were allocated by 20% (that becomes 2.2 billion) through IMF and other programs to Pakistan since 9/11. \$1.6 million more was rendered through IMF. In addition, \$300 million were given in the name of 'Base Fund' in 2005. Along with this, International Military Education and Training (IMET) were also initiated in 2008. The only condition attached to it was that the projectiles and training should be relevant to curb the militants' activities.

By the support of IMF Pakistan got a number of other platforms which were viable in fighting against terrorists. As purchasing the usual projectiles will not be very healthful in counter-militancy, more than \$227 million were endowed to enhance the up-gradation of F16 which was the contradiction of the congressional agreement which states that the funds must be used against counter-militancy (Smith, 2007).

Furthermore, on practical grounds the training of the native soldiers and creation of mind-to-mind communication and professional Excellencies between US and Pakistan military forces, the international security trainers training were given to Pakistan under the name of International Military Education and Training (IMET). The significance of these trainers and trainings were highly effective for the Pakistan army to ensure their vital role in national politics. These training would alter the behaviour of Pakistan's army towards the stability and constancy of democratic system in Pakistan. In 1990 IMET stopped working when the circumstances were critical between two countries. But in FY 2002-2004, \$1 billion was given on annual basis. In 2006, the number of the officers was 106 and the total trainers were 275 to guide them in military assistance. The method was to use newly weapons received from America was introduced to Pakistan forces (Boucher, 2007).

The Security Development Plan

This program was essentially introduced for Pakistan's military to enhance its capability to vouchsafe its border territories with Afghanistan. This tenure of the training was six years to save Pak-Afghan border from the cross intervention by the extremists. The consent and triangle coordination of Pakistan, US embassy and US central command were on board. In FY 2007-2008 \$2 billion was

provided to run the training then in the FY 2009 further \$1 billion was demanded because of variation in supplemental budget. Main focus was fixated to enhance the operational capabilities of Frontier Constabulary (FC) which is a paramilitary force to curb militancy in FATA but works under the control of Pakistan's army XI corps (Smith, 2007).

So, the first part of the plan was to train the FC soldiers. The inauguration of the two camps took place. First one was in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the other one in Baluchistan with thirty US command trainers who will train roundabout eight thousand and four hundred FC soldiers. It was supposed by the US that exploitation of the native soldiers keeping their natural capability of linguistic and geographical competences is vital. These all will surely give gross support in intelligence sharing and understanding. In reality, fragile circumstances of Pakistan's did not allow the specificity of the training locations. Therefore, training was given in an uncertain place. Further, it was expected that in future the US training program will play an essential role in the defence of Pakistan.

Another settled target of the training was the enhancement of bilateral relations between the forces of Pakistan, NATO, ISAF and Afghan soldiers to create a common and indivisible role in the elimination of extremism in this part of the region. This program was named as Border Crossing Card Security (BCCS). This unity provided "A Common Picture" of the operations (McNeill, 2008). Further, the Liaison Officers (LNOs) in Torkham border will meet and share the new plans and ideas regarding conducting the operations. Thus, US blamed Islamabad for not sending its forces against the militants in FATA's far-flung territories which is one of the requirements of the program (McNeill, 2008).

Furthermore, another objective of the project was to prepare the army's high-profile unit SSG which renders the dramatic response to the drastic insurgent appearance in the region. Another name was given to it termed as '21st Quick Reaction Squadron' and it would be used in FATA with the utilization of chopper mobility training.

However, in May 2009, the prejudice which was rooted in the public for the Pakistani forces were erupted because of the sufferings of local people as the forces started to use modern ammunitions with heavy bombardment against the natives of erstwhile FATA. (News t. , 2009).

Assistance Received by Pakistan for its Internal Security

Keeping in view the elimination of the religious extremism and the contra-bound activities along with border sides having proximity with Afghanistan including smuggling, human-trafficking and other incalculable in-humanitarian activities, the following efforts are

clearly documented by the US Department of State and Justice: (Seth G. Jones, 2006, pp. 125-160)

1. To inculcate the managerial and leadership qualities in lower police soldiers to enhance their moral and communicative skills.
2. To launch a bio-metric system for strengthening the figure identifications and to collect the criminal record.
3. For sharing the information about the militants to control insurgency and establishment of interdepartmental coordination for communication and detections. (Seth G. Jones, 2006, pp. 125-160)
All these efforts were taken to make more powerful the defensive agencies of Pakistan' along with the borders side that include the anti-terrorism, border control of exit and entry check points on Pak-Afghan borders and complete elimination of poppy smuggling from Afghanistan to Pakistan (Seth G. Jones, 2006).

In fact, all these struggles brought to the minimal level achievements in FATA owing to have the uneven and mountainous location near the Afghan borders. Yet, to curb the activities of insurgents highly trained and equipped forces were pivotal. But, due to huge gap between military funds and assistance, negative internal security impacts upon the range of such counter-terrorism activities are common.

Conclusion

Terrorism and extremism is an existential reality and it cannot be defeated without trust and cooperation. This is also a reality that states collaborate with each other to achieve the settled and mutually agreed goals. But, realist approach does not allow the state to sacrifice its prime objectives for the sake of other state's interests. For Pakistani security vanguards the fundamental threat is India therefore, they focus largely on that side. Contrary to this, threat of terrorism and militancy is a secondary one. The trust deficit between Washington and Islamabad emerged majorly on two things. First, Pakistan has been using the financial assistance of the US for enhancing its capacity against India rather than to wipe out terrorist sanctuaries in Pak-Afghan borderland area. Second, mismanagement and corruption in the US assistance as there is no documented record of aid presented by Pakistan. Although, for channelizing the funds different groups and committees were formed but instead of solving the controversies trust deficit further deepened between both the countries.

In the Strategic partnership between Pakistan and the US humanitarian and civil infrastructure development was associated with Washington's tactical objectives which create resentment among the common masses of Pakistan. Since, a large amount of aid was reserved for military objectives and miniaturized amount of aid was allocated for civilian development therefore, Washington could not win the hearts and mitigate anti-Americanism in Pakistan. Although, the US published diplomacy and democracy promotion slogans were fascinating for the intellectual class of Pakistan but it could not be materialized due to trust deficit while countering the militant culture and controversies over the US financial aid.

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