CHAPTER - IV

ESTRANGED FRIENDS:
THE BUSH YEARS AND CLINTON’S FIRST TERM

The Bush administration did not bring any substantial change in US-Pakistan strategic partnership. Initially, like Reagan administration, the new administration continued in awarding precedence to Pakistan for its geo-strategic location and vital role it played in withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. The Bush administration also recognized the pressure that Pakistan was facing because of presence of millions of Afghan refugees on its territory. He declared that military support to the Afghan resistance would continue as would non military assistance for increasing urgent humanitarian needs.

In February 1989, barely a month after coming to office the Bush administration requested to Congress for $1.2 billion in foreign assistance for South Asia for 1990 Financial Year. Out of this amount $782 million was for economic assistance and remaining $242 million was for military assistance, with major portion going to Pakistan. Howard Schaffer, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near East and South Asia, testifying before the House Foreign Affairs Sub-committee on Asia and Pacific Affairs in February, 1989, noted that even after the withdrawal of
Soviet troops from Afghanistan, Pakistan remained vital to achieving American goals in Afghanistan and broad objectives in South Asia.¹

However, the international scenario was swiftly changing with far reaching implications. The ‘Cold War’ was winding up, one after another the Soviet Satellites in Eastern Europe were shedding their communist rulers. The ‘Iron curtain’ was crumbling, US-Soviet conflict in ‘Third World’ in general and Afghanistan in particular was rapidly moving towards settlement favourable to United States. Further, unification of Germany brought a rapid succession of events that led to an era of unprecedented Soviet-American rapprochement. All these events were fundamentally altering the global balance of power.²

In the changing world the United States not only abandoned its Cold War strategies but after the departure of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan its perspective towards Pakistan changed radically. The US and other Western Allies backed out of post war reconstruction of Afghanistan. Now, Pakistan no longer enjoyed the strategic exclusiveness that it had enjoyed during the last decade, since the disintegration of Soviet Union and emergence of Central Asian states opened up new avenues for the US, Pakistan was left on its own to face and solve the post Afghan civil war problems. Thus, in less than a decade Pakistan’s dream of acquiring a ‘strategic depth’ in Afghanistan was to end in nightmare.
Consequently the relations with one time “most allied Ally” reached at lowest ebb.³

Meantime the development in the Persian Gulf, in the form of Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990 re-opened the US stakes and strategic interest in Middle East and South West Asia. For Islamabad this was an opportunity to develop close military and economic alliance with Washington in post Afghan crisis period, although Pakistan provided logistic support to US led allies in the Gulf War, the Pakistan ambition of playing a major role in the Gulf crisis as an American Ally as well as in capacity as an Islamic country was foiled when President George Bush sent an aid cut massage in 1990.⁴

Relations between two countries further deteriorated when Pakistan witnessed political upheal on August 6, 1990. President Ghulam Ishaq Khan in one stroke dismissed the elected government of Benazir Bhutto and announced dates for holding national election on October 24, 1990. US Congress took keen interest in political turmoil of Pakistan when it sent a message to the caretaker government in Islamabad demanding among other things “a free and fair election” and warning that election would be test of US- Pakistan relations to continue smoothly in future. A somewhat similar stand was taken by the US State Department as well.⁵
As the Gulf War intensified along with it the pro-Saddam and anti-American sentiments were aroused in Pakistan. Moreover, the statement made by President Ishaq Khan did irreparable damage to the already shaky relations, when he remarked that the integrity and solidarity of all the Muslim countries is an article of faith with Pakistan and its heart bleeds at the spilling of Muslim blood anywhere. With this tough posture Pakistan lost all hopes of receiving American assistance. Once the Gulf War ended with the tremendous American victory the US which led the coalition war efforts against Iraq successfully emerged as the undisputed leader of the world in political and strategic matters. The tone of American foreign policy in the post Gulf War, infact began to smack of Superpower arrogance in the absence of a countervailing power, a role that the Soviet Union used to play earlier.

Thus, through the Gulf War the US attempted to create a “New World order”. Now Washington assumed the role of world policeman to subordinate Europe to the US power and intimidate the Third World into submission. In a sense it was an attempt to regain the position of global supremacy held by the United States at the end of the Second World War. The Gulf War in its broadest contours was an attempt by the US to define a new military-centered global order.6
Infact, by this time US Pakistan strategic relations had already got into rough weather. President Bush did not issue the annual certification to the US Congress giving a clearance to Pakistan that it did not possess a nuclear device, nor requested the Congress for waiver of the Pressler Amendment. More over, the emerging pattern of relations between the India and the United States and increasing American pressure on Pakistan nuclear programme made it clear that the United States would re-orient its strategy in South Asia and signalled that the strategic significance of Pakistan had considerably declined in American calculations. With this US-Pakistan strategic relations completed a full circle, which had started with Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979.7

Pressler Amendment

The nuclear issue had placed unusual strain on relations between the United States and Pakistan, after years of growing ties following the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. Pakistan's nuclear programme had been an issue of contention throughout. In the past Pakistani officials had given assurance that they are not developing an atomic weapon, and the Reagan Administration had consistently waived the aid restriction. However, once again, in a surprise move the US Administration on October 1, 1990 decided to suspend all military and economic aid to Pakistan, worth between $ 564 million and $ 578 million in 1991, following
renewed fear that Pakistan had developed a nuclear weapon. The decision was the result of the failure on the part of President Bush to certify that Pakistan's nuclear programme was designed exclusively for peaceful purposes.

Under the 1985 Pressler Amendment to the Foreign Assistant Act, it was made clear that "no assistance shall be furnished to Pakistan and no military equipment or technology shall be sold or transferred to Pakistan, unless the President shall have certified in writing to the Speaker of the House of the Representatives and the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Senate, during the fiscal year in which assistance was to be furnished or military equipment or technology was to be sold or transferred that Pakistan did not possess a nuclear explosive device." On October 9, 1990 the US Secretary of State, James Baker informed Pakistan Foreign Minister, Sahibzada Yaqub Khan that future aid would be impossible unless convincing new evidence was provided that no "nuclear device" existed.

Undoubtedly the US has stringent laws to bar aid to countries suspected to be engaged in a nuclear weapons programme, but they have always been subordinated to its strategic interest. The US administration had been aware since the autumn of 1986 that Pakistan was producing weapons grade uranium at Kahuta. The Washington Post, reported that Pakistan had detonated a high explosive device between September 18 and
21, 1986. Moreover, Mr. Reagan in 1988 and Mr. Bush in 1989 personally declared that evidence about Islamabad continuing pursuit of weapon was making it difficult to give the certificate that the President is required to provide annually that Pakistan "does not possess a nuclear explosive device". During 1989, voices were being raised in the Congress, notably by Mr. Stephen Solarz and Mr. John Glenn, that Pakistan must make fresh promises of good behaviour to qualify for a certificate. The Washington Post had meanwhile, editorially called for a termination of aid "clearly and without regret". But there were many who had been lobbying Congress for continuance of aid under a temporary waiver to give time to the regime that took office in Islamabad after the October 24, election to respond to US concern.

The certificate was given in 1988 on November 18, two days after the conclusion of Pakistan's general election of that year. Possibly by doing so, President Bush wanted to claim to be champion of Pakistani democracy, that he was using the leverage of the certificate for a good purpose. In fact the US administration in the past had used several excuses to get over the US Laws which specifically prohibit aid to countries which possess or are trying to acquire nuclear weapons. Till the presence of Soviet forces in Afghanistan it was argued successfully that continued aid to Pakistan was necessary to buy its support for Afghan rebels. However, that excuse no longer existed after the Soviet withdrawal.
And when Benazir Bhutto was elected as Prime Minister, US officials gave another excuse that it was necessary to continue the aid to support democracy in Pakistan. The sale of F-16s at Mrs. Benazir Bhutto’s request was said to be as much for helping her to consolidate a democratic order as for meeting the country’s "legitimate" security needs.

Mrs. Benazir Bhutto after becoming the Prime Minister assured the Congress and the White House that we do not possess nor do we intend to make a nuclear device. But in the subsequent months the CIA had gathered sufficient evidence indicating that Pakistan was still working on the bomb. There had been reports that Pakistan had been modifying its (US) supplied F-16 Jet so that they could carry nuclear weapons. In September 1990 some fresh evidence of Pakistan’s suspected procurement efforts came into light. It was reported that in early 1990 Pakistan made several clandestine efforts to buy high-temperature furnaces from Consarc Crop. of New Jersey. The furnaces were capable of producing metals for nuclear weapons system. Consequently US military and other aid to Pakistan was suspended in October 1990.

Thus, for more than a decade, the US officials found reasons to look the other way while Pakistan moved steadily closer to becoming a nuclear power. That was particularly true during the war in Afghanistan, when Pakistan served as a key staging area for supplying anti-Soviet guerillas with American made weapons. But
now that the Cold War apparently was over, Washington was no longer willing to turn a blind eye. Washington may now have felt that it no longer needed to worry so much about staying on good relations with Pakistan. The end of Cold War, in fact, had made it more difficult for Third World countries to play Moscow and Washington against each other. Moreover, the Gulf crisis of 1991 had taught Washington the danger of looking the other way while countries such as Iraq developed chemical warfare programmes or nuclear capabilities.

The imposition of Pressler Sanction since October 1990, was a heavy blow on the Pakistan’s defence establishment. The US stopped with immediate effect the delivery of 28, F-16 fighter aircrafts and other military equipments for which Pakistan had already paid $1.4 billion. Further with October 1, 1990 the $564 million economic and military aid programmes approved for fiscal year 1991 was frozen. Nonetheless, in view of the delay over the implementation of the Pressler Amendment Pakistan received an estimated $3.3 billion American aid during 1985-1990 of which over $2 billion was in the form of military aid.**

Pressler Sanction had less immediate impact on economic development since the amendment stopped only new assistance commitments. Aid was able to continue to implement programmes that were already under way and to disburse funds from roughly $1 billion still in the pipeline. Nevertheless, the sanction had
considerable negative effect on projects run by the US assistance. These projects were related to agricultural and rural development, engineering, health, population, nutrition, human resource development.\textsuperscript{13}

The adoption of the Pressler Amendment was considered by Pakistan as another betrayal and its old fear revisited that as long as Pakistan served America's strategic interest the latter deliberately ignored every things but as soon as its objectives were accomplished it deserted Pakistan in oblivion. That is what happened after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and consequently disintegration of Soviet Union changed the US perception towards Pakistan.

The reaction in Islamabad to the imposition of sanction was one of disbelief, shock and anger because of its discriminatory nature. The sanction was country specific leaving-India untouched who had conducted nuclear test way back in 1974. Moreover, Pressler Sanction was too severe and unlike earlier sanctions\textsuperscript{14} or embargoes it was longer one. Although the Bush administration said that apparent reason why the amendment covered only Pakistan and none else was that Islamabad was the recipient of billions of dollars in name of military and economic assistance. The press in Pakistan also critically denounced the US action as unfair, anti-Islamic and discriminatory. They charged that the United States had once more proved to be a "fickle friend". A Pakistani
observer commented acidly, "with the Afghan war over, the United States no longer needs Pakistan. You Americans have discarded us like a piece of used Kleenex". General Aslam Beg expressed a view that most Pakistani agreed that with the Afghan war over the United States no longer needed to look the other way on the nuclear issue and it let the Pressler axe fall.\textsuperscript{15}

**Pakistan's Efforts Against Pressler Sanction**

As the Pressler Sanction began to bite, Pakistan tried desperately to wriggle out of its implications and repercussions on its economy. First such move was made in June 1991 when the Chairman of Pakistan Senate, Wassem Sajjad visited Washington with Nawaz Sahrif's ambitious diplomatic initiative, calling for a five power conference to consider a ban on nuclear weapons in South Asia. The proposed countries were the United States, Soviet Union, China, India and Pakistan. Washington showed interest in the idea, however, due to India's reluctance, the proposal remained moot. Thus, he utilized his visit to impress upon the American policy makers about Pakistan's interest in non-proliferation and the Indian intransigent attitude.

Although Sajjad could not convince the US Congressmen regarding resumption of the US aid, nonetheless he did not return empty hands. As a result of his intensive discussion and persistent lobbying with the US officials, the Bush administration finally
agreed to supply some military spare parts and equipments to Pakistan on commercial basis by providing a self serving interpretation of the Pressler Amendment. Moreover, on October 6, 1992 the US Congress approved an amendment providing a “minor break” for Pakistan in terms of renewed US assistance through waivers on two items for the Pressler Sanctions. The Congressional waivers, as part of the 1993 Foreign Aid Bill, were applicable to “assistance to non governmental organization and under Public Law – 480”.

The strategic significance of the Congress move gets reflected in the fact that the amendment containing the waiver also stipulated a provision that requires an annual report from the US President on the State of the nuclear and the ballistic programmes of Pakistan India and China. This provision pleased the policy makers in Islamabad. It was regarded as an achievement of the Pakistan lobby which was apparently making efforts to reduce the excessive focus of the US policy making on Pakistan’s nuclear programme.

This waiver was a clear indication that Washington would take gradual step in time to come to normalize the relations with Pakistan which had been strained since October, 1990 in the wake of suspension of the US military and economic aid to Pakistan. There seemed to be growing realization in the United States that
Pakistan had already suffered for quite sometime and that normalcy in the relations between the two countries had to be restored before they were seriously ruptured. In September 1992, the then US Ambassador to Pakistan John C. Manjo had made it already clear that “while we hope new economic and security assistance to Pakistan suspended under Pressler Amendment can be resumed. We will not compromise our non-proliferation principles to do so.” This statement was significant in context of US Pakistan relations. The first part of Manjo’s statement is perhaps more important and carries the real message than the second part which was often repeated. It was also known that rules, regulations and amendments are suitably changed or appropriately interpreted when any compromise over principles or national interest becomes necessary. The same was done during the prolonged Afghan crisis.

The non-proliferation issue was not the only serious impediment in the US-Pak strategic relations. Problem of terrorism in Kashmir was at the top of Bush administration’s priorities. US expressed serious concern over the covert help by Pakistan for Kashmir insurgency which was destabilizing the peace and security of the region. Under Secretary of State for political affairs Arnold Kanter warned that if Pakistan continued its help for the Kashmir insurgents “it ran the risk of being declared a country officially supporting terrorism” His comments were based on
credible intelligence reports that the ISI was continuing to provide
direct assistance to the anti India insurgents through training and
infiltrating them across the line of control.

In the mean time, the war in Afghanistan was dragging on
with no near end in sight and due to infighting among
Mujahideens along ethnic lines, Najibullah government could not
be ousted. In September 1991, the United States and the Soviet
Union finally agreed that they would both stop the supply of
military equipments to Afghanistan. With this the US-Soviet Cold
War confrontation came to an end. Now Afghanistan became a
second or third tier foreign policy issue. As one top State
Department official told then Pakistan country Director John
Holzman "Afghanistan is no longer on our radar screen".

The subsequent events of disintegration of the Soviet Union
had great repercussions in store. On one side it radically reshaped
the regions geo-political landscape. On the other hand Afghanistan
gained importance as a potentially important corridor for trade and
other links with newly independent Central Asian countries.

However, the sudden demise of the Soviet Union undermined
the Najibullah regime. The government collapsed in April 1992,
after the infighting within the government. Najibullah’s fall did not
usher in era of peace instead it began a new phase of what would
become an Afghan civil war in which rival factions battled each other.

Thus withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan and subsequent change in the US-Pak relations did not mean that Afghan factor will not influence future course of US-policy towards Pakistan rather it loomed large in the wake of continued civil war for Kabul among ethnic groups.

Bush administration thus could not cement US-Pakistan strategic relations which was created against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Bilateral differences were all too apparent during Bush administration. Pakistan had not only lost strategic importance but had become a nuclear trouble maker and a source of regional instability for US policy makers. Islamabad perceived the imposition of sanction as the change in US perspective and more a evidence that the United States was 'fickle', 'unreliable' and not a friend in need of Pakistan.

In the mean while, there was change in administration in Washington. The incoming Bill Clinton administration brought no substantial change in US policy towards Pakistan. The new President’s re-emphasis on nuclear non-proliferation, human rights, democracy and cross border terrorism did not helped in improving relations with Pakistan. Thus, the Clinton administration took up from where George Bush had left.
Pakistan in its quest of improved relations with Clinton administration sent foreign Secretary Shahryar Khan to Washington in August 1993, to wriggle out of the US pressure and to strive for resumption of the US aid. He succeeded in convincing National Security Advisor Anthony Lake’s for further dialogue to tackle the problems created by the implementation of the Pressler Amendment. The Foreign Secretary, Warren Christopher underscored the “Vital role” that the United States could play in resolving the Kashmir question. These statements were regarded in Pakistan an important development towards normalizing hitherto, strained relations between the two countries. While assessing his visit Shahryar Khan himself claimed that he sensed a “breath of fresh air” from the Clinton administration in addressing both bilateral and regional issue. The Pakistan’s Foreign Office was reportedly pleased over the outcome of the wide ranging bilateral talks between the US and Pakistan, which in its understanding, would develop a “new more mature and durable relationship” between the two countries.

Less than a month after Khan’s visit to Washington, The US Senate sent to President Bill Clinton for signature a bill that would exempt Islamabad from the operation of the Pressler Amendment for some specific purposes. The Bill authorized the sale of wheat and soyabean worth $ 40 million to Pakistan. Other items that were exempted from the Pressler Law were funds for non-
governmental organizations working for population planning, child welfare and adult literacy programmes. In fact, these exemptions were already working in the outgoing fiscal year as well. It was in August 1992, when Washington sent a friendly feeler to Islamabad administration over the US aid cut issue by conveying the US Department of Agriculture's decision to increase by $50 million credit guarantee available to US exporters for the sale of wheat to Pakistan.22

The US policy makers had found other ways to redress Pakistan's grievances. While refraining from giving any official military and economic assistance to Islamabad, the US State Department had authorized the commercial sales of military spare parts to Pakistan and had not discouraged US private businessmen from other countries as well as multilateral funding institutions from dealing with the country.

Shahryar Khan's visit to Washington was coincided with the new US sanctions (August 1993)23 against a few Chinese companies and Pakistan on the issue of transfer of M-II missile technology to Pakistan. It was only an addition to the existing irritants between the two countries. However, it was common knowledge that the later sanction under Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) would not affect Pakistan. Nation, a leading Pakistani daily had rightly commented that the US
sanctions will hardly make any material difference to Pakistan, the real rub will be on the political level where despite the best efforts by Islamabad, relations between Pakistan and its erstwhile patron will further deteriorate. Responding to the sanction, the then Pakistan Prime Minister, Moeen Qureshi, in a statement in Islamabad on August 26, 1993 said, “The Missiles that Pakistan received over a year ago are well within the parameter of MTCR. China, which agreed to supply a small number of Missiles to meet our legitimate self-defence requirement, told the US that the short range tactical missile it supplied to Pakistan did not exceed the MTCR criteria. We ourselves have given the same assurance to the USA”.24

Generally, the Pakistani reaction to imposition of the US sanction over the M-11 missile issue was at very low-key. First, because it had no practical effect on Pakistan and secondly, it was imposed only after the real transfer of the missile technology took place.

The whole issue of missile transfer to Pakistan from China brought the USA in the unenviable position of being subjected to pressures by three nations. Pakistan by deploying its M-11 missile could jeopardize the US-China relations. India by deploying the Prithvi could trigger off such a reaction on the part of Pakistan.25 China which was already annoyed with the US on the issue of the
Taiwanese President, Lee Teng Hui's visit to the US and the lifting of certain curbs on high technology transfer to Taiwan, could well supply more missiles to Pakistan. In other words, the MTCR which was touted as a great US initiative in curbing missile proliferation was now causing it headaches.26

Discussion Draft

Only a few months after Shahryar Khan's visit to Washington, the State Department sent a 130-page bill labeled "discussion draft" of a new foreign Assistance Act to key members of the US Congress. This draft adopted new approaches to foreign aid with a view to best utilizing the US money to serve the nation's interests. Interestingly, this new approach included removal of the country specific language of the Pressler Amendment. In the past, Presidents of both Republican and the Democratic parties had complained that the Congress had attached rather too many conditions to foreign aid. The rationale behind the "discussion draft" was that the President needed to have greater flexibility in the matter of providing assistance to foreign countries and since the Pressler Amendment, unlike other similar legal measure, did not have any similar provision of waiver, it needed to be done away with.27

While there was widespread agreement that the time for restructuring the US aid programmes had come and the six
objectives of the aid programmes outlined in the “discussion draft” such as “promoting sustainable development”, “promoting democracy”, “promoting peace”, “providing humanitarian assistance”, “promoting growth through trade and investment” and “advancing diplomacy” were acceptable. The efforts to do get away with the Pressler Amendment met with severe opposition in the Congress.\textsuperscript{28} The Clinton administration, in the face of Congressional opposition and the adverse reaction in the Indian Subcontinent, decided to drop the idea at least for the time being, removing the Pressler Amendment from the Foreign Assistance Act. Nonetheless, these development in the USA provided a sense of relief to the Pakistanis as their case was being advocated by some Americans themselves.

It is interesting to note that the Pakistani leadership felt that they would not prevail over their patron on resumption of economic and military aid, they tactfully tried to link up the issue of nuclear-non-proliferation and the problem of Kashmir together.\textsuperscript{29} Pakistani officials reportedly conveyed their American counterparts that both regional peace and the future of nuclear proliferation depend on a settlement of the Kashmir issue between Indian and Pakistan. Pak Prime Minister Moeen Qureshi during his private visit to Washington had stated that: “There was a linkage between Kashmir and non-proliferation and that the lasting solution of the proliferation issue rested in the resolution of the Kashmir
problem.” Muslim, a leading Pakistani news paper argued that “as long as contentious issue between India and Pakistan-notably Kashmir issue remains unaddressed and continues to spite fire there will always be incentive for arms built-up, including proliferation of nuclear weapons... If the political cause of proliferation, notably the Kashmir problem are removed in accordance with UN resolutions, there will be no nuclear weapons”.

We are still left with the question, why did Pakistan unveil its nuclear capability in connection with the Kashmir issue, and why the Pakistani politicians link the bomb and Kashmir? While answering these questions Prof. Stephen P. Cohen quoted some Pakistanis as saying their nuclear capability would provide the umbrella under which Pakistan could re-open the Kashmir issue. Another reason behind this Pak ploy could be diversionary tactics to withstand the tremendous US pressure on the proliferation issue.

The US administration made unsuccessful attempt in 1994 to seek a one – time exception to the Pressler Amendment to deliver F-16 aircrafts and to resume suspended military and economic assistance aid to Pakistan. Thanks to Larry Pressler and his colleague Senators, who succeeded in aborting the administrations effort to scarp the Pressler Amendment through a new Foreign Assistance Act. There was in fact a growing sense in
Washington that the Pressler Amendment had outlived its utility as a diplomatic lever. There were many in the American foreign policy establishment who had accepted the Pakistani argument that the Pressler Amendment punishes Pakistan unfairly without including India to change its behaviour on nuclear non-proliferation. In the last five years Pakistan attempted, though without success, to coax the US Congress on to either extending the Pressler Amendment to India or to dropping it altogether.

Over the years there has been sustained interaction between the USA and Pakistan to end the nuclear dispute. Two factors might have worked to facilitate a nuclear *modus Vivendi* between the USA and Pakistan. One was the new positive attitude in Washington to put its relationship with Islamabad back on track. The other was the formerly declared position of Pakistan since February 1992 that it had ultimately frozen its nuclear programmes. Given these position it was not impossible for the US and Pakistan to find common ground, that would allow them to return to the nuclear status quo ante and renewal of the US military and economic assistance to Pakistan.

Nonetheless, the Clinton administration in 1994 had insisted on three conditions for lifting the Pressler Amendment against Pakistan firstly, to end the production of weapons grade Uranium; secondly, to stop the manufacture of additional nuclear weapons cores; and finally, to melt the existing nuclear cores. Michael Mc
Curry, the US administration spokesman said on October 6, 1994 that: “we have offered Pakistan the opportunity to work with us to achieve our non-proliferation goals, which could lead to a waiver of the sanction that we have imposed on the Pakistani entity”.

Perhaps the most questionable aspect of this new US proposal was that, notwithstanding the failure that necessitated the 1990 application of the Pressler Amendment in the first place, it was once again projected as means of curbing Pakistan's nuclear ambition. The apparent assumption was that by resuming conventional military aid to Pakistan the US would gain “new flexibility” in persuading Islamabad to place certain constraints on its nuclear weapons programme, something which Washington had lost through applying Pressler’s blanket ban. According to this rationale, the Pressler law was a structural impediment to progress on non-proliferation in South Asia. But the flaw in this approach was that it did not take into account the fact that Pakistan did not shy away from its nuclear programme when the US, through its massive military aid during the Reagan years sought to bring about military parity with India.

**One Time Waiver**

President Clinton’s South Asia Report (1994) on US non-proliferation objectives referring to this region named capping, reducing and finally eliminating the nuclear weapon capability of
India and Pakistan as its prime concerns. Lynn Davis under Secretary for International Security stated in April 1994, that "we are looking at the possibility of a one time waiver of the Pressler Amendment which would have as its goal to cap the production of missile material by the Pakistanis and to do so in a verifiable way" so that Pakistan could receive the F-16 aircrafts. But much to the US surprise Pakistan had refused to accept verifiable cap on its nuclear programme. Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto instantly declared that Pakistan would not roll back its nuclear programme.

The proposal of Clinton administration was perplexing because supply of F-16 capable of delivering nuclear weapons could not promote non-proliferation. Lynn Davis said that, "the aircraft would be sold without the capacity of delivering such weapons, "she was obviously referring to the Pentagon assurance that the plane transferred to Pakistan would not have the racks to carry bombs. But as Senator Pressler pointed out "racks do not require any sophisticated technology and can be built by any corner garage mechanic".

While the US administration was defending the proposal to sale F-16s to Pakistan, Senator Larry Pressler expressed his determination to go to any length to prevent this proposed sales of F-16 and other military materials to Islamabad. Reacting to the proposal Pressler remarked it is bad enough that the...
administration wants to sale a warfare, capable of delivering a nuclear weapons, to a volatile region. Now, it is seeking to rebuild the entire Pakistani Airforce. Instead of pursuing a responsible nuclear non-proliferation policy in South Asia, it seems the Clinton administration is conducting a Pentagon garage sale of military hardware and spare parts.\textsuperscript{39}

By linking up the issue of sale of F-16s to capping of the production of fissile material, the State Department sought to project an impression that this step would be in the economic national security and nonproliferation interests of the United States. In one stroke, the Clinton Administration attempted to please the Look head Company, the Pakistanis and Senator Pressler and his colleagues in the Congress.

Although, the Clinton administration did not succeed in resuming military aid to Pakistan, it had, however, gradually succeeded in restoring token economic assistance and some other non-military aid to Pakistan, despite the operation of Pressler Sanction with minimum or no opposition from other branches of the American government. Even commercial sales of the certain military spare parts to Pakistan also continued. It was, however, bound to face Congressional opposition to any of its plans to sell military hardware to Pakistan. Pakistanis, on the other hand, were
trying their best to acquire the approval of the US Congress; the ball was clearly still in the American court.

**Benazir Visits USA**

The unfinished business of negotiations between the USA and Pakistan over the resumption of the US military aid to Pakistan once again acquired new life when Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto visited the USA in April 1995. But just before her visit on March 9, 1995, two employees of the American Consulate General in Karachi were shot dead which jolted the relations. This increased the growing insecurity in the ruling Pakistan establishment about its ties with the USA.

Meanwhile, the condition in Karachi and Sindh had already deteriorated to worse. The Clinton administration took serious note of this and at one stage had threatened to put Pakistan on the list of terrorist States and stop aid. Nine Democratic and Republican member of the Congress had urged the Secretary of State, Warren Christopher to put Pakistan on terrorism watch list. In a letter to Christopher they had said "while Pakistan says it condemns terrorism in all forms and manifestation reports contradicts these assertion. The killing of the American diplomats and Pakistan's continued grooming of terrorist warrants a serious re-evaluation of the US-Pakistan relationship."
Prime Minister Bhutto’s visit was to seek visible reiteration of US support to Pakistan’s ruling establishment and also push for lifting the Pressler Sanctions which had become an impediment in the US-Pakistan strategic collaboration. A seasoned Pakistani commentator termed the Bhutto’s visit a “Make or Break Yatra” for the politically embattled Benazir. Well before her visit Pakistani government tried its best to soften US attitude towards it. Firstly came the “discovery” that the man alleged to be the mastermind in the 1993 bombing of the New York, World Trade Centre, Ramzi Ahmad Yusuf was a Pakistani. He was quickly extradited to the United States, that was followed by the “discovery” and rapid extradition of Haji Mirza Mohammad Iqbal Baig and Mohammad Anwar Khan Khattak both indicated in the United States in 1992 for drug smuggling. To improve its image and gain favour in Washington, Islamabad presented itself as being in the vanguard of “moderate” Islam, opposed to fundamentalism else-where especially in Iran, an emerging nuclear threat. Ms. Bhutto had said that Pakistan needs American support not sanctions to battle extremists.

In fact, Benazir Bhutto was clamouring for a new basis for the US-Pakistan relationship, American recognition and presumably aid were asked for as a frontline State in the fight against religious fanaticism, sectarianism and all extremist
movements as well as the various manifestations of narcotic trade.\footnote{45}

During her sojourn in Washington Ms. Bhutto utilized a bulk of her time lobbying with Congress against the Pressler Amendment. Pakistani Prime Minister also highlighted the Kashmir issue and linked it with the nuclear issue to globalize the Kashmir issue, Ms. Bhutto stated that I urged an early resolution of the core issue of Kashmir which poses a great threat to peace and security in our region, it had retarded progress on all issue including nuclear and missile proliferation. This was unambiguously endorsed by Clinton when he said that obviously if the issue of Kashmir were resolved a lot of these issue we have been discussing here to day would be resolve themselves. At least I believe that to be the case reiterating the familiar US position that Washington would play a role in Kashmir only if both parties are willing to US play a leading role. Further, Bill Clinton said that he wanted a review of the Pressler Amendment that it is time we should seriously review the policy. He described Pakistan as a nation that aims to combine the best of the tradition of Islam with modern democratic ideals. President Clinton stated, America is proud to claim Pakistan among her closest friends and has been a good partner and more importantly has stood for democracy and opportunity and modernization. The indulgent description of Pakistan as a mature, moderate nation State was indicative of the
tremendous sympathy bordering on blind affection that permeated the Clinton administration. US was of the view that a strong Pakistan is the need of hour for peace and reconciliation and ultimately for dismantling weapons of mass destruction in the region.

However, the Clinton administration could not succeed in giving any concession to Pakistan because a powerful lobby in Congress, led by Republican Senator Larry Pressler, was dead set against change, fearing that such a step would make mockery of the US non-proliferation concerns. During Ms. Bhutto’s stay in Washington a group of fifteen US Congressmen wrote to American Defence Secretary, William J. Perry voicing their staunch opposition to any change in the Pressler Amendment. “we do not believe events warrants a repeal of the Pressler Amendment and we will resist all efforts to bypass or weaken this provision”, they said in a joint letter to Perry.46

US Pakistan relations further received a setback when the Washington Post, revealed that Pakistan was furtively constructing a new nuclear reactor giving Islamabad access to substantial quantities of plutonium for more powerful and compact nuclear weapons that it now possesses. To compound matters the Washington Post, reported that after initially denying knowledge of any such facility, the Pakistani Prime Minister back tracked and
conceded that such a project was in existence. The Washington Post decided to pull this issue out of obscurity and timed it with the Benazir visit to Washington thereby, leaving the Clinton administration with little manoeuvering in assuaging the Pakistani sentiment over the Pressler Amendment. The Clinton administration, thus was faced with a great dilemma in harmonizing its global nuclear non-proliferation policy with Pakistan's furtive nuclear weapons quest.

Although reports certainly created a new headache for Pakistan but it could not prevent Prime Minister Bhutto from getting Clinton's assurance for a revision of Pressler Amendment. For Islamabad the removal of the Pressler Amendment from the statute book arguably had more political and strategic importance than its military value *perse*.

Benazir Bhutto's visit proved more productive for Pakistan than what was perceived at that time. Three significant gains for Pakistan emerged from this visit, first, the commitment by Clinton administration that US would not abandon Pakistan and confer a strategic dimension to the US-Pak relationship in the Post Cold War period. Second, acceptance by the US President of the Pakistani interpretation that Kashmir's is at the core of the acrimonious Indo-Pak relations, finally endorsement of the Pakistan position that the Pressler Amendment discriminates
against Islamabad and a US resolve to work towards a regional nuclear solution that perceives India's nuclear dynamics only in an Indo-Pak context.**

Thus, Bhutto effectively articulated her case both to President Bill Clinton and the American public that Pakistan a formerly time tested friend of the US had now been abandoned. She harped on the theme of a new 'geo-strategic' contact with America, her visit yielded results just after few months of her return from Washington when US Congress finally passed the Hank Brown Amendment.

The Hank Brown Amendment

After several attempts by Pakistan government over the years to get repealed the Pressler Amendment, the US Congress passed the Brown Amendment in November 1995. Named after American Senator, Hank Brown, the Amendment provided the transfer to Pakistan of all the previously embargoed lethal arms and equipment other than 28, F-16 combat aircrafts. Although, the Amendment, backed by the Clinton administration was introduced in the Senate with the Defence Authorization Bill in August 1995, but it was stalled successfully for months by the anti-proliferation lobby opposed to it.

However, the determined Clinton administration, introduced the Amendment again in the Senate in September 1995, as part of
the Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill, this time it was adopted. The House Senate Conference Committee which met in October 1995, also accepted the Brown Amendment by decisive 10-4 votes. These developments were followed by the adoption of the Brown Amendment as part of the Foreign Appropriations Bill of the US House of Representatives on November 1, 1995. The package permitted Pakistan to take possession of military equipment frozen in the US including 3PC orion air crafts, Harpoon missiles, C Nite multifunction Kits, M-198 Howitzer, Cobra Helicopter, TIQ-36 radars, Tow launchers besides spares for F-16s. It also gave the green signal for the renewed economic assistance loan guarantees by the Overseas Private Investment Corporation and Export-Import Bank Lending.

United States objectives behind the Hank Brown initiatives, which was written in the United States Defence Planning Guide for the Post Cold War era, published in 1992 were as follows “...with regard to Pakistan a constructive US-Pakistan military relationship, will be an important element in our strategy to promote stable security conditions in South-West Asia and Central Asia. We should endeavour to rebuild our military relationship, given acceptable resolution of our nuclear concern.

Initially, Islamabad hailed passage of the Brown Amendment as a major victory. However, soon Pakistan realized that the
Amendment provided largely symbolic relief. As the Brown Amendment left intact the heart of Pressler Sanction, the ban on the US military assistance and government to government arms transfer. Pakistani establishment, nonetheless, was satisfied because the Clinton administration had finally acknowledged the inherent unfairness of the Pressler Sanction and tried to amend that. In effect, Pakistanis agreed with Brown Amendment which boosted Pakistan's defence and economy.

The renewed US interest in Pakistan made strategic theorist Spykman, and his rimland concept more valid. According to him Pakistan as a viable rimland State could serve a dual US purpose, though on occasions Islamabad had become the tail that wagged the dog. The primary US aim is to secure the Gulf Oil\textsuperscript{52} and "contain" the aspirations of Iran immediately and possibly Russia and China at a later date. The second strategic significance of Pakistan is its access to Central Asia which encompasses the oil, potentially crucial mineral, natural gas and the dependence of Russia, China and India on it made crucial to US establishment to control Central Asia.\textsuperscript{53}

This is how US harmonized its regional strategy with an abiding national interest. Pakistan as a geographical entity and more specifically Pakistani army acquired a special niche warranting US indulgence. This is where the contradictions fall
into place. The Hank Brown Amendment not only being anti-India or pro-proliferation acquires a different context to the extent where Islamabad’s nuclear transgressions are condoned to keep Pakistan plaint and committed to furthering US interest. Under the circumstances the US had obviously reverted to its Cold War policy of using Pakistan as an ally to safeguard American interests in South and West Asia. Since an ally or a client State has to be kept politically happy or stable, it has to be piped with economic and military largesse.\(^{54}\)

An American expert on South Asian affairs Harold A Gould had given a three fold answer to the question why the United States adopted the Brown Amendment. First, it reveals that the Cold War culture has survived Cold War. Two generations of American politicians and scholars were so conditioned to think in ‘containment’ and confrontational terms about international security that they continue to do so long after the need to do so is irrelevant. Second, and related to first, a vast American defence industry and the politicians whose constituencies continue to derive economic benefits from its production lines, has a vested interest in perpetuating in Cold War Style of doing international business. Third, the Clinton administration is in some ways more naïve about South Asia than were most of its predecessors, partially because Mr. Clinton himself seems to be so unattuned to the international dimensions of politics, and partly because, as far
as India is concerned, the advice he got came heavily from an Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, Robin Raphel, who was (a) pro-Pakistani and (b) out of her depth.55

However, no one was certain why President Clinton took the path which President Bush feared to tread in 1990s Pakistan's nuclear ambitions had been as clear as day light and yet the US officials and legislature for a ignored their dazzle and offered military package to their old client on a silver platter. According to an Indian analyst56 such a military package to Pakistan would appear to serve three purposes of the US: First, it would help the Americans in their efforts to win back loyalties of a former crony Pakistan. With Washington remaining wedded to its idea of projecting it as a "moderate Islamic State", and Pakistan threatening in the post-Pressler Amendment phase, to firmly align itself to either the Islamic bloc or Communist China the prime obsession of the Clinton Administration, it caused alarm in Washington.

Secondly, an increasingly confident India would in the long term be a threat to the American hegemony in the region. The United States considered the democratic, India to be an unmanageable factor in its regional strategic planning. Compared to this, the US had not just the experience, but also continuing assurances from Pakistan that it will remain a reliable ally and co-
operative partner in the US plans in the region. Hence, this attempt to strengthen Pakistan by maintaining a balance of power in South Asia.

Finally, the vast American military, industrial complex was keen to revive arms sales in South Asia, as the region was a major arms-import in the eighties. So, the Hank Brown initiative and its approval by the Clinton administration, was also designed to please the American industry as well as the electorate. Such a policy had echoes of the past, when the Neo-Realist school of political thought as enunciated by Henry Kissinger, had stated that "morality" ends at one's national borders- beyond which nothing is immoral if it helps in the furtherance of one's national interests.

The US policy makers believed that revival of a kind of quasi-alliance with Pakistan will give the US leverage in that country which was lost during the years of suspension of military supplies and other forms of aid due to Pressler Amendment. They claim that this influence can be used to contain Pakistan's nuclear ambitions and freeze the development and deployment of Ballistic Missiles. The US logic that the arms sales will give America greater leverage vis-à-vis Pakistan was a simplistic fallacy. During Afghan War, the US floated the same theory that the supply of arms will keep Pakistan away from perusing the nuclear path. But what happened? Having received billions of dollars worth of arms,
General Zia went ahead with his nuclear programme. The US conveniently closed its eyes. Similarly the Reagan administration provided arms by the tonnes to the Afghan rebels in their fight against the communists.

India’s renowned defence expert K. Subrahmanyam has rightly observed: “This is not the first occasion for the US administration and legislature to commit a folly of this type. They gave arms to Chiang Kai Shek and they ended up with the Chinese Communists. They supported the South Vietnamese generals and the results are now part of history. They sold enormous quantities of the arms to Shah of Iran and that benefited the Ayatollah. They supported Saddam Hussein and he turned against them. They armed Siad Barre of Somalia and General Aideed inherited those weapons. They armed Pakistan; ISI and Afghan Mujahideens. Those arms were later used in sustaining the civil war in Afghanistan, ultimately becoming sanctuary of International terrorism.

The US President’s arguments that this policy of releasing military equipment to Pakistan would not effect the military balance in South Asia and that it would instead actually help strengthen peace, stability and democratic forces in Pakistan also proved facetious. In his testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations sub Committee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs on
September 14, 1995, Bruce Reidel Deputy Assistant Secretary took great pains to establish the point that India already had a 2 to 1 superiority over Pakistan in conventional weapons and therefore the release of $ 368 million military equipment to Pakistan would not make a difference to the military balance in the region. While advancing an argument of this kind he deliberately ignored the fact that India is four times bigger than Pakistan and its security responsibilities are qualitatively different and quantitatively larger than those of Pakistan. It also reveals a psychology that the US cannot resist the temptation to neutralize Indian strength whenever an opportunity permits it.

**Ring Magnet, M-11 Missile Issue**

Meanwhile, US-Pak strategic relations received a hiccup when shipment of a US military equipment to Pakistan under the Brown Amendment was put off in early 1996 because of Pakistan’s suspected acquisition of sensitive nuclear equipment from China in 1995 and subsequent controversy over M-11 missile supplied by China to Pakistan, in violation of MTCR guideline, put the implementation of Brown Amendment in peril. Since the Brown Amendment did not entirely lift sanctions against countries that received help for an unsafe guarded Uranium enrichment facility thus, a major problem arose, complicating the implementation of the Brown Amendment and exacerbating bilateral trouble with China in face of the CIA reported discovery that the China’s
Nuclear Energy Industry Corporation had sold some five thousand Ring Magnets, which aid uranium enrichment to Pakistan.\(^6^2\)

Although, Pakistan reacted that it was not a violation of Brown Amendment but still Clinton administration thought that this was an attempt by Pakistan to smuggle laser equipment to measure precisely machined nuclear weapons components.

However, instead of taking strict action and imposing sanctions against China and Pakistan, firing from a pea shooter into the air was the best response President Clinton found to the sale of nuclear related Ring Magnets. US merely freezed export credit to China for a month and delayed arms deliveries to Pakistan to deliver mildest of warning against nuclear proliferation.\(^6^3\) These were inadequate measures well short of not sanctions. Earlier Clinton administration could not ignored the CIA report because the CIA director had confirmed the validity of the Ring Magnets transfer in an open Public Hearing of the Senate Intelligence Committee. This put the Clinton administration in an embarrassing position and in a spot over the issue of concealing crucial informations from the Congress during the debate and vote on the Brown Amendment.

The US 1994 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act stipulates harsh sanction, and sale of Ring Magnets should have resulted in the suspension of all export-import Banking if the US government concluded that the Beijing authorities had willfully approved the
Ring Magnet transfer. But the feeble and adhoc sanction was the Clinton administration's way of avoiding a direct showdown with Beijing. Except holding for a while arms package to Pakistan, no action was taken against Islamabad by way of sanction. Instead, Clinton administration further moved ahead to implement a major element of the Brown Amendment when $ 368 million equipment frozen by the Pressler Sanction and refund of $ 120 million for other items were released. It seemed that Clinton administration was protecting a burgeoning commercial relationship and mollifying a frazzled ally. It was nothing but a detestation for following the practices of his predecessors to give priority to non-proliferation over trade and economic interests.

Similarly Clinton administration did not take any action when US intelligence confirmed that Islamabad had resumed production of weapon grade uranium. Pakistan was exonerated by a mere warning. When the Deputy National Security Advisor Samual Berger went to Islamabad to emphasized US concern that if Pakistan continued with its nuclear programmes Clinton administration would have trouble in implementing the Brown Amendment.  

More fissures arose in bilateral relations in Summer 1996. When intelligence agencies reported that Pakistan decided to deploy nuclear capable Chinese supplied M-11 missile. Further, CIA concluded that China was assisting Pakistan in setting up a factory near Islamabad. This created sensation in the United
States and South Asia. Thus, the intelligence information put the Clinton administration in an awkward position, since it suggested that the Chinese were dangerously violating MTCR guidelines by exporting missiles to Pakistan.

Although MTCR guidelines imposes drastic sanction for its violation, which could have costed American companies billions of dollars in sales to China. But the Clinton administration turned a blind eye to this and took no action on the ground that the intelligence was insufficiently conclusive to justify the imposition of severe sanction.

Clinton administration issued certificate to Pakistan on narcotics contrary to frictions it created. US policy makers also ignored human rights violations and Islamabad’s role in the spread of global terrorism and its clandestine nuclear weapons programme. This proved the hollowness of US advocacy of nuclear non-proliferation through international regimes and conventions like MTCR, NPT and CTBT. The timid and “pea-shooter” approach of the Clinton administration also showed that US is no longer the sole superpower which could prevail its wish in the post Cold War world.

What ever the reasons given or arguments advanced by the US administration in support of the Brown Amendment and not applying sanctions on the serious issue of shipment of Ring Magnet, M-11 missiles by China to Pakistan and US blind eye on
this contradicted the declared US policy objective of working for non-proliferation, MTCR and CTBT. The US restoring of military supplies to Pakistan and subsequent blind eye on Pakistan’s other effort to achieve nuclear arsenal not only negated earlier US legislation aimed at penalizing Pakistan for its nuclear weapons programme, but was a clear political signal that it tacitly accepted Pakistan’s nuclear weaponisation as a part of its strategic plan to secure its interests in South Asia, West Asia and Central Asia. Thus “all the pious concern of the US for nuclear proliferation has been shown to be an eye wash in relations to an old and trusty ally”.

Hence, the thesis that with the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan, Pakistan’s importance in serving US interests had diminished was not correct. Rather Clinton administration considered Pakistan an important partner in safeguarding its interest in the Gulf, on the eastern flank of the region. US also considered Pakistan a useful base for influencing political process in Central Asia. Further, it thought that a strong Pakistan is essential to counter its threat perception regarding Iran and Iraq. The US believed at that time that Pakistan was one country which if strengthened militarily and technologically can counter India’s emergence as an effective regional power. US perception since the emergence of Pan-Islamic trends in World politics are that being supportive of Pakistan will contribute to
encouraging moderate Islamic forces and countering Islamic extremism. By the end of 1996 when Clinton completed his first term US was obsessed with all these factors and it was willing to pay a high price for collaboration with Pakistan, pretending that Pakistan is a secular State. Their obsession blinded them to the reality and Pakistanis exploited that obsession to serve their own interests.
REFERENCES


15. Quoted in Dennis Kux, No. 13, p. 311.


23. During last two decades the US imposed Sanctions on Pakistan on four occasions: 1977, 1979, 1990 and 1993, While the first three sanctions were limited with the nuclear question, the Latest one was on suspected acquisition of M-11 technology from China.


33. The same thesis was recently advocated by the US Defence Secretary, William Perry, For his view see The Times of India, February 2, 1995.


35. In addition to the 38 F-16, Washington wanted to arm Pakistan with three Orion anti-Submarine War Planes and 15 T37 trainer air Craft, see Indian Express, April 8, 1994.


37. The Indian Express, April 10, 1994.


40. The Times of India, Mach 9, 1995.

41. The Times of India, May 1, 1995.

42. The Times of India, April 9, 1995.

43. For Detail see, “Benazir Visit to USA: Implications and Inferences”, C. Uday Bhaskar, Strategic Analysis, July, 1995, Vol. XVIII, No. 4, p. 461-76.


46. The Times of India, April 6, 1995.

47. The Times of India, April 15, 1995.


50. Vinay Kumar Malhotra, "The Clinton administration and South Asia 1993-97". South Asia Publisher, New Delhi 1997, p. 75.


52. On February 16, 1995, The White House Released the US Department of Commerce Section 232 investigation which found that the Nations growing reliance on imports of Crude Oil and refined petroleum Products threatened the nations security and increased US vulnerability to oil supply a interruptions. The US strategic thinkers are therefore, looking fenetically at a diversification of source of supply mid nervousness about increasing dependence on the Gulf Region.
Pakistan was carefully pursuing the possibility of piped natural gas supply from Turkmenistan which had abandoned reserves, through Afghanistan to a port in Pakistan. This would not only permit Pakistan to meet its own growing demand for natural gas but also too possibly liquefy the balance for export to other parts of the world. Conceivably, piping oil along the same route could also supply to the US, reducing its dependence on Gulf Oil.

Narendra Gupta, “India must rework its security plan” The Times of India, New Delhi, December 12, 1995, p. 10.


Between 1981 and 1991 the US government gave to Pakistan aid worth more than $ 6 billion. And yet there were precisely
the years during which Pakistan made maximum progress in the development of its nuclear weapons.


64. Vinay Kumar Malhotra, “*The Clinton Administration and South Asia*, 1993-97, South Asia Publisher, New Delhi, 1997, p. 80, p. 80.
