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This dissertation on "US-Pakistan Security Relations, 1977-1988" is an analytical study of the strategic dimensions of the alliance between a small and impoverished third world nation, Pakistan, and the world's most powerful nation, the United States. It analyses Pakistan's motivations in aligning with the United States and the disappointments Pakistan had in the lean period of the alliance. It also deals with the negative consequences that Pakistan had to suffer as a result of the unequal alliance.

This work is not a detailed account of strategic and technical aspects of the defense related issues. It, however, portrays at some length the major nuances pertaining to the U.S.-Pakistan security assessment in guiding their respective national interests.

Pakistan's earnestness to enter into a strategic alliance with the U.S. has been the most important determinant of its foreign policy since its birth as a nation. It has been at the same time the single-most important factor that has influenced the prosperity and poverty in South Asia.

Pakistan's efforts to woo the United States did not initially bear the desired results and Islamabad was diplomatically rebuffed by Washington. South Asia being a region which was under the colonial rule was left to the British to insulate it from Communist influence. But a relentless Pakistan was not to be discouraged. It continued to seek close military and economic ties with the United States and pursued a policy to draw the attention of
Washington by adopting a pro-Western policy. Ultimately, when the Cold War, born as a European phenomenon, spread to the Asian continent in the 1950s, the containment policy was extended to this region. Soon, Pakistan became an eager nation to join the ranks as an American ally. By the end of the 1950s, Pakistan and the U.S. were linked through the 1954 Mutual Defense Agreement, the South-East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) in the same year and the Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO) in 1955. This was a partnership of unequal powers, to serve their divergent goals -- Pakistan to strengthen itself vis-a-vis India and the U.S. to thwart the spread of communism -- converging only at one point to seek each other's help.

But, just as was expected, once the intensity of the Cold War began to decline in the early 1960s, Pakistan's importance for the U.S. plummeted. The inherent dichotomy and contradiction in the alliance surfaced and Pakistan was dropped like an unwanted vestige causing unnecessary complications for the U.S. Pronouncements like the one made by President Ayub Khan in 1961 that the U.S. could land troops any time in Pakistan to defend the "free world" were of no avail. The U.S. neglect of Islamabad continued and it sent the South Asian nation scurrying for friends to compensate for the loss of its powerful ally. Thus started an effort to foster close relations with China and Islamic nations.

The U.S. neglect of Pakistan continued till the end of the 1970s.
During this period spanning over a decade-and-half, Washington's relations were based on Pakistan's adherence to U.S. non-security goals like nonproliferation, human rights etc. In this phase, Pakistan fought two wars, one in 1965 and the other in 1971 with India. Both these wars were lessons in International relations for Pakistan, the second one which left the nation by less than half. During the wars, the U.S. was practically a dispassionate onlooker -- though it made some empty noises during the 1971 war -- clamping an embargo on arms on both the occasions.

The neglect continued until 1979, when an assertive Soviet Union, directly intervened in Afghanistan on 27 December to protect its interests. Pakistan was once again catapulted into U.S. security schemes, but this time with unprecedented importance being attached to the strategic role it could play in American schemes. Pakistan neighbours Afghanistan, and it was seen as the only nation that could assist the U.S. in thwarting what was perceived to be the Tsarist ambitions of Moscow to find an access to and border the warm waters of the Indian Ocean. A new Cold War had erupted with South Asia as the main theater and Pakistan found itself occupying a pivotal position of a frontline state reminiscent of the role that Germany played in Europe in the first Cold War.

The U.S. immediately shed all its non-security concerns and moved to embrace Pakistan in a close military alliance. With the election of President Reagan, in 1980, Pak-U.S. alliance attained a new dimension.
This time, it should be admitted that Pakistan played its cards well and was able to in international relations occasion a rare instance where a small power had been able to influence the strongest world power. This it did under President Zia with great elan and diplomatic finesse. Unlike during the alliance in the 1950s, after the Afghan crisis, Pakistan virtually dictated the price for its role in the alliance and cooperation and the U.S. was willing to pay it. By 1988, Pakistan was provided $3.2 billion in military and economic aid and another $4.2 billion was approved in 1987.

This thesis consists of six chapters including the conclusion. The First Chapter is an historical overview of the Pak-U.S. security relations from the beginning (1940s) until 1977, when Jimmy Carter was elected to the White House. It gives an account of Pakistan’s paranoid obsession to align with the U.S. in the effort to strengthen itself vis-a-vis India, the disappointments it had to face when Washington downgraded the importance of Islamabad in the 1960s and during the 1965 and 1971 wars Pakistan waged with India.

The Second Chapter deals with the Carter years when the U.S.-Pak security relations touched the lowest nadir. The Carter Administration had assigned India the pre-dominant position in the subcontinent and made aid to Pakistan conditional on the implementation of U.S. non-security goals such as nonproliferation, human rights etc.

Chapter Three gives an account of the shift in the policies of the Carter Administration engendered by the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan
in 1979 and the efforts of the Administration to balance its security and universal concerns as also to accommodate India’s interests. At the same time, the Afghan crisis had virtually stirred the Hornet’s nest in Washington and Pakistani efforts to capitalize on the situation to extract a higher aid package from the U.S. are also analysed. In this context, the rejection of the aid package by Pakistan dismissing the Carter offer as "peanuts" is analysed. It is dealt with in the context of the shrewd calculation of President Zia-ul-Haq that the U.S would be willing to pay a substantial price for Pakistan’s strategic cooperation.

Chapter Four deals with the election of Ronald Reagan and the conservative anti-Communist approach of the new Administration. It also gives an account of the willingness of the new Administration to strap Pakistan in a strategic alliance according it the status of an undisputed frontline state in Washington’s efforts to frustrate the perceived Soviet ambitions. It also deals with the disposition of the Administration to sell its ally the weapons Pakistan desired to have despite its unsuitability for the declared purpose of countering the Soviet presence in Afghanistan.

Chapter Five deals with the willingness of the Reagan Administration to accede to Islamabad’s demands to make it play an active role in the U.S. strategic efforts in South Asia. The decision of the Administration to continue aiding Pakistan despite its obdurate nuclear policy is also analysed. The efforts of the Reagan Administration to withstand Congressional opposition and push aid to Pakistan despite strong intelligence
reports and incontrovertible evidence that Islamabad was pursuing a policy to acquire nuclear weapons are also dealt with. The consequence of the arms aid policy on the subcontinent in triggering a costly arms race in the region is also analysed.

The Sixth Chapter or the conclusion deals with the intra-regional instability that was spawned by the U.S. arms aid and the impact of the arming of Pakistan on South Asia. It also refers to the attempts by Islamabad to modify the U.S. supplied F-16s to carry nuclear weapons and the inherent danger the acquisition of a nuclear delivery capability by Pakistan poses for the subcontinent.

It has to be admitted that Pak-U.S. relations, primarily its security dimension, has been a 'hot' topic with the research scholars and academicians of South Asia. But, at the same time, because of the nature of the subject, primary documents are difficult to procure. Military and defense related documents are classified and it will be several years before they are made available to research scholars. Hence this study will be subject to this limitation.

Nevertheless, almost all the primary documents available in India and the United States have been consulted for undertaking this study. It must also be mentioned that even in the important source materials, the various hearings conducted by the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, there are several gaps which represent the furnishing of important information to the Congress on classified basis.
In view of the classified nature of the information, reliance had to be placed on the speeches, proceedings of the Senate and the House of Representatives and investigative newspaper reports and other similar publications in the scour for source materials.

First and foremost, I must refer that this study would not have been possible had it not been for the invaluable help, guidance and constant advice of my supervisor, Prof. R.P. Kaushik, who was my teacher and Professor right from my Post-graduation days in the School of International Studies of this University. He had not only been a constant source of strength but also a source of inspiration for me to complete this research despite my employment in the Indian Administrative Service.

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