CONCLUSIONS

The preceding chapters have delved into the dynamics of complex US-Pakistan strategic relations. On the basis of this discussion one can now attempt to draw some broad conclusions about the factors responsible for shaping the nature of this strategic relationship and the possibilities of cordiality and causes of friction and tension in the foreseeable future.

The US-Pakistan strategic relations over the years have had the rollercoaster character, marked by so many ups and downs. The relations have seen number of stages, initial hesitation, alignment, detachment, tilt, disenchantment, re-alignment and re-detachment and lately the rediscovery of a frontline state.

United States had emerged from World War II as the world’s strongest and most prosperous country and soon become the leader of the Anti-Communist bloc in the Cold War. Henceforth its policy revolved around the dominant objective of containment of international communism all over the world. This demanded strategic nexus and military pacts to accomplish the global security system against communism.

The United States having taken measures to contain the advancement of communism in Europe, now turned its attention towards Asia. Initially, Washington showed only modest interest in the Pakistan, and it attempted to have closer ties with larger and
more important India. But as India chose a non-alignment policy, Pakistan became an attractive potential partner in security arrangement for containing Soviet expansion in the Middle East. Pakistan's geo-political location played significant role in concluding strategic relations with United States. Pakistani perception of aligning with US was totally different. Since Pakistan was in frantic quest for an ally who could remove its sense of insecurity vis-à-vis India. It thought that friendship with US would bolster their defence. Thus, both countries needed each other, though with divergent policy perceptions and orientations. The United States was guided by its global policy of containment and Pakistan was motivated by its perceived threat from India.

Pakistan's foreign policy makers took advantage of the many opportunities inherent in the Cold War environment by using the right rhetoric in the right direction and at the opportune time. Pakistan extended unstinted support to the US stand during the Korean War and subsequently when the latter signed peace treaty with Japan. The outright opposition of India and Pakistan's unequivocal support at critical juncture when US prestige was at stake, certainly left deep impression on the mind of Americans. All these development led to the US estrangement from India and intimacy towards Pakistan.
Pakistan's pre-occupation with India kept it running for support all over the world to strengthened its defence. Pakistan entered into military pacts (CENTO, SEATO) and concluded mutual defence pacts with US which resulted into Pakistan obtaining massive military aid. The supply of arms to Pakistan become issue of friction when it used US arms against India in the 1965 war, US placed an embargo on the supply of arms to Pakistan because these arms were primarily meant for use against the communist countries. Thus, Pakistan became conscious of inherent dangers of over reliance on single source of supply of weapons. Pakistan established a new military relationship with communist China; which ultimately become 'trusted ally' of Pakistan in late 60's and 70's. Similarly, when Pakistan did not get enough support from US and China during 1971 War with India, Pakistan joined non-alignment. Pakistan too frequently shifted its allies because of its fickle friendship with US.

Infact, Pakistan and US had their own preoccupation and priorities. The former was too obsessed with India from which emanated its threat perception that India could destroy it. Unfortunately this conviction grew stronger when India become instrumental in the loss of East Pakistan in December 1971. Similarly, United States was always preoccupied with Cold War rivalry. It saw every move of Soviet Union with skepticism. Pakistan was never on the top of its priority. The US was a global
power and economically most advanced. Pakistan although an important Muslim state was economically poor regional power whose security interest did not extend much beyond its neighbours India, Afghanistan, Iran and China. Thus, it was “a union of un-equals”.

US Pakistan relations had been bedeviled even in the seventies. US imposed Symington-Glenn Amendment to security Assistant Act which forbade US military and economic aid to any country engaged in acquisition or production of nuclear weapons. Pakistan fell into this forbidden category with the result that all military aid to Pakistan was frozen.

However, the fall of the Shah regime in Iran in 1979 and the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan in the same year produced new glue to bind the two countries together. The Soviet adventure in Afghanistan become ‘turning point’ for Pakistan-US strategic relations. Pakistan geo-strategic landscape led the American policy makers to ‘rediscover’ the strategic importance of Pakistan. The Carter administration emphasized Pakistan’s new role as ‘Front Line State’ against the possible Soviet expansion. The past deterioration in bilateral relations came in for reappraisal. The change in US policy underlined that whenever and wherever US national interest lies it would not hesitate to take U-turn in order to achieve its objective but once its goal was accomplished it would leave Pakistan in the lurch.
The Afghan crisis strengthened Zia's bargaining position which was reflected when he rejected $400 million aid offer as mere 'peanuts'. President Zia in fact thought the leaders of the United States were in a state of panic after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and that was an opportune time for him to extract the maximum commitment from them for more reliable and durable relations in future.

The strategic and security relations received great boost during Reagan years. United States provided massive military and economic aid to Pakistan in order to check Soviet expansion. $3.2 billion aid package was extended and it was to be spread over 1981-87. Moreover, US Congress cleared another $4.2 billion military and economic aid package for Pakistan for second spell of six years (1987-92). Beside this Pakistan received many sophisticated and extremely lethal weapons including F-16 fighter aircraft from USA.

US-Pakistan co-operated in Geneva negotiation held under the UN auspices to find a solution to the Afghan conflict. However, soon smooth course of Pakistan-US close co-operation came under serious strain on the question of formation of an interim government in Kabul, prior to the signing of the Geneva Accord. Pakistan refused to sign the accord unless there was prior agreement on interim government in Kabul. The differences were so serious that Islamabad expressed frustration over American
attitude and exhibited a sense of betrayal at the hands of United States. Nevertheless, the Geneva Accord in April 1988 and the subsequent Soviet pullout in Feb 1989 were the obvious results of successful Pakistan-US collaboration over a decade on Afghan issue. It could be concluded that collaboration on Afghan issue was more designated and pursued to suit American interests than Pakistan.

Pakistan-US strategic relations radically altered in the Post Afghan conflict or in Post Cold War period. The disintegration of Soviet Union and subsequent end of Cold War brought rapid change in international scenario. In ‘new world order’ the unrivalled super power abandoned its Cold War global security strategies and with it Pakistan’s strategic significance diminished in US military thinking. Now Pakistan left to face the post Afghan civil war on its own. It shattered Pakistan’s dream of acquiring ‘strategic depth’ in Afghanistan.

Pakistan’s attempted rapprochement with USA fell apart during Gulf War even though it has provided all possible support to US. The bilateral relations received further set back when in a surprise move the US administration on October 1, 1990 suspended all military and economic aid to Pakistan under the 1985 Pressler sanctions following renewed fears that Pakistan had developed nuclear weapons. Although, 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, which was particularly true only during the War in Afghanistan, when Pakistan served a key US purpose against Soviet Union. But after the end of Cold War Washington was not to turn a blind eye on Pakistan.

Pakistan strived hard to wriggle out of stringent Pressler Law. A number of official visits were undertaken by Pakistan to pursue and convince that Pakistan did not possess nuclear weapons but all those efforts fell on deaf ears. When Pakistani policy makers felt that they would not prevail over their patrons on resumption of economic and military aid, they tactfully tried to link up the issue of nuclear non-proliferation and Kashmir dispute together.

Benazir visit in 1995 to United States proved fruitful for Pakistan as she got commitment by Clinton administration that US would not abandon Pakistan. This conferred a strategic dimension to US-Pak relationship. She also succeeded in convincing US that Kashmir is the core issue between India and Pakistan.

The passage of Brown Amendment in October 1995 brought great respite for Pakistan. It cleared the way for resumption of American arms supply to Pakistan and provided an aid package worth of $ 370 million under provision of the Hank Brown Amendment.
The passage of the Hank Brown Amendment renewed US interest in Pakistan because Clinton administration considered Pakistan an important partner in safeguarding its interest in the Gulf on the Eastern Flank of the region. Washington also perceived that strong Pakistan is essential to counter its threat perception regarding Iran-Iraq.

The US Pakistan relations during the Clinton's second term were marred by Pak's obsession with India. Taliban factor and nuclear issue caused friction between the two countries. But efforts were put in to improve relations. Secretary of state Madeline Albright came to Pakistan but this visit was in contrast to the Shultz's visit at the climax of Afghan crisis in 1983.

One of the major irritants between US- Pakistan has been nuclear weapons. In bilateral relations US as a boss always tried to dictate Pakistan's nuclear policy. However, Pakistan nuclear policy makers ignored all the allurement and threat of US when in May 1998, Pakistan conducted nuclear tests. US imposed sanctions against Pakistan under 1994 non-proliferation act. Thus, Pakistan lost an opportunity to take advantage of India's misadventure.

The Kargil conflict between India and Pakistan raised the specter in the United States that conflict over Kashmir could trigger the first use of nuclear weapons. Finally, American intervened to save the situation in South Asia from going out of hand.
The President Clinton’s visit to Pakistan in year 2000 did not bring any perceptible change in relations as both countries differed on major issues such as Kashmir dispute, Pakistan’s Taliban policy and question of terrorism and democracy. The fateful events of September 11, 2001 did recast the regional matrix in South and South West Asia in a most unexpected manner. The destiny of nation states in the region have undergone a change unlikely to be reversed in near future. Apart from Afghanistan no other state has felt the impact of the events more than Pakistan where ruling elite has had to carry out acrobatic maneuvers in its policy to prevent the very state structure of Pakistan from possible disaster. All of sudden Pakistan’s geo-strategic significance was rediscovered by United States as a ‘front line state’ in fight against international terrorism. Thus, Pakistan’s geographical location once again brought it closer to its erstwhile benefactor. It seemed that year 1979 has revisited. To access land locked Afghanistan the United States came to realize Pakistan’s inevitability. All past deterioration in the relations came in for reappraisal. Pakistan joined anti terror coalition to end its isolation and avoid being declared terrorist state. More importantly to deny India any opportunity to group with America against Pakistan.

The future course of US-Pakistan relations is hazardous to predict because of wide swing of the past half-century. What we can note are certain constant factors that will remain important.
Geography will continue to give Pakistan strategic importance as the juncture of Western, Southern and Central Asia. There are three reasons why geo-strategic location of Pakistan will be important to the US. To tackle the growing influence of Russia-China-India in the region and preempt China, Iran, India axis. Pakistan's geo-political proximity to the Central Asian Republics and Middle East is also a plus for it. The US needs to garner support of a moderate Muslim country to fight Islamic terrorism. As Pakistan is a leading Islamic state, the coming of an extremist Islamic regime in Islamabad would have profound negative impact not only on the sub-continent, but throughout the Islamic World. US interest lies in avoiding such a development.

Since India and Pakistan are nuclear weapons states. How Islamabad and New Delhi manage their nuclear rivalry will have an implication far beyond the subcontinent. Averting a nuclear holocaust on the subcontinent will be a key US policy goal. This will keep Pakistan and US engaged in the years to come. The future course of the US-Pakistan strategic relations would also depend on whether the interest of the two countries are complementary or divergent. Further, American assistance to Pakistan would depend on the utility of Islamabad to promote US foreign policy objectives. It seems Afghanistan is going to loom large in near future on bilateral relation as both countries have agreed to fight against the menace of terrorism.
It must be clearly understood by US-Pakistan policy makers that to establish reliable, creditable and durable relations both countries have to leave all real or imaginary apprehensions, fears suspicions and mistrust. Irritants should be removed through diplomacy, cooperation, negotiation and attitude of give and take. US has greater responsibility to carry burden of relations because of its power and influence. It is only then and then alone that a lasting, durable, strategic relations beneficial for both can be ensured. Hence, a long term objective of conciliation and strategic friendship should not be lost sight of which is essential for peaceful co-existence.