

US-PAK RELATIONS, PAKISTAN'S STRATEGIC CHOICES IN THE 1990s

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Pakistan's decisions and policy formation during President Bill Clinton's administration and how the US foreign policy has influenced Pakistan has been gleaned by the author. For this she interviewed and interacted with the variety of people. The writer's analysis is factually rich and is the complete incarnation of the book title. The book provides the reader with the examination of the combined impact of Bill Clinton's policies on Pakistan's security objectives and instruments in the 1990s. It explains the dynamics which drove Islamabad's pursuit of nuclear weapons, its support for the Taliban and approach towards the indigenous uprising in Illegally Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJ&K). She explains how overarching security dilemmas can affect the foreign policy. This book is a perfect read for policymakers who want to study foreign policy and are interested in understanding how various factors affect policymakers' choices.

The chapters in this book magnificently segue onto the next with historically abounding references engaging uniquely. The author's insightful approach towards presenting history catches a lot of attention as she interviews people like Senator Afrasiyab Khattak, and General Pervaiz Musharraf, etc. Talat Farooq does not shy away from asking questions that move readers and force them to question their comfortable perceptions.

The author of the book uses the theory of Security Dilemma, a Waltzian Approach to the era of the 1990s, which accurately explains Pakistan's approach and its policy choices. In the opening, the idea was that the episodic "convergence of

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security interests" gave birth to the US-Pakistan relationship in the cold war era. Despite the convergence of security interests, US-Pakistan relationship suffered from contradictions due to Pakistan's India-centric regional goals. At the same time, the book mentions how the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan left an objective scenario at the western border of Pakistan. After the Soviet's withdrawal from Afghanistan, the US started focusing more on the international arena, particularly on the fast-moving events in Europe and the Middle East in the post-cold war context.

The book implicitly questions the credibility of the US regarding its allies and partners. It unveils the marriage of convenience between powerful and weak states, with the accomplishment of the objectives of the powerful. One of the chapters embodies John Mearsheimer's quote, "Alliances are only temporary marriages of convenience." The book also criticizes Clinton's security-centric approach regarding Pakistan. The sanctions against Pakistan during the Clinton era have contributed to the acceleration of the Pakistan's nuclear programme instead of curtailing it.

The US-Pakistan relationship has suffered from multiple contradictions, and the author has clarified the impact of these contradictions. President Clinton has failed to understand that a new (changed) approach is inevitable regarding Pakistan. The author also delineates upon the claims that Pakistan's support for the proxies in HOK&J is to maintain regional balance of power against India. Contrary to the claims, the primary objectives of Pakistan's elite have been maintaining the security of both its eastern and western borders with nuclear weapon development. The book argues that despite the U.S constant pressure and use of sanctions in Clinton's era, Pakistan came out more powerful militarily in the region.

The book ends up as a remarkable oration for readers, with an apt analysis of the past and how Clinton's approach towards Pakistan has had a massive impact on its foreign policy orientation. Pakistan has taken the pragmatic and realist approach of pursuing the acquisition of nuclear weapons. Especially after the 1965 war, when the US's suspension of the sales of armament took place, proving the US as an unreliable ally. There has been a trust deficit between Washington and Islamabad. When faced with a security dilemma, Pakistan has assumed the worst-case scenario.