

An overview of the significant events in 2011 and their impact on the U.S-Pakistan relations during the Global War on Terror (GwoT)

Muhammad Hatim

Mohammad Zaki bin Ahmad

Mohamad Faisol bin Keling

School of International Studies, College of Law, Government and International Studies, Universiti Utara Malaysia

E-mail of the corresponding author: mohammed.hatim.uk@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The United States' Global War on Terror had brought the highest peak in the U.S-Pakistan relations which were once frozen in the 90s. For the next ten years, both countries enjoyed cordial relationships, however, the year of 2011 had brought a new low in their relations. Therefore, this study aims at over-viewing the significant events in 2011 and its impact on the U.S-Pakistan relations. Based on the events between these two nations during the year of 2011, this study concludes that the U.S-Pakistan-relations suffered of huge setbacks due to various events which left a serious deterioration for many years and created a huge trust deficit.

Keywords: Pakistan, U.S, Global War on Terror, Significant events

To cite this article: Hatim, M., Ahmad, M. Z. & Keling, M. F. (2020). An overview of the significant events in 2011 and their impact on the U.S-Pakistan relations during the Global War on Terror (GwoT). *Competitive Social Science Research Journal (CSSRJ)*, 1 (3), 32-36.

INTRODUCTION

According to BBC, 2011 is labeled as the worst year between the U.S.-Pakistan relations in the Global War on Terror (BBC, 2011). In 2011, there were several significant events which seriously influenced the U.S-Pakistan relations. In alone, this year brought huge setbacks and lowest position between the both countries' relations. In the following, an overview of the significant events in 2011 is presented.

KILLING OF OSAMA BIN LADEN

Osama bin Laden's presence in Pakistan and his killing in 2011 by the armed forces of U.S disrupted the relations between the U.S and Pakistan. Furthermore, Moreover, at international level, it is being thought that the government of Pakistan allegedly provided shelter to bin Laden. However, on the contrary, this event infuriated the government of Pakistan because, in a way, it was considered a serious violation of the sovereignty of Pakistan.

According to Gall (2014), it took many years to probe the depth of the relationship between al-Qaeda and Pakistan, and the world has learned this as bin Laden was captured in Pakistan. He was killed by the U.S Navy Seal's commandos at his place. She accuses that many officers from the Pakistani intelligence agencies have links with terrorist groups who were providing shelter to bin Laden. She also alleges that Pakistan handled the militant groups to serve its own purposes. She regards this event as bringing a huge gap between the U.S and Pakistan. On a similar note, Goldberg and Ambinder (2011) also reaffirm that the animosity level and trust deficit between both the countries has sharply increased due to this incident. They also add that the Pakistani government was infuriated due to the violation of its sovereignty when the U.S killed bin Laden without prior approval. It seems that this incident has locked both the countries in a hostile circle. Munawar and Mushtaq (2016), like Goldberg and Ambinder (2011), also point out that the sovereignty of Pakistan has been compromised in this event, and its defense and security committee condemned it.

THE NATO AIRSTRIKE

Another significant event in 2011 was the NATO airstrike. Pakistan vociferously condemned the NATO airstrike, which later heightened the sentiments of distrust between the U.S and Pakistan. It mainly was linked with the killing of the 24 Pakistani soldiers at Salala check-post in Pakistan in 2011 (Abbas and Javaid, 2017). This incident was also protested at an international level in the shape of the boycott of the upcoming Bonn Conference (Maqbool (2011). In the wake of this incident, Pakistan also suspended the NATO supply route.

Pakistan retaliated the NATO airstrike taking several measures to show it. This incident heightened the tension between both the countries. Abbas and Javaid (2017) provide an overview and significance of this incident. In retaliation to this incident, Pakistan closed all grounded supply routes to the U.S-led coalition fighting in Afghanistan. Furthermore, Pakistan has ousted the U.S. forces from its two airbases at where the U.S. launched the drone strike. Additionally, Pakistan started to reexamine its ties with the U.S. under its National Parliament. They add more that this incident fueled the already tense situation between the both countries.

The NATO airstrike has produced a two-way reaction on both sides. Mollaun (2016) mentions that the relationship between Pakistan the U.S has had its ups and downs but relatively remained stable since 2001 to 2011. While, in 2011, relations have ruptured between the both countries due to a number of events such as killing of bin Laden and the NATO airstrike. In retaliation, Pakistan shut down the NATO supply routes and, in return the U.S suspended the aid. Eventually the supply routes were opened as well as the U.S resumed the aid. Pakistan and the U.S have different points of view regarding the NATO airstrike. Certain studies such as the one carried out by Munawar and Mushtaq (2016) discuss that this incident has expanded the distrust between the both side and damaged the cause of Pakistan's fighting against terrorism. They add that over this incident, there was a controversy as Pakistan blamed to the U.S for this aggression against its forces and its sovereignty whereas the U.S claimed this action had taken for its self-defense as the firing was initiated by Pakistani soldiers.

The NATO airstrike deteriorated the relationship between Pakistan and the U.S, which seems to be coming to a halt. Maqbool (2011) states that 2011 seems to be ending with a serious blow in Pakistan and the U.S partnership in the Global War on Terror. It has roared up the public anger in Pakistan, and inculcated trust deficit between both the countries.

RAYMOND DAVIS CASE

Several studies, as discussed below, put forth that the Raymond Davis case has created an anti-American sentiment throughout Pakistan, which, in a way, has disrupted the U.S-Pakistan alliance in 2011. This incident, later, seemed to reveal that the Raymond Davis episode was connected with the covert unilateral operations by the U.S in Pakistan to confirm the link between Pakistani intelligence agencies and the terrorists.

The Raymond Davis incident brought in more trust deficit between the U.S and Pakistan because it lent powerlessness both to the Pakistani government and public. Maqbool (2011) argues that the incident fueled the anti-American sentiments across Pakistan and the Pakistani government was mocked at on its inability to take appropriate measures to stop the U.S unilateral operation in Pakistan. This incident hurt the Pakistan's state pride.

U.S. DRONE STRIKE ON PUBLIC GATHERING IN PAKISTAN

According to several studies, as analyzed below, another significant incident in the U.S-Pakistan relations is the U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan. The incident of the drone strike on a public gathering in Waziristan, a remote area in Pakistan, sparked the anti-American sentiments among the Pakistani public in terms of violating the sovereignty of the state and the consequent killings. Maqbool (2011) calls this incident ‘the deadliest ever drone attack’. The Pakistani Army also exhibited its great concern regarding the killing because it was considered to have been executed on a peaceful gathering who did not have any intention of and connection with insurgency in any way. General Kiyani, the then Army Chief, stated that the “highly regrettable that a meeting of peaceful citizens including elders of the area was carelessly and callously targeted with complete disregard to human life” (p. 1). Cavallaro, Sonnenberg, and Knuckey (2012) regards this incident as the violation of the sovereignty of Pakistan. Here, both the countries for another time were on a different page, which widened the gap in the U.S-Pakistan relations, the U.S labeling the killed personnel as insurgents whereas Pakistan calling them the innocent civilians and tribal elders. This event has created a serious rift between the both countries’ relationships.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the year of 2011 has brought the U.S-Pakistan relations at its lowest position of all time due to several aforementioned events. The study determined that these events have significant impact on the U.S-Pakistan relations not only creating rift but also a huge setbacks which left a serious deterioration for many years. Pakistan’s sovereignty and territorial sanctity were compromised due to aforementioned events, whereas, the U.S suspected Pakistan of its support to terrorist elements. The aftermath of these events led to huge trust deficit and its aftershocks were felt for many years.

REFERENCES

- Abbas, G., & Javaid, U. (2017). Pakistan's war on Terrorism and 9/11. *South Asian Studies (1026-678X)*, 32(1).
- Cavallaro, J., Sonnenberg, S., & Knuckey, S. (2012). Living under Drones: Death, injury and trauma to civilians from US drone practices in Pakistan. *International Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Clinic at Stanford Law School and Global Justice Clinic at NYU School of Law*, 1-165.
- Hatim, M. (2020). The origin of the Pakistan-United States relations: A review of 1947-1958. *Competitive Social Science Research Journal*, 1(1), 60–64. Retrieved from <https://cssrjournal.com/ojs/index.php/cssrjournal/article/view/23>
- Gall, C. (2014). What Pakistan Knew About Bin Laden. *The New York Times*, 19, 2001-2014.
- Goldberg, J., & Ambinder, M. (2011). The ally from hell. *The Atlantic*, 28.
- Maqbool, A. (2011, December, 31). 2011: New low for US-Pakistan relations. *BBC NEWS*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-16369301>
- Mollaun, A. H. (2016). US Aid to Pakistan: Nation-Building and Realist Objectives in the Post 9/11 Era.
- Munawar, S., & Mushtaq, M. (2016). War on Terror and Challenges to the National Sovereignty of Pakistan. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences (PJSS)*, 36(1).