

# **Pakistan and United States: A Strategic Partner not a "Frontline state" Again?**

Presented by

**Saeed Shafqat, PhD  
Columbia University**

## **Musharraf-Bush expression of commitment**

**In June 2003, President Musharraf of Pakistan paid his third official visit to the United States in less than two years and was lauded by President Bush, as a**

**"courageous leader and a friend of the United States. America has a strong relationship with Pakistan...The friendship between the United States and Pakistan is vital to the security of South Asia."**

**President Musharraf reciprocated, "We have reviewed in depth with President Bush how to strengthen and expand the Pakistan - U.S. bilateral relationship and to give it greater depth and meaning. Both sides have reaffirmed that our ties should be made more broad-based and multifaceted and placed on a long-term and predictable basis. The United States has accordingly agreed on a multi-year economic and defense related package for Pakistan. This exemplifies the U.S. commitment to remain involved with us for a long term. We look forward to diverse programs of cooperation in the economic, commercial, and political and the defense sectors. We also expect greater people-to-people contacts and close interaction between the parliaments of the two countries to promote the cause of democracy."**

**Post 9/11 World and strategic considerations**

**Geo-strategic Pakistan as a pivotal state in war on terror and broader regional arena**

**Crossroad of South/Central Asia and Gulf**

### **US Expectations:**

- ❖ Unflinching support on International terrorism and collaboration against Taliban
- ❖ Nuclear non-proliferation
- ❖ Kashmir and relations with India
- ❖ Afghanistan
- ❖ Containing Islamism and changing the education paradigm in the Madrassahs
- ❖ Promoting democratic governance, protection of human/gender rights
- ❖ Perception what if nuclear weapons fall in the Hands of rogue elements?

## **Pakistani Expectations:**

- ❖ Help resolve Kashmir dispute — huge India factor
- ❖ Afghanistan, protect Pakistan's interests and Pashtun rights
- ❖ Provide conventional weapons and maintain a minimal deterrence in the region
- ❖ Debt relief
- ❖ Investment, increase trade and textile quotas
- ❖ Defense cooperation, training etc.

## **Where we are coming from? Beginning to the end of Cold War**

Cold war alliances 1950 and 60's; shared strategic interests and goals

- ❖ Logistical support (Badaber base Peshawar), air space and intelligence (U-2 incident 1960)
- ❖ Indo-Pakistan wars 65 and 71 — US disengagement and famous 'tilt'
- ❖ The depressing 1970s and the nuclear issue
- ❖ The Roaring 1980s; 1979, Iranian revolution and Soviet intervention in Afghanistan; Pakistan emerges as the 'Frontline state'-the beginning of new partnership, Global mobilization of Islamic militants, Madrassahs, weapons; Pakistan receives about \$7 billion between 81-87. A successful war and strategic partnership that changed the world.

## **Where we are coming from? Beginning to the end of Cold War**

- ❖ Geneva peace process, 87- 88, parting of the ways, Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan 89 and hasty US disengagement from the region — perceived as 'abandonment' by Pakistan.
- ❖ 1989-91 collapse of Soviet Union and Civil war in Afghanistan 1989-93
- ❖ Regional actors-Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, India and opening up of Central Asia — the new Great Game, oil and militant Islam
- ❖ Emergence of Taliban 1994-1998, growth and expansion, support of Pakistan
- ❖ Taliban and rise of violence in the region 1998-2001: Pakistan, perpetrator or victim?

## **Post 9/11 World:**

**US and Pakistan, strategic partnership  
or tactical alliance?**

**Re-defining the relationship**

- ❖ War on Taliban, international terrorism and rediscovery of Pakistan, part of the problem, part of the solution?
- ❖ New terms of endearment; logistical support, use of air space and intelligence cooperation---no sanctuary for Taliban
- ❖ Renewed search for strategic partnership
- ❖ Do they have share strategic interests now? Nuclear non-proliferation, curbing extremism, promoting democratic governance and improving human rights record.
- ❖ Institutional collaboration on issues of security concerns, steps forward, India as huge factor in US-Pakistan relations
- ❖ Musharraf's paradox: two faces, foreign policy pragmatism and domestic reform!

### Future directions:

- (a) Learning from the experience of past tactical alliance
- (b) Opting for a long term broad based strategic partnership

What the US need to do?

What Pakistan must do?