

An Estranged Client and an Annoyed Patron: Shift in the Pakistan-US Relations during the 'War on Terror'.

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Abstract

The Cold War period witnessed Pakistan and the United States as "staunch allies" with patron-client bond. The end of the East-West confrontation, however, began a new era in Pak-American relations due to the changing priorities of the long-time ties amongst the departments of bilateral allies- CIA, State Department, the White House, and the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI). Main concerns of these policy-making bodies/agencies clashed with their counterparts in their policies toward Afghanistan and Pakistan's tribal belt following the 9/11 events.

The divergence of approaches toward the future of Afghanistan and giving a casual response to the sensitivity of Pakistan's security vis-à-vis India has further aggravated tension between the Pakistan Army and the US policy making bodies. The war on terror especially along Pakistan's Western border in the tribal areas is infuriating the already volatile situation. The sources of policies which have brought the two countries to the brink of wrangling are the stumbling blocks in winning the war on terror.

Key words: South Asia, US, Pakistan Army, diplomacy, Kerry Lugar Bill

Events of the past two decades- the end of the cold war in 1989, the tragedy of September 11, 2001, and the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq 2003- have drastically changed the types of

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international issues the US faces. The South Asia is the major arena in this new era of international diplomacy and warfare. As the US attempts to address the situation in Afghanistan and Iraq as well as other major security issues in the Middle East and South Asia, a positive relationship with Pakistan could prove to be the most important asset. However, the traditionally strong patron-client relationship the US has had with the Pakistan Army has fundamentally changed. A new paradigm of US-Pakistan relations has evolved over the past two decades. Only the events of the past few years- the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, blatant and blunt support to former President Musharraf and the passage of Kerry-Lugar Bill 2009- have illuminated this new reality. A staunch supporter of the US- Pakistan has grown economically, militarily, and diplomatically- dependent upon the US to play its regional role in South Asia. Because the people and the Army under General Kiyani of Pakistan are asserting their independence from the US by expressing their opposition to the Karry-Lugar Bill, support to the Pakistani Taliban, and the US policies in Afghanistan as well as its drone attacks on Tribal belt, while the government of Pakistan is still collaborating on every issue, the relationship between the Pakistan Army and the US is most accurately categorized as 'Estranged Client'.

This study will trace the evolution of the US-Pakistan Army relationship from its patron-client bond to the current 'Estranged Client' stage. After looking at the reasons for the creation of the patron-client relationship, this paper will show how the annoyed Pakistan Army and perceived decline of the US have eroded the foundation of the patron-client relationship. Then, recent strains on the US- Pakistani public relationship will be examined in order to establish the degree of independence Pakistanis are asserting. Finally, this analysis will evaluate the possibilities for the future of US-Pakistan relations.

Theoretical Framework

Bilateral institutional relations between two states in the modern era can be conceptualized in a number of ways. Most salient to this discussion is the theoretical framework referred to as patron-client relationship. Christopher Carney, in a piece entitled 'International Patron-Client Relationships: A Conceptual Framework', outlines three characteristics of patron-client relationships: "First, there must be a decided asymmetry between the military capabilities of the states

involved'; second, the client plays an important role in patronal competition'; a third critical aspect of patron-clientcy involves the perception of the relationship by other parties." (Christopher, 1989:46). The presence of these three attributes in a bilateral relationship signifies power disparity between two nations and the dominance of the more powerful nation over the weaker nation- a patron-client relationship.

While the United States and Pakistan had some diplomatic exchanges during 1940s, they did not enter into close relationship until initial 1950s. At this point, the two nations entered into a client-patron relationship according to the three parameters outlined above. There was a clear asymmetry of military power, since Pakistan was almost completely dependent on the US for defense against outside threats- India, Afghanistan and the former Soviet Union. The main impetus for the creation of strong US-Pakistan ties was the Truman Doctrine's central tenet of containment of the Soviet Union. (John, 1982:45). Pakistan, like many other client nations in that era, was a pawn in the larger struggle between the US and USSR- the two major patrons seeking clientage in the region. Specifically, the US valued Pakistan for its geo-strategic position to such an extent that Pakistan was 'the most important military factor in the South Asia'. Therefore, the Pak-US relationship conforms to the second characteristic of patron-client relationship. Finally, the close Pak-US relationship during the Cold War was an observable and well-known arrangement: the most allied ally of the US. Numerous other examples of exchanged favors between the US and Pakistan substantiate the notion of a strong bilateral relationship between the two to other nations around the world. While the US-Pakistan relationship at its inception was a patron-client arrangement, later developments altered this arrangement, as will be seen in subsequent sections of the paper.

The characteristics and dynamics of patron-client relationships have been analyzed by a number of authors. However, the phases that follow a patron-client period of bilateral relations have not been specifically addressed. Carney only briefly touches on the existence of post-patron-client phases of a bilateral relation:

The availability of the exit option is another important trait of patron-clientcy. In as much as the relationship was entered into voluntarily, it can be abandoned the same way. Patron-client relationships may

simply die a natural death or may end amidst conflict and dashed expectations. Or, as is sometimes the case, they can evolve into something more akin to an instrumental friendship, shedding the other traits of cliency ((Christopher, 1989:45)

Furthermore, Carney does not define 'instrumental friendship' or how it differs from a patron-client relationship. In order to argue that Pakistan is assuming this role as an 'Estranged Client', the other possible outcomes of a patron-client relationship must be outlined clearly and ultimately rejected. Patron-client relationships can evolve into one of five arrangements:

- **Progressive Decline:** In this situation the ties between the patron and client weaken gradually as a result of mutual disinterest in the relationship. As times goes on, the two nations become essentially indifferent to each other.
- **Sudden Cessation:** In this situation, some disagreement or problematic event results in the immediate end of the patron-client relationship. Afterwards, the two nations may be either indifferent or inimical to each other.
- **Estranged Client:** In this satiation, the patron and client maintain a cooperative relationship; however, the client asserts much ore independence. In certain situations, the client may oppose the patron and the stability of the relationship is a constant concern.
- **Role Reversal:** In this situation, the patron weakens and the client strengthens such that the confluence of these two trends results in the former patron assuming the role of the client and the former client assuming the role of the patron. This role reversal can be a short phase in the overall relationship or a longer term arrangement.
- **Sustainable Equality:** In this situation, the patron weakens, the client strengthens, or both occur. This results in a roughly balanced relationship between the two nations. They will cooperate when it is mutually beneficial and not cooperate when they have a disagreement- but the overall relationship will be strong.

It is important to note that these five states of affairs are also not definite arrangements. For example, the cause for a Sudden Cessation may be remedied and a patron-client relationship may be resumed-

only to be followed by an Estranged Client arrangement with periods of Role Reversal.

With this theoretical framework established, it is possible to apply it to Pak-US relations.

Pakistan's Decent in the post 9/11 Scenario

Pakistan Army has paid heaviest price for the war on terror. It deployed 140,000 troops along Pak-Afghan border, thus weakening and risking its position on its Eastern front vis-à-vis India. Till 9/11, Pakistan's western border was guarded by few soldiers only. Similarly, till to-date, more than 8700 Pakistani troops have been killed or wounded in curbing the menace of terrorism while more than 21000 civilians killed or wounded (*The Nation*, 2010).

As if to drive home the point, Daily Times reported that "Pakistan has suffered economic losses amounting to \$6 billion during 2007-08 while supporting the global war on terror." Dr. Hafiz Pasha (Pakistan's Finance Minister), heading a panel of Planning Commission economists last year, told the Pakistan Institute of Development Economists' annual meeting, 'This loss to the economy, according to the government of Pakistan, is over \$8 billion,' said Pasha, adding that the US should double the funds being given to Pakistan for its support to the war on terror in view of the massive losses. He said the prevailing economic situation was "not very positive", as tax collection had fallen, imports were very high, real effecting exchange rate was functioning at the level of last year and the ministries' expenses had increased by Rs.100 billion (Chaudhry, 2009).

The losses for Pakistan do not stop here. As analyst Pepe Escobar points out in Asia Times 'Last but not least, the energy wars. And that involves that occult, almost supernatural entity, the \$7.6 billion Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline, which would carry gas from eastern Turkmenistan through Afghanistan east of Herat and down Taliban-controlled Nimruz and Helmand provinces, down Balochistan in Pakistan and then to the Pakistani port of Gwadar in the Arabian Sea. No investor in his right mind will invest in a pipeline in a war zone, thus Afghanistan must be "stabilized" at all costs (Pepe, 2009).

Hence, Operation Enduring Freedom adversely affected the already fragile economy of Pakistan. Major losses were caused to the civil aviation, tourism, investment and shipping due to rise in the rates of insurance.

US Decline

The cold war era of international relations was defined by the state of bipolarity; the US and the USSR were the two major rival poles of global war. However, at the end of the cold war, with the collapse of the USSR, the US became the sole super power and the world entered into a period of uni-polarity (Charles, 1990:23-33). The 1990s was an era of US primacy in world affairs, able to operate in an arena devoid of true power equals. However, the tragic events of September 11, 2001 called into question US invulnerability. Subsequent military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq have overstretched the army (www.news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/4649066.stm), and lack of appropriate equipment has curtailed the viability of American armed forces (McMichael, 2007). Additionally, the US economy has had several down-turns in the past decade, the most recent credit crisis being only the worst in a series that does not appear to be ending in the near future. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) predicts 'that financial losses stemming from the US mortgage crisis might approach \$1 trillion' (*Bloomberg News*, 2008). These military and economic issues have been exacerbated by the world's growing distrust and dislike of US foreign policy. Even though there was a high point of global support for the US invasion of Afghanistan, subsequent actions-the US invasion of Iraq- have sent global opinion of the US plummeting (www.nola.com/frontpage/t-p/index.ssf?/base/news-5/114784645160150.xml). These indicators, as well as numerous other small issues, have converged to diminish the global standing of the US.

To say that the US has declined is not to say that it is not still the global power. However, as the US declines relative to other nations, the shrinking power differential gives the US less of a decisive leadership role. The goal of this paper is not to gauge this decline by any metric. Rather, it only discussed to point out that something fundamental has changed and the debate about it signifies this reality (Fox, 2007:643-53). Additionally, this fundamental change is recognized by the rest of the world, and the mechanics of international

relations are being affected by this new reality of uncertain US supremacy.

A New Relationship

The two previous sections established the downward trajectory of Pakistan and the stagnant if not downward trajectory of the US. The established trajectories of both countries are dependent upon each other. Now, the examination will look at three issues on which the two diverge, and analyze these diversions to determine the nature of the new relationship. Each of these issues- the Afghanistan, US drone attacks on Pakistan's tribal belt and the Kerry-Lugar Act (KLA) – demonstrates that the patron-client relationship between the US and Pakistan Army has ended and that the two have entered a new type of relationship- 'Estranged Client'.

1. Historiographic Triangular Relationship between Afghanistan, Pakistan and the US

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 was a turning point in super-power rivalry after detente. The invasion was at once denounced by the Americans. Pakistan and the US supported the armed resistance by the Mujahideens against Soviet Union. The Mujahideens were given holy accords and the roles of national heroes by the Pak-US alliance. The US president Ronald Regan named these 'freedom fighters' as "the moral equivalent of our own Founding Fathers" (Kurt, 1993:161). However, the true inside story of the Afghan war has come to the limelight just recently. Truth not only negates the 'official version' of events (Brzezinski, 2003:273), but also exposes how the US induced the Soviet invasion on Afghanistan in structuring the Afghan jihad (Kristian, 1999:182-83).

True story of Afghanistan reveals that the US started its campaign to aid the Afghan fighters in Pakistan against the Soviet Union during April, 1979 (Anwar, 1988:229-236). Weapons were imported from the Middle East and China to aid rebels much before April 1979 (Smith, 1995:583-93). Jimmy Carter authorized U.S. covert action on July 3, 1979, six months before the Soviet intervention on December 24, 1979. The reasons were outlined in 1998 by Zbigniew Brzezinski, Carter's National Security Advisor, who revealed that CIA gave military

support to the Afghan Mujahideens so that it may induce a full military reaction from the Soviet's side.

The reason for the military support to the Afghan freedom fighters was not for the democracy and against the soviet styled system of government but rather, as Brzezinski said, "to give the USSR its own Vietnam," by pulling it "into the Afghan trap." Afghanistan government and the Soviet Union always condemned the CIA's role in the region (Ashitkov, et al., 1986). But it was mostly denounced and rejected by the western scholars and internationalists alike (Garthoff, 1985).

CIA and the Saudi government provided six and nine billion dollars of weapons to the Afghan Jihadis (Faltas, et al., 2001:13). On the other hand, the Soviets added 5.7 billion dollars of weapons to the Afghan puppet regime. Thus Afghanistan became the most militarized state with changed political, military and economic results (Smith, 1995:62).

The CIA fought the war in Afghanistan in the name of religion- A Jihad (Carpenter, 1994:79). Americans were here to fight a proxy war against the Soviet troops. Afghanistan became, as a result, a warring land where the US supported the Afghan Mujahideens in the name of Jihad against the Soviets. The Jihad also attracted other Muslims of the world including Osama Bin Ladin. This converged Afghans and Arabs fighting in the name of Islam and Allah (Rubin, 1997:179). Perhaps Afghans were not that radical. However, the arrival of the Arabs turned picture of Jihad here. Afghans turned into fundamentalist radicals (Carpenter, 1994:79)

During Afghan Jihad of 1979-91, Pakistan was turned into a base-camp where recruiting, training, and arming of the Mujahideens took place. This was taking place under the command of Pakistan's military general Zia ul Haq. General Zia's shrewd futuristic approach kept Americans as client and Pakistan as a driving force or patron in the Afghan Jihad. He knew American weaknesses and Pakistan's bargaining position. Americans wanted to win Afghan war against Soviet Union to take revenge of Vietnam and for that matter they were ready to sacrifice anything (\$\$\$) in any amount. This increased Pakistan's bargaining position which mustered weapons and money for its own defence.

The Soviet left Afghanistan in 1988. However, Afghanistan had become a gun-powder magazine. It was supplied with weapons from all sides- Soviet Union, Muslim world, and the US (CIA).

In the build-up to the invasion of Afghanistan just after 9/11, the US had a great deal of ease creating an international coalition. Due to its long border with Afghanistan, Pakistan was seen as particularly important ally because the US military could have an easy access to Kabul as well as East of Afghanistan. When the issue of authorizing the US army operate from Pakistan soil came, the former Pakistani President Musharraf never wasted a single moment to say 'yes' to the US cry. It's a very common norm that Pakistani dictators' nod positively to the US needs to legitimise their authoritarian and undemocratic rule as well as mustering military and economic assistance from the State Department and Pentagon. In return, between 9/11 and 2007, Pakistan mustered \$10 billion in US aid (*The Washington Quarterly*, 2007:7-19). Till to-date, Afghanistan has remained an influential issue in the US foreign policy vis-à-vis Pakistan and its army.

With previous bad experiences in aiding US war efforts rather proxy war in Afghanistan against Communism, Pakistan having developed a regional power, agreed US military plans because they ran in congruence to Pakistan's objectives. After the 1950s and 60s, and 1980s Cold War front line ally, it is clear that Pakistan was same malleable client of former decades, rather a substantially more dependent actor.

2. Pakistan's Domestic Politics, Pakistan Army and the Blackwater Activities

The Pakistan Army has already launched military operations against the Pakistani Taliban first in Swat named Rah-e-Rast (right path) and now in Waziristan Rah-e-Nijat (path to salvation). Pakistan exploited nearly all available non-military options before undertaking such operations. While Washington supports the GHQ in its operations in the areas mentioned above, GHQ argues that the resilience of the TTP terrorism is much related to the political and military support given to them by outside powers. There have also been military allegations that just in the beginning of operation Rah-e-Nijat in Waziristan; American helicopters were witnessed to have started an air-lift for the terrorists of the Pakistani Taliban. In both cases, one feels there is an officially

sanctioned 'dual policy' practised by the US and the Pakistan Army. CIA and the ISI, once buddies of the Cold War today are at loggerhead and do not see eye to eye on several strategic issues.

The Pakistan Army's alleged support to Afghan Taliban is no secret (Ahmed , 2008) and widely supported amongst the Pakistani public. This has raised the power of attraction that GHQ holds in the eyes of activists in the NWFP, Baluchistan as well as Islamist elements everywhere in Pakistan. If GHQ in the near future gets once again closer to the US, it would most likely lose the moral ground it has gained over the past couple of years since Musharraf's departure. The US image in the region is already in tatters. While Americans regard Pakistan and Afghanistan as separate countries, to the Afghan Taliban and Pakhtoons of NWFP, Baluchistan and especially tribal Pakhtoons, it is all one friendly, familiar piece of territory. For them the border, Durand line, is just a Western invention. It is indeed interesting to note that the people living in these places consider Afghan Taliban justified in taking up arms against the US/NATO forces, but at the same time thinks of Pakistani Taliban as terrorists (*Daily Wahdat, 2009*).

In some respects, the move of the US to station troops as well as Blackwater and DynCorp (US non-governmental military, and mercenary companies) in Pakistan may be compared to the US troops and bases, especially the 'Badaber base' in Pakistan during the 1960s. But American troops and bases in Pakistan were then considered as powerful symbols of the strategic relations between the two countries. In fact, the Pakistan Army encouraged the establishments of such bases as it appeared to strengthen Pakistan's position vis-à-vis a powerful neighbour-India. Today the situation is very different. The presence of US troops and Blackwater on Pakistani soil are considered by the Pakistan Army as posing a serious challenge to Pakistan's security. Americans consider such 'presence' as a part of its global 'War on Terror'. However, senior officers in the Pakistan Army who I had communications with; believe that the presence of American military as well as DynCorp and Blackwater (just recently renamed as Xe- Xenon) will be for extended periods. They also fear that such 'presence' will be a direct threat to the security of Pakistan's nuclear weapons. My informants in the Pakistan Army also hold Blackwater responsible for the car bomb blasts in Pakistan. And believe that the US agencies are intentionally destabilising Pakistan so that, giving the

pretext of a terrorist threat, the nuclear weapons of Pakistan may be taken away.

In terms of domestic politics, GHQ has grown discontented with the possibility that the Pakistani civilian Presidency has gradually turned out to be a strategic tool in the hands of US interests. Permission to base Blackwater and the US marines stay in urban areas including Islamabad are key issues that have eroded Pakistan Army's confidence in President Asif Ali Zardari. As a result of lack of trust in President Zardari, the control of Nuclear Command Authority is recently shifted from him to the Prime Minister (*The News*, 2009).

3. US drone attacks on tribal areas of Pakistan

The third event which is investigated here is the Pakistan Army's annoyance over the US drone attacks on Pakistan's tribal areas. The Army was already conducting raids to curb terrorist elements in the tribal area. However, situation is different than in the past CIA-ISI relations. According to my officer informants, who requested for anonymity, the US have always assured the Pakistan Army that American ground operations on their territory would happen only with advance consultation with the Pakistan military, and when possible, American and Pakistani troops would operate together. However, The US appears to have conducted ground and air raids inside Pakistan's tribal belt without consulting their military counterparts. Consultation is now shrunk to an intimation of a strike- according to my sources often only a few seconds before it happens. Such non-consultation is once again the repetition of the institutional interaction of 1960s. President Kennedy provided military assistance to India but without prior consulting the Pakistan Army as promised. American drone attacks in tribal areas of Pakistan in which to-date 14 Al-Qaeda terrorists have been killed along with 1000 innocent Pakistani civilians is a sheer violation of territorial sovereignty of Pakistan. GHQ has long refused to give the green light to American operations in the tribal belt lest such attacks might convert people to Al-Qaeda. Thus despite a 62 year acquaintance, the military to military relationship is increasingly strained. The CIA senses that the ISI is acting in complete coordination with the Taliban in Afghanistan (Ahmed, 2008:221-239). The ISI in turn believes that the CIA is not only supporting the Pakistani Taliban militants but is also carrying out subversive activities inside Pakistan's territory (*Business Recorder*, 2009). They fear that "the CIA wants to

create enough chaos and violence in Pakistan via Blackwater activities so as to be able to justify coming in and seizing control of the nuclear assets. When there is a state of total chaos in Pakistan, the US can pressure the UNSC into allowing it to takeover Pakistan's nuclear assets" (*The Nation* , 2010) - what will euphemistically be termed "under international control" (*The Nation* , 2010). Hence it's a polite way to ask whether the US leadership as well as CIA has been playing both sides of the war all along?

For the Pakistani military, the real problem about the war in Afghanistan and the ongoing insurgency on the Frontier is not the Afghan Taliban or Al-Qaeda or the Pakistani Taliban (Tahreek-e-Taliban-e- Pakistan, TTP) militants fighting against them. For them the real problem is India which is manipulating the crisis in Pakistan while staying in Afghanistan. The close alliance between the US and India has deeply shaken Pakistani confidence in their own alliance with the United States. US policy makers could never convince the Pakistan Army that Afghanistan would not become an Indian client state after their departure. Indian consulates along the Pak-Afghan border are seen as dens of Indian spies. Their purpose is rumoured to be the running of covert operations to destabilise Pakistan (*The News*, 2009). A serving Army officer, on condition of anonymity, confirmed that the Pakistan Army has numerous proves and witnesses that the Indian-Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) agents were financing and supplying weapons to the Pakistani Taliban in their insurgency in Swat and Waziristan. David Sanger in his book, 'The Inheritance', writes a conversation between a CIA officer and a Pakistani military officer in following words: 'when America pulls out, India will have full control over Afghanistan. In this way, Pakistan would face a two front threat. Hence, Pakistan will have to sustain contact with the opposition to the Afghan government - code for the Afghan Taliban (Sanger, 2009:244-45).

This and numerous other alleged statements compelled the US administration under President Bush to bomb the ally- the strong ally against terror. Sanger also writes that President Bush had admitted to him and other reporters that even Musharraf had little interest in sending his army into frontier territory, where, as Bush once put it to an aide, 'they get their asses kicked every week' (Sanger, 2009:244-45). Thus American military fought inside a sovereign nation that was also an ally. Such US decision was akin to President Nixon's secret

decision during Vietnam to conduct a 'secret war' in Cambodia where the Vietcong had found sanctuary. The confidence on both sides had shaken and eventually broken. The drone attacks started on Pakistan's soil- in the tribal areas bordering Afghanistan.

4. The Kerry-Lugar Act (KLA) 2009

And the final point of contentious debate between the US policy-making bodies and the Pakistan Army is the Kerry-Lugar Act, which according to the Army spokesman in plain words has affected the sovereignty of the country. The depth of analysis in the bill indicates genuine American interest in serious Pakistani issues. According to the Bill, the secretary of state must produce a Pakistan Assistance Strategy Report within 45 days of the bill's passage, and a Security-Related Assistance Plan Report within 180 days of the bill's passage. Six months after the secretary of state's Pakistan Assistance Strategy, Madam Secretary, or her predecessor, in concert with the secretary of defence, will be required to submit the first Semi-Annual Monitoring Report. Every six months thereafter, they will be required to produce one of these reports. The semi-annual reports will not only detail expenditure and achievements, but will also include an evaluation of efforts by the government of Pakistan to "disrupt, dismantle, and defeat Al Qaeda, the Taliban", "eliminate safe havens", close "Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorist camps", "cease all support for terrorist groups", "prevent attacks into neighboring countries", and "close madressahs linked to the Taliban". In addition to evaluating Pakistan's performance along these lines, the report will also describe Pakistan's anti-proliferation efforts, assess whether US assistance is enabling Pakistan to spend more on nukes, and finally, assess the extent of civilian government control over the military, including "oversight and approval of military budgets, the chain of command, the process of promotion for senior military leaders" (*The News*, 2009). This will muster \$1.5 billion a year for Pakistan. According to the text of the bill, Pakistan will receive an additional \$2.3 billion of military assistance in the next fiscal year (*The Dawn*, 2009).

'Following the 122nd Corps Commanders Conference held on Oct 7, the Chief of Army Staff General Kiyani was quoted as saying that Pakistan was a sovereign state and had all the right to analyse and respond to the threat in accordance with its own national interests. The Kerry-Lugar Bill also came under discussion during the conference.

The forum expressed serious concern regarding the clauses impacting on the national security' (*The News*, 2009). When the Bill was brought to the parliament, 76 per cent of the parliamentarians had spoken against the conditions of the Kerry-Lugar Bill (*The News*, 2009). A right wing political Islamist party- Jam'at-e-Islami also conducted a referendum on the question of KLA. It was reported that 98% of the people rejected KLA (*The Nation*, 2009).

5. Raymond Davis case

Relations between the US and Pakistan once again touched their sensitive norms when a US Consulate, Lahore American employee-Raymond Davis, killed two Pakistani motorcyclists in Lahore (*The News*, 2011). Davis was driving his car on a Lahore street when a motorbike with two men astride it drew up beside him at a traffic stop. Davis told police the men had a gun pointed at him. He drew his own gun and shot them. Assassination attempts by motorcycle are not uncommon in some parts of the world. However, Pakistani police say Davis told them he was worried about being robbed when he shot the two men. Although Davis claimed that he was acting in self-defense, witnesses and the post-mortem examination stated that the two dead men were each shot in the back as well as the front. Davis shot the men through his windshield, got out of his car, shot them again, including in the back, and then photographed their bodies with a digital camera (*The Guardian*, 2011). During initial interrogation, displaying official identity documents, he identified himself as a "consultant." He also showed "passes" for visits to Islamabad and Lahore (*The Express Tribune*, 2011).

The importance the U.S. attaches to this brewing international incident with potentially severe consequences was evidenced by the fact that John Kerry visited Pakistan on 16th February 2011. However, surprising thing was his statement which was much contradictory to what Davis stated about himself being a consultant. Kerry told the press reporters that "This man is a diplomat within the embassy and immunity attaches to it" (*The News*, 2011). In another surprising statement, the US President Barak Obama said, "the detained official Raymond Davis enjoyed diplomatic immunity under the Vienna Convention" (*The News*, 2011). Contrary to such statements from such exalted echelon, the Foreign Office of Pakistan held a different stance. It provided documents to the Ministry of Law that the US Mission in

Pakistan declared Mr. Davis as 'administrative and technical staff' with documentary proof (The News, 2011).

It was on 21st of February 2011 that the US administration accepted that Davis was a security contractor working for the CIA. Mr. Davis had worked for years as a mercenary for the C.I.A, including at times for the Blackwater, the private security firm (now called Xe), (*The Guardian*, 2011) that Pakistanis have long viewed as symbolizing a culture of American gun-slinging overseas. It was also revealed that Raymond was collecting intelligence and conducting surveillance on militant groups deep inside the country." (*The New York Times*, 2011). He was a member of CIA team that was engaged in the surveillance of militant groups, including the Tehreek-e-Taliban-e-Pakistan (TTP). Forensic examination of the equipment found in his possession is said to show that he was in phone contact with 33 Pakistanis, of whom 27 were from the TTP and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT). Neither organisation is known for peaceful or law abiding activity inside or outside Pakistan (*The News*, 2011).

Contrary to the protestations of American officials that their staff would never engage in espionage or covert operations in Pakistan, this was indeed what their spymaster Davis was busy with. The Washington Post goes so far as to detail that he was operating out of a 'safe house' and at the time of the incident he was conducting "area familiarisation" – basic surveillance – in order to better acquaint himself with the area he was working in (*The Washington Post*, 2011). There is also speculation that his contacts with the TTP and LeT were more than mere 'surveillance'. If this is anywhere close to the truth then we are getting a glimpse of the very dark and very dirty side of American foreign policy as it is played out here ((*The Washington Post*, 2011).

Interestingly the Pakistani Taliban warned the government of Pakistan that it would punish any move to release a US consulate employee, Raymond Davis, accused of murdering two Pakistanis in a case that has inflamed already strained ties with Washington."If (Pakistani) rulers hand him over to America then we will target these rulers. If Pakistani courts cannot punish Davis then they should hand him over to us. We will give exemplary punishment to the killer Davis," said Azam Tariq, spokesman for the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (Taliban movement of Pakistan) (*The Express Tribune*, 2011).

Whatever the legal outcome, whether Davis is tried for murder or espionage – with the latter probably unlikely – the coinage of American diplomacy in Pakistan has been debased to the point at which it is virtually based on lies and deceit rather than open and frank relations between allies in the War on Terror.

These five events mentioned above show that the relationship between the US policy making bodies and Pakistan as well as the Pakistan Army can no longer be classified as a patron-client arrangement. Now, the relationship is in a crisis-patron-client phase, specially 'Estranged Client'. This new reality will be shown in the next section by returning to the theoretical framework and applying it to this relationship.

Application of the theoretical framework

While the trajectories of the US and Pakistan, as well as the issues of contention outlined above, show an overall trend, the theoretical framework of post-patron-client relationship must be applied in order to truly understand the current state of US-Pakistan relations. After showing that the conditions for a patron-client relationship are clearly being met, this analysis will examine the applicability of the five different post-patron-client scenarios to demonstrate that 'Estranged Client' is most accurate.

The three aspects which define a patron-client relationship-asymmetry of military power, patronal competition, and international perception of a strong relationship- have already been shown to be present at the inception of Pak-US relations. However, gradual processes over the past few decades have altered this dynamic. Today, Pakistan has a large army, well trained and well armed military force which makes it a clear regional power in the South Asia. The US military is over-stretched, and additional conflicts could completely ruin the effectiveness of the American armed forces. In 1990, the US became the sole world superpower, and the patronal competition with the USSR ended as did Pakistan's role in that competition. Furthermore, some have even characterised the US as a declining superpower and the emerging world order as 'apolarity', an arrangement which would also be devoid of patronal competition (Wyne, 2006). Finally the numerous disagreements between the US and Pakistan, which are observed by the international community, show that the relationship is

no longer perceived as strong. With each of the three components of the definition no longer applicable, the patron-client relationship had ended.

Though not appearing in any official policy statement, the clear goal of the GHQ regarding defence policy of the country is to develop a dominant regional military capability with an autonomous military production system capable of supporting unilateral action in pursuit of national security.

Pakistan has developed economically, militarily, and diplomatically to the point where it can't assert its regional dominance. However, since South Asia plays so heavily into the overall US global strategy, Pakistan's regional role is a threat to overall US world power. That is not to say that Pakistan is becoming more powerful than the US on the global level, but that Pakistan and especially its Army has the ability to shake US policy if it is perceived as detrimental to Pakistan and its defence. It is the unbalanced importance of the South Asia in US objectives which provides Pakistan with seemingly unbalanced power. With this ability for independence and a clear will to achieve greater autonomy from the US, Pakistan has rejected the subordinating role in a patron-client relationship. Of the five post- patron-client situations- 'Progressive Decline', 'Sudden Cessation', 'Estranged Client', 'Role Reversal', and 'Sustainable Equality'-the current situation between Pakistan and the US should be described as 'Estranged Client'. There was no progressive decline because the US and Pakistan are still involved in bilateral relations. While there have been tense policy disagreements between the US and Pakistan, none of them has led to the termination of bilateral relations in a 'Sudden Cessation'. Pakistan has seen considerable violence and disturbance, however, there has not been a 'Role Reversal' because the US still has more power than Pakistan; Pakistan is not able to control the US. Finally, the US and Pakistan have not been entered into a 'Sustainable Equality' relationship because there is still a power disparity between the two. Having refuted the other four possibilities, only 'Estranged Client' remains as a classification for Us-Pakistan relations.

This classification is the most applicable because Pakistan has acted unilaterally in the past few years, e.g., non-compliance with the US drone attacks on Pakistan's tribal areas and in general is asserting more independence. Additionally, the stresses on the Pak-US bilateral

relationship have been constantly bringing the stability of the relationship into question. The US can no longer assert dominance over Pakistan, but Pakistan is not able to assert full independence either. It is in this transitional age between complete dominance and complete independence that Pakistan is situated- this transitional stage known as 'Estranged Client'.

The Future of Pak-US Relations

While it is impossible to predict exactly how Pak-US relations will evolve in the short- and long-term futures, it is possible to identify the most likely situations based on current trajectories. With a high degree of certainty, it can be said that the US and Pakistan will never revert to a patron-client relationship. In order for that to happen, Pakistan would have to undergo drastic stagnation and contraction of its power to the point where the power disparity with US would be sufficiently significant enough again. Conversely, it is unlikely that the US and Pakistan would enter into a patron-client relationship with the US as a client because that would require an even more drastic reduction in power on the US side. While either of those outcomes is a distant possibility in the long-term, no present indicators suggest such trajectories. Rather, what present conditions forestall is continued 'Estranged Client' status in the short-term with strong possibility for 'Sustainable Equality' in the long-term. Pakistan is and will remain a vital ally for the US not only in South Central and Southwest Asia, but in the global context as well. Even in this era of advanced technology Pakistan's unique geographic situation as a physical and cultural bridge between the East and the West makes the nation critical to US policies. Therefore, the US and Pakistan will cooperate on clear mutual threats, for example, war on terror especially in the region. However, when national interests diverge, Pakistan will more and more take a different, and sometimes opposing, position from the US. The real task before the US and Pakistan is understanding the mutual benefits of positive bilateral relations and creating the conditions that could allow for the 'Estranged Client' stage to change to the 'Sustainable Equality' stage. While there is no magic formula for engendering 'Sustainable Equality,' it is certain that understanding and respecting each other's critical and unchangeable interests as well as compromising on peripheral issues will be necessary for better relations.

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In that vain, the US can tailor its foreign policy to repair relations with Pakistan. For one, the US should give Pakistan a larger role in the rebuilding of Pakistan in order to highlight Pakistan's importance in the region. Additionally, the US should support Pakistan diplomatically so that Pakistan does not drift towards the re-emerging global opposite power (Russians, defiant Iran and the moderate Afghani Taliban). Finally, the US should continue and augment joint anti-terrorism efforts with Pakistan.

Currently, the US and Pakistan Army are navigating a rough patch in their bilateral relations as Pakistan breaks away from US dominance. Positive, productive future relations between the US and Pakistan are only possible if each nation desires them and consciously works toward that end.

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