Historical Perspective of Pak-us Military Relations (1988-1990) an Overview

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Abstract: In this paper Pak: US strategic relations after disintegration of Soviet Union will be analyzed, because Pakistan witnessed the low priority of the relations between two countries during post cold war era and was placed under sanctions due to the nuclear explosions. In characteristics as a coaster-ride up to different decades of ups and downs remain their between two friendly countries, especially military ties remain in tension because US had already imposed military sanctions on Pakistan through NPT and MTCR and Pakistan was un able to receive military aid till US President himself certify that Pakistan does not poses a nuclear weapon.

Key words:

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Since intervention of Soviet Union into Afghanistan in 1979, Pakistan had played a significant role in Afghan crises. Since that, Pakistan had got military aid from US. These relations were continued till George Bush took reigns of US administration after President Ronald Reagan. He (George Bush) had already stated during his election campaign that he will continue the previous administration policies till solution of the Afghan war. So, because of that it can be argued that due to the crises in Afghanistan Pakistan got massive military aid from US.

If we will see the background of the relations of both countries, “For the entire history of Pakistan, the relationship with United States has been a love-hate one, at times had made the most-allied-ally and at others axis-of evil”. (http://www.foreignpolicyblogs.com)

Since long Pakistan served as a front line state during the Soviet –Afghan war in the eighties and received $ 3.5 billions of military and economic assistance from the US, which supplies including 40, F-16 fighters, Cobra attack helicopters, M-48 A5 main battle tanks, heavy artillery and various infantry weapons including stringer shoulder launched SAM’s.” (Sheikh 2007) During this crises period, Pakistan was also poured its policy of Nuclearization by India. Due to which its military aid was stopped under the “Symington Amendment”. The main aim of this amendment was to threat Pakistan that through which it must stop its nuclear programme by US Congress. On other hand they were of the opinion that, if US President issues a certificate to US Congress that It (Pakistan) does no posses the nuclear weapon then military aid can be released in fever of Pakistan So during Afghan crises it was the obligatory of US administration to issue a certificate to US Congress. In this way Symington amendment was waved off on the annual bases, because of the same policies of Pakistan and US in Afghanistan.

But after quite some time when Soviet troops starts pull out from Afghan soil under Geneva Accord of 1988, US security interests changed over nightly and US President refuse to certify Pakistan. Now, US President himself determined the security clearance from Pakistani Government that Pakistan does posses or not posses the nuclear weapons? Benazir Bhutto being the Prime Mister took serious stand on Pakistan’s nuclear policy, which was the serious issue of her foreign policy, though on other hand South Asian Specialist “Mr. Geoffrey Kemp also opposed this US tilt to cut off military aid to Pakistan only because of its nuclear programme. (Pakistan Horizon1989)

It is believed that, “Pakistan Peoples Party [PPP] government evolved the Benazir Nuclear Doctrine in April 1989. This was done to protect Pakistan's nuclear assets and to give confidence to the world community which was deeply concerned about the nuclear program. Under this doctrine, Islamabad undertook not to put
together the components of a nuclear device unless its security was threatened and also not to export nuclear technology to any third country. This doctrine followed discussions between Islamabad and Washington in 1988 and 1989. It was announced during the Benazir Bhutto state visit to Washington at the invitation of the first President Bush in April 1989. Later Washington had certain issues in this regard which it wished to discuss with Prime Minister Bhutto in the summer of 1990. This discussion with the special envoy of the Bush administration could not take place because the Foreign Office was unable to coordinate the meeting. At the time, the Prime Minister was traveling to different countries mustering support for the Kashmir dispute for a scheduled Foreign Ministers meeting of the Organization of Islamic countries. Once the PPP government was sacked on August 6, 1990, Washington cancelled the four and a half billion dollar assistance package as well as the sale of sixty F-16s which the Benazir government had negotiated". (www.globalsecurity.org/index.html)

Due to which in the year 1989, Benazir Bhutto inaugurated a nuclear power plant in Kot-Addu (Punjab), where she reiterated her government’s policy, to development the nuclear energy for peace full purpose. In a reply of a question she said, “We are committed to a peace full nuclear policy for energy purpose. We do not want doubts to shadow Pakistan’s policy and in the process isolate the country, when there is so much good will around” (Times of India, 1988) while speaking in a gathering at other place, “she also announced that Pakistan would continue with its nuclear weapons development programme, raising concerns that a nuclear weapons since the 1970’s.” (http://www.pakistan4ever.com)

While talking, “In March 2005 Benazir Bhutto said, Pakistan may have had a nuclear weapon long before that. She said her father, former Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, had told her from his prison cell that preparations for a nuclear test had been made in 1977. "... He expected Pakistan to have its first nuclear test in ... in August 1977. I was in his conduit to the person who was actually running the nuclear program who is no longer alive now. His name was Mr. Munir and he was chairman of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission. He told us that the nuclear test had been delayed to December 1977, and then he told us the nuclear test had been indefinitely delayed." It is unlikely that this would have been a test with appreciable nuclear yield, since at that time Pakistan would not have had an appreciable inventory of fissile material”. (www.globalsecurity.org/index.html a) while replying to the question she said, “Her government had a nuclear capability when she came into office the first time in 1988, ten years before Pakistan's first nuclear test. Ms. Bhutto said Pakistan had all the components for nuclear weapons, but never assembled them until India set off several tests in 1998. "When I became Prime Minister I was told we had not put together the bomb. We had the components of the bomb. So, when is a chicken a chicken? Is it a chicken when you have it in separate parts but you don't put it together? Or is it a chicken when you actually put it together? And although we had the components of a nuclear weapon, we took the conscious decision not to put together a nuclear weapon, which is why when India detonated it took us some time to put together the weapon and actually have our own tests.” (www.globalsecurity.org/index.html b) while supporting the Benazir Bhutto’s statement, “Dr. Samar Mubarak Mand, member Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission, has said that the team of Atomic Energy Commission developed the design of atomic bomb in 1978 and had successfully conducted a cold test after developing the first atomic bomb in 1983”. (www.globalsecurity.org/index.html c)

On other hand, US was of the opinion that, Pakistan is still busy to make nuclear weapon, so President George Bush issued an statement that until and unless Pakistan stop its nuclear weapon programme, US will not provide its military aid to Pakistan. President George Bush expressed his serious concerns about Pakistan’s continuing efforts to develop its nuclear weapon programme, but Pakistan assured US that, “its nuclear programme is not the weapon but it is the best solution to meet the danger of proliferation in South Asia. “President Bush welcomed the assurance given by Pakistan”. (Pakistan Horizon 1989a)

During this period US had signed an agreement with Pakistan to supply 70 F-16 fighter aircraft’s along with some other weapons, Pakistan had already paid about 370 million dollars when the deal was signed before Pressler Amendment, but US refuse to hand over F-16 to Pakistan. On other hand, US put pressure to Pakistan through its amendments like Pressler amendment and MTCR that Pakistan must sign Non-Proliferation Treaty, but Pakistan refuse to sign it, till India sign, but India refuses to do so.

On other hand India continued to test its nuclear weapons, despite the assurances to US administration by Pakistan, It (Pakistan) was compelled to test its missile system. So on February 11th, 1989, Pakistan tested its first surface to surface missile and on February 14th, 1989, surface to air missiles, all these were Non Nuclear entities.

In June 1989, President George Bush invited Benazir Bhutto on a State visit to US, on good will tour; this was her first official US trip as Prime Minister of Pakistan. During this visit Pakistan’s nuclear issue was before US administration and the US Press, on this visit US suggested a proposal that if Pakistan is serious in purchasing of F-16 aircraft’s, then it can only be given to Pakistan till Pakistan Cap and roll back its
nuclear programme, but Benazir Bhutto refused to do and said that, “we will not provoke a nuclear arms race in sub-continent.” (Azmi, Raziullah 1994)

Pakistan was of the opinion that non-proliferation step by it, is totally linked with the India if India is agrees automatically Pakistan would also agree to sign Non Proliferation Treaty but the delivery of F-16’s can not be linked with the nuclear questions because supply of F-16 to Pakistan and signing of non-proliferation treaty are two different issues which can not be linked together, because, it is the prime duty of US administration to release the F-16, for which Pakistan had paid earlier, if not, then US is bound to refund the paid amount to Pakistan. It was because of that Pakistan had great danger from its neighbor India, because many wars had been fought between Pakistan and India, because of that due to the feeling of unsecured, Pakistan refused to stop non-proliferation of nuclear weapons till India do the same. In other words it can be argued that Pakistan linked its nuclear programme with the utmost solution of the bone of contention between Pakistan and India which is non-other then Kashmir problem. President George Bush was of the opinion that Kashmir issue should be resolved bilaterally between Pakistan and India according to the Simla agreement.

During Benazir Bhutto’s visit to US, Pakistan also took keen interest in purchasing of the different anti-tank helicopters, just to maintain balance of power in the region. Pakistan also agreed to sale of its 60 F-16 fighter air crafts to third party and money should be returned to Pakistan. While signing different pacts with US, Pakistan also got a heavy military aid from US, during Benazir Bhutto’s visit to US while speaking in council for foreign relations she was if the opinion that, “I would like to see the U.S. military and economic aid to Pakistan continues. I think there needs to be a long-term commitment to security in the region”. (Benazir Bhutto 2007) She was also of the opinion that, “I would like them to link it to the restoration of democracy”. (Benazir Bhutto 2007a)

When she returned back from their, US administration approves the, “total request (which) stood at $ 621 million for the 1990 as a part of the $ 4.02 billion, six-year package ending in 1993”. (Azmi, Raziullah 1994a) Pakistan not stopped here but it also intends to acquire more and more weapons to strengthen its military capability. During the spring of 1990, major crises accrue between Pakistan and India on their core issue of Kashmir, “Pakistan reactivated or accelerated its programme of nuclear weapon”. (Azmi, Raziullah 1994b) Pakistan also got the capability to modify its F-16 fighter aircrafts for carrying nuclear warheads. The tension of Proliferation Mountain high in the South Asia region, it is also to be said that during this time, “A de-facto nuclear deterrence is already said to be at work in south Asia, the first example of the two regional adversaries locked in an action-reaction nuclear race.” (Manchanda Rita 1990) During this time Benazir Bhutto’s democratic government was sacked by her President Ghulam Ishaque Khan on August 06, 1990 and on other hand President George Bush under the Pressler Amendment also refuse to certify that Pakistan does not poses the nuclear weapon.

“C. Christine Fair, in her wall street journal article, “Pakistan Needs Its Own Nuclear Deal”, stressed on a need to make a civilian nuclear pact with Pakistan, she argued that, it will help reduce the trust deficit and serve mutual interests of US and Pakistan.” (Muhammad Anas 2010)

Under Pressler Amendment, US administration, suspended all type of military assistance to Pakistan, which was started in 1984, in this way Pakistan’s F-16 aircraft’s problem remain unsolved.

**Conclusion:**

Pakistan played a vital role during Afghan crises but when Soviet Union troops pulled out from Afghanistan the US interests changed into non proliferation of nuclear weapons in south Asian region in which Pakistan was dragged into it by India. US put much pressure through different amendments in the names of Pressler amendment, MTCR by its congress but Pakistan was of the opinion that F-16 issue must be solved for which it had already paid and NPT was linked with the solution of core issue of Kashmir, Pakistan agreed to sign if India sign.

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