

## **The origin of the Pakistan-United States relations: A review of 1947-1958**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The origin of the Pakistan-United States relations had come into existence soon after the foundation of Pakistan in 1947, making it amongst the first nations to establish relations with the United States. Later on, Pakistan was well-known as the most allied ally of the United States in Asia through which Pakistan not only strengthened its economy but enhanced military capabilities in order to maintain its national security. Thus, this study presents the historical overview on the origin of the Pakistan-United States between 1947 and 1958. The chosen timeframe is considered as the period of early intensive engagement between both countries. The study has highlighted and thoroughly discussed all the events that occurred during the aforementioned period. After reviewing the historical events and developments of those years, the study concluded that soon after the independence of Pakistan till 1958, the intensive engagement between both countries has been observed in the form of bilateral security and economy related relations.

**Keywords:** Origin, Pakistan, United States, Soviet Union, Security, Bilateral

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## **INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY**

The relations between the United States and Pakistan represent the bilateral relationship between the former and the latter. Soon after the foundation of Pakistan, on 20 October 1947, the relations were established between Pakistan and the United States which made the latter among the first states to inaugurate relations with the former, a newly founded state. During the Cold war era, Pakistan joined the United States' block in order to counter the Soviet Union, and was a vital player in the SEATO and CENTO alliances.

## **THE ORIGIN OF THE PAKISTAN-UNITED STATES RELATIONS**

Following the independence of Pakistan from Britain, the newly founded state strived to place itself amongst the non-aligned countries. The pro-communist forces of Pakistan had considerable support in East Pakistan, however, the pro-Soviet "Pakistan Socialist Party" remained mostly marginalized in West Pakistan. The pro-American and capitalist "Pakistan Muslim League" controlled most of the political landscape in West Pakistan, mainly in Punjab, a prosperous region of Pakistan, however its support was far more modest in East Pakistan.

Liaqat Ali Khan, Pakistani Prime Minister, although tried to institute the friendly relations with both the U.S and the Soviet Union in hopes that we could benefit from both superpowers. Pakistan's Foreign Service and the Pakistan's Military elevated doubts whether the Soviet Union have capacity to assist us for technical, military and economic aid as well as political will to a similar level on which they are already offering to India, the Pakistan's rival (Cawasjee, 2011). Pakistan however requested the Soviets for military aid, "which was predictably rebuffed as the Soviet Union had previously oriented itself to India" (Cawasjee, 2011). Overtures of the government to the USSR were not favourably regarded by the conservative middle class of Pakistan, who viewed the Soviet Union as a socialist and an atheist state as well as an Indian ally (Kazmi, 2003).

In 1950, Pakistan's Prime Minister Liaqat Ali Khan was invited for an official state visit by the U.S that was considered as extended an overture to the former. When the Soviet Union had declined capitalist Pakistan and they aligned itself with the rivals of Pakistan. The policymakers of Pakistan found that it is impossible to maintain relations with the both

superpowers. Therefore, the American invitation was accepted by Prime Minister Khan and officially visited the U.S for 23-day commencing on May 3, 1950. Prime Minister visit to the U.S was extremely politicized in Pakistan, and fuming the leftists of the country, as well as it was observed as the seminal event that led the creation of warm diplomatic relations for many years. Although, allegation puts forward that the U.S president Truman requested Liaqat Ali Khan to grant the formulation of CIA base in Pakistan in order to strictly keep eyes on the Soviet's activities during the first official visit by the premier of Pakistan, — Khan refused this request (Timeline, 2012).

### **THE UNITED STATES AND PAKISTAN BILATERAL RELATIONS**

From 1950 to 1953, many prominent military and political figures of Pakistan visited the U.S. At that period, Pakistani Army chief Ayub Khan visited the U.S – who later on would institute a powerful military dictatorship of pro-American. Then Finance Minister of Pakistan Ghulam Muhammad, Foreign Minister Sir Zafrullah Khan, Foreign Secretary Ikram-Ullah Khan and Defense Secretary Sikander Mirza all visited the U.S officially (Hussain, 2002).

Following the visit of Khan to the U.S, almost immediately, the Defense relations between both countries strengthened. Even following the assassination of Liaqat Ali Khan in 1951, it was evident that personal goodwill towards Pakistan was marked. During the regime of Khawaja Nazimuddin, Officials from the United States and Pakistan advanced positive attitudes with each other. For instance, personal goodwill was marked when in 1953, the U.S Secretary of State John Foster Dulles told the “sub-committee on Agriculture and Forestry” during hearings, while arguing the matter concerning for wheat aid to Pakistan that “the [p]eople of Pakistan had a splendid military tradition, and that in Karachi he had been met by a guard of honour which was the finest he had ever seen” (Hussain, 2002). In May 1954, the further close ties were consolidated when both countries signed Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement (Ayub, 1964; Bhutto, 1964; Hashmi, 1973; Ispahani, 1964; Khan, 1967; Sattar, 2017), through which hundreds of officers from Pakistan's armed forces began to train in the U.S on regular basis (Hussain, 2002). A “Military Assistance Advisory Group” (MAAG) of the U.S was also established in Rawalpindi, headquarter of the Pakistani military. Officers of Pakistani armed forces got training not only in military tactics, however they were also taught in management, leadership, and economic theory (Hussain, 2002).

In 1956, the United States President Eisenhower requested a lease of the “Peshawar Air Station” (PAS) from then Prime Minister of Pakistan, Huseyn Suhraurdi, “which was to be used in intelligence gathering of Soviet intercontinental ballistic missiles” (Hussain, 2002). The American request was approved, and shortly after, at the site, they built a command and control station and an airstrip before initiating operations (Hussain, 2002). This airbase was regarded a top-secret command and control station, and even though the Pakistani influential public officials for instance Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, were refused to enter PAS (Hussain, 2002).

The United States’ interest with Pakistan primarily focused to counter the communism expansion therefore the former maintained excellent ties with the military establishment of the latter. Prime Minister of Pakistan, Huseyn Suhraurdi, along with his Army chief, Ayub Khan, officially visited several times the United States (Hussain, 2002). “After the military coup d’état in 1958, Ayub Khan argued that left wing activists could seize power in Pakistan, thereby jeopardizing American interests in the region” (Hussain, 2002). Successfully, he convinced the United States that the military of Pakistan was the most capable and strongest institution to govern the state (Hussain, 2002) which further embarked the strong security, military and economic relationships.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the presented historical overview of the Pakistan-United States relations between 1947 and 1958, it is considered as the period of early intensive engagement between both countries. The study has highlighted and thoroughly discussed all the events that occurred during the aforementioned period. After reviewing the historical events and developments of those years, the study concluded that soon after the independence of Pakistan till 1958, the United States was the first country to establish relations with the former which led the foundation of strong bilateral security and economic relationships. In those years, the intensive engagement between both countries has been observed in the form of bilateral security and economy related relations. Therefore, Pakistan was well-known as the most allied ally of the United States in Asia through which Pakistan not only strengthened its economy but enhanced military capabilities in order to maintain its national security and territorial sanctity.

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