

Q no: 1

Discuss the changing trends in Pakistan-US relations since 2001?

Ans:

### Introduction

Since 2001, US-Pakistan relations have been a roller coaster. They cooperated on the several issues and enjoyed good partnership. However, at the same time, they differed on some important matters based on their national interest and turned hostile against each other.

In order to understand, in broader ways, the changing trend in US-Pakistan relations since 2001, their relations must be divided into the following categories year wise.

#### **From 2001 - 2003:**

After 9/11 incidents, Pakistan decided to support US led "War on terror" and became important ally. As a result, Islamabad provided its bases to the US for launching an attack on the Afghan's soil and accepted all its conditions. To appreciate Pakistan's cooperation, The US, in 2001, introduced a bill to lift all sanctions,

②

previously imposed on it and, in 2003  
forgive \$1 billion dollar worth of loan  
it had granted to Islamabad.

Besides, Musharraf, in his speech  
of 12<sup>th</sup> January 2002, banned militant  
organisations including Lashkar-e-  
Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Muhammad  
(JEM) - It created confidence in  
American administration that Pakistan  
has started to take some serious  
measures against the other militant  
group as well.

Moreover, Pakistan's establishment, in  
collaboration with CIA started to hunt  
Al-Qaeda militant that had penetrated  
inside Pakistan. CIA provided  
intelligence, while Pakistan army  
sent forces to capture them. For instance,  
on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2002, Abu-Zubaida was  
from the house of LeT member -  
Abu-Zubaida was from Palestine  
and appointed chief of operation  
by Bin Laden - Ramzi-bin-al-Shibi  
was arrested from under the  
construction building of Karachi.  
He was the head military wing  
of Al-Qaeda. Besides, Khalid  
Shaikh Muhammad was arrested  
from the house of women wing

of Jamat-e-Islami (JI) in 2003.

Thus, this cooperation improved US-Pak relations.

However, Pakistan's support to west against Afghan Taliban remained limited because of both strategic calculation and mass sentiments as described by Anatol Lieven in his book "Pakistan: A hard country."

In term of strategic calculation,

Pakistan's establishment feared that Afghanistan under non Pashtun government would become an Indian client state, leading to India's strategic encirclement of Pakistan from both the borders during crisis.

It is true that Pakistan afford to fight on two borders at the same time.

"In terms of mass sentiments, the overwhelming majority of Pakistanis - including the communities from which most Pakistani soldiers are drawn see the Afghan Taliban as engaged in the legitimate war of resistance against the foreign occupation." Even the young soldiers did not consider them as the enemies of state and thus, there were risk of disintegration with Pakistan's army. Hence, Pakistan's policy of

extending support to Afghan Taliban  
badly affected US-Pakistan relations.

## From 2004 to 2007

In 2004, Pakistan launched a military operation in FATA to capture the militant of Al-Qaeda who were given shelter by the local people. The action of Islamabad was in line with the interest of US. However, the operation could not succeed, as the local people resisted the military and protected their so called guests. It ended up a in singing in keel with local citizens.

In the same year, President George Bush officially declared Pakistan as a non-NATO ally granting it the authority to purchase strategic and advanced military equipments.

However, in 2006, Pakistan was caught red handed in trying to supply the full component of nuclear bomb making plant to Libya. It brought the US in direct clash with Pakistan. Musharraf made Dr. Abdul Qadir Khan as scapegoat by blaming that he alone was involved.

Afterward, Dr. Qadir Khan was put in

5

well-guarded house arrest so that truth could not emerge.

In 2007, a report was issued in which Pakistan was accused of using aid money provided by US to Pakistan for its cooperation on war on terror, for strengthening its defence against India. Ahmed Rashid writes in his book "Pakistan on the Brink" that from 2001 to 2008, Pakistan received \$11.8 billion US aid and 80 per cent was spent on the military. Hence, the event of Libya and US aid jolted US-Pak relations.

## From 2008 to 2010

In 2008, the civilian government under Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) came into power in Pakistan and it was eager to make good relation with US to get economic assistance. In 2009, Obama also became the president of US and realized the importance of Pakistan to win the war against terrorism. Obama created a term Af-Pak representative of the US for Afghanistan and Pakistan to solve Afghan crisis through negotiation. By this time, US relation with Pakistan's military was not good and it decided to win

6

the cooperation of civilian government. Obama administration passed Kerry-Lugar bill in October 2009 to offer Pakistan's civilian sector \$ 7.5 billion for 5 years at \$ 1.5 billion per year. It was rejected by the military and further deteriorated civil-military relations.

## From 2011 to 2013

In 2011, a series of incidents took place that deteriorated US-Pak relations. In January 2011, Raymond Davis, a CIA agent, killed two men in Lahore. As a result, he was arrested and only released when blood money was paid to the victims' families. Besides,

In May 2011, Osama bin-Ladin was killed from inside Pakistan by secret American operations, violating sovereignty of Pakistan. Two helicopters entered into Pakistan's territory from Afghanistan without informing its government. It created frustration in Pakistan's establishment against the US.

Moreover, in November 2011, the NATO forces attacked Pakistan's military check post in Salala, killing around 24 Pakistani soldiers.

It was claimed to be an accident, but it further worsened US-Pak relations. As a result, Pakistan got Salala air base evacuated from the US forces.

Pakistan also blocked the NATO supplies temporarily to display its utmost rage towards Washington.

In 2013, Pakistan improved its relations with China and initiated China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Hence, Pakistan shifted its loyalty towards China from US. Thus, Pakistan relations with the US remained abysmal during these years.

## From 2014 to 2015

In 2014, Ashraf Ghani won the elections and became the new president of Afghanistan. He was keen to solve the Afghan's issue through dialogues. In Pakistan civil-military relations improved owing to the coming of a new civilian government in power under Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. Pakistan's new Chief of Staff General Raheel Sharif, who was appointed in late 2013, was also interested in arranging talks.

between the US and Afghanistan Taliban. The deal was simple, Pakistan would bring Afghan Taliban on the negotiation table and Afghanistan would go hard against Ja Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan's (TTP) leader who were hiding inside Afghanistan and wreaking havoc in Pakistan from there. The talks were arranged in 2015. Hence, the convergence of interests of US and Pakistan, once again brought them closer to each other. However, the dialogues could not succeed, as Afghan Taliban carried out series of attacks in Kabul on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2015 causing approximately 50 deaths and several hundred injuries.

## From 2016 to date

In 2016, Trump became the new president of the US. He promised during his elections campaigns, to pull the US out from international conflicts. However, his Afghan policy remained totally opposite. He not only given approval to increase American soldiers,



but also put pressure <sup>on</sup> Pakistan to do more. To make things worse, He increased the involvement of India in Afghanistan. His policy was described as "stay and fight". The new Afghan Policy of US clashed with interest of Pakistan.

Very recently, Afghan Taliban have concluded Doha peace agreement with US to solve Afghan's crisis. The terms they have not only agreed to accept the withdrawal of US in installment, but also decide to negotiate with the existing Afghan's government and other ethnic groups for power sharing. It is evident that, the US and Pakistan both want peace in Afghanistan.

Conclusion:

Thus, although Pakistan became the most important ally of the US after 9/11 and backed its campaign against war "war on Terror", yet their relations were not smooth and went through bumpy patches owing to their conflict of interest on different issues.