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## SALALA CHECK POST INCIDENT: CONTEXT AND IMPLICATIONS

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### Abstract:

**Purpose of the Study:** This paper aims to analyze the series of significant events which contributed to the deterioration of the Pakistan-US relations before November 26 2011, and the strategic, diplomatic, and financial implications of this event for the two countries.

**Methodology:** This qualitative study is based on secondary sources such as journal articles, PhD thesis, newspapers, official reports, and websites.

**Principal Findings:** On November 26 2011, an aerial attack of NATO forces on two of the Pakistani border Military Check posts leaving at least 24 soldiers dead outraged Pakistani people and government. Subsequently, already strained Pakistan-US relations touched the lowest ebb. NATO supplies to Afghanistan were immediately suspended by Pakistan, demanding a formal investigation and apology by the U.S. It is pertinent to note that the Salala incident was only the tip of the iceberg. There were other events before this that contributed to the growing mistrust between the two strategic partners.

**Application of this Study:** This study can be helpful for the foreign policy decision-makers of the U.S. and Pakistan to maintain these bilateral relations on a smooth footing based on mutual trust and respect for each other's sovereignty and security.

**Novelty/Originality of this study:** This study has analyzed the implication of significant events during the Obama period and particular focus on the Salala Check Post-incident and the strategic, diplomatic, and financial impacts of these events for both countries.

**Key Terms:** Pakistan-US Relations, Salala check post, NATO Supply, Strategic, Diplomatic, Financial

### I. INTRODUCTION

Pakistan and the United States of America bound in a marriage of convenience have primarily experienced a mutual love-hate relationship. They could neither divorce nor settle down for good. Convergence of interests brought the two bilateral partners closer, though for a limited period, while the diverging interests caused the parting of the ways. The U.S. is a superpower that always had claims of global nature. During the Cold War, America's main focus was on the containment of communism, primarily by checking Soviet expansions. However, being a newly independent developing country in its regional context, Pakistan was interested in seeking financial assistance and strengthening its security against India ([Nagra, Mustafa, & Imran, 2019](#)). Pakistan's interest in signing SEATO and CENTO can be understood in this context. Kashmir issue has been a significant bone of contention and a dangerous flashpoint between India and Pakistan. To keep relations with two South Asian powers, it has always preferred conflict management over Resolution ([Ahmed, 2012](#)).

Pakistan remained the 'most allied ally of the U.S. during different phases of bilateral relations, the 1950s, 1980s, and post 9/11 period ([Hussain M., 2016](#)). The most recent slump in Pakistan-US relations started since the Democrats returned to power, having President Obama in office and touched the lowest point in 2011. In 2009, Pakistan already looked weary of American demands of 'doing more' against Taliban and other terrorists on its soil and threats of increased drone strikes if Pakistan failed to satisfy the U.S. ([Perlez, 2009](#)). Obama's visit to India in November 2010 and developments on civil-nuclear deal concerned Pakistanis ([The White House, 2010](#)). The U.S. tilt towards India was an arm twisting of Pakistan to achieve American goals in Afghanistan. Pakistani media and many opinion leaders believed that coalition with the U.S. had proved costly for Pakistan as it lost more and gained less in this

partnership. A general opinion was developing that the U.S. had hatched the conspiracy to denuclearize and destabilize Pakistan ([Tribune, 2012](#)).

Pakistan has been a major non-NATO ally (MNNA) and one of the significant recipients of U.S. foreign assistance since 2004. The U.S. expected Pakistan to support the overall war effort in Afghanistan mainly by providing transportation and logistic support. The U.S. recognized Pakistan as a lynchpin to achieving its objectives in Afghanistan. The year 2011 was a very fateful one as some of the most significant events unfolded. First, the Raymond Davis case in which an American C.I.A. undercover agent killed two Pakistanis in Lahore on January 27 2011. Second, the Abbottabad Operation on May 02 2011, in which American Navy SEALs entered the Pakistani city of Abbottabad to assassinate Osama bin Laden. Third, the Salala Checked post-incident on November 26 2011. At least 24 Pakistani soldiers were killed in an aerial attack on two Pakistani Military Check Posts by the NATO forces in Afghanistan. This paper aims to study the Salala check post-incident as a sequel of other distasteful events and analyze Pakistan-US relations' strategic, diplomatic, and financial implications.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Ahmad Rashid Malik (2012) argues that the Salala incident severely damaged Pakistan-US relations. Pakistan responded with protest by the closure of NATO supplies and boycotting the Bonn Conference, and forced the U.S. to vacate the Shamsi airbase. Likewise, Javaid & Butt (2012) observe that the Salala incident proved that Pakistan being a non-NATO ally, was not trusted by the U.S. The incident was also evident that the two countries had diverging interests in the war on terror. In the background of the Raymond Davis case and Osama bin Laden's killing, the Salala check post-incident further deteriorated U.S. relations with Pakistan. Authors expected that the two countries would be reconsidering the terms of engagement.

[Khan & Zaheen \(2014\)](#) find that after the Salala incident *Newsweek* and *the Economist* from December 01, 2011, to April 30 2012, projected a negative image of Pakistan. The authors view that the negative image projection of Pakistan was due to its Islamic character, which is considered a threat to American interests. [Aziz & Shah \(2020\)](#) viewed that Osama bin Laden's killing and Salala Check Post-incident demoralized Pakistan by violating its sovereignty. [Mustafa, Ali, Siddiui, & Shah \(2020\)](#) noted that the Raymond Davis case, Abbottabad Operation, and Salala incident were significant hurdles in Pakistan-US relations during the Obama Administration. The researchers' highlight that the Salala incident caused a severe decline in the relationship between the two countries.

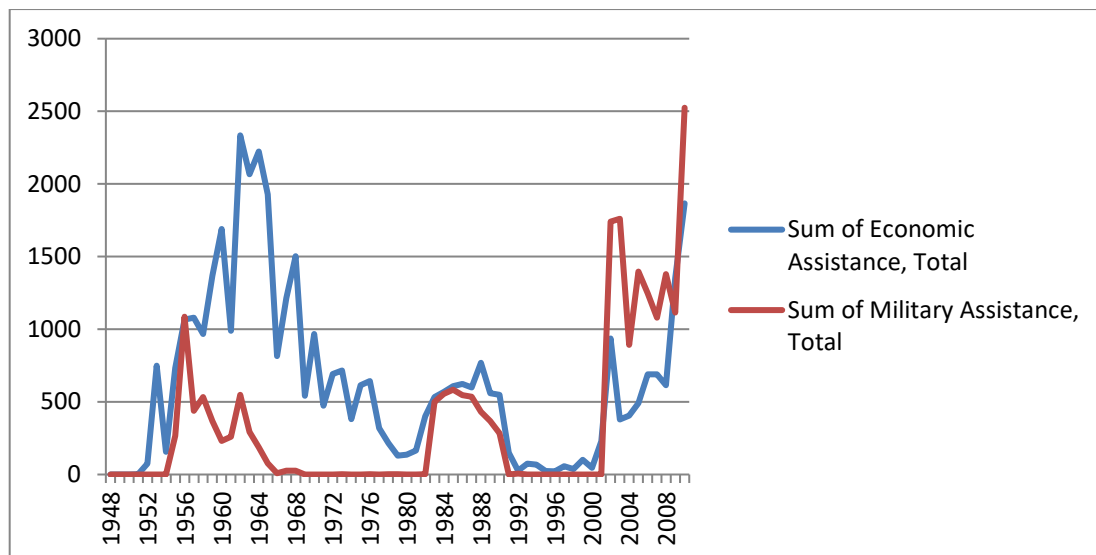
## III. METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study is based on secondary sources such as journal articles, PhD thesis, newspapers, official reports, and websites.

## IV. FINDINGS

### **Kerry-Luger-Berman Act: An Attempt to Win Hearts and Minds**

The U.S. foreign assistance to Pakistan restricted in the 1990s amid Pakistan's nuclear program; in the post 9/11 period, Pakistan once again became one of the largest recipients of the U.S. military and economic aid. Between 1948-2010, Pakistan received 30 billion U.S. dollars as direct aid, almost half comprised of military assistance. Further, it is pertinent to note that nearly 20 billion U.S. dollars aid was provided for 2002-2010, and 13.3 billion U.S. dollars were granted for military and security assistance ([Epstein & Kronstadt, 2011](#)). In 2009, the Obama Administration realized that the U.S. could not achieve its objectives in Afghanistan due to some public support of Al-Qaida and Taliban in the bordering Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan. To win the people's hearts and minds and address the socio-economic causes of terrorism, the U.S. decided to increase the non-military aid to Pakistan. At that time, Pakistan was worst hit by terrorism and desperately needed to enhance its military and law enforcement capabilities to counter the skyrocketing terrorist activities in the country.



U.S. military and economic assistance to Pakistan in U.S. million dollars (1948-2010) (The Guardian, Data Blog 2011)

Congress eventually passed Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act of 2009, known as the Kerry-Lugar-Berman (K.L.B.) bill, approving 1.5 billion U.S. dollars annual economic assistance for the next five years. This Act raised concerns on the part of Pakistan as it attached certain conditions and certifications for the provision of security aid. Although, in the same year, Congress established two funds, the Pakistan Counterinsurgency Fund (PCF) and the Pakistan Counterinsurgency Capability Fund (PCCF), to support effectiveness of ongoing military operations in Pakistan certification Secretary of State that Pakistan was duly complying with the agreed policy. However, the two strategic partners were neither satisfied nor happy with each other. The U.S. was always complaining that Pakistan was not doing enough to support American objectives in Afghanistan. In contrast, Pakistan always had an impression that the U.S. had failed to recognize Pakistan's efforts in the War on Terror and did not support enough to facilitate Pakistan to fight America's war more effectively ([Epstein & Kronstadt, 2011](#)).

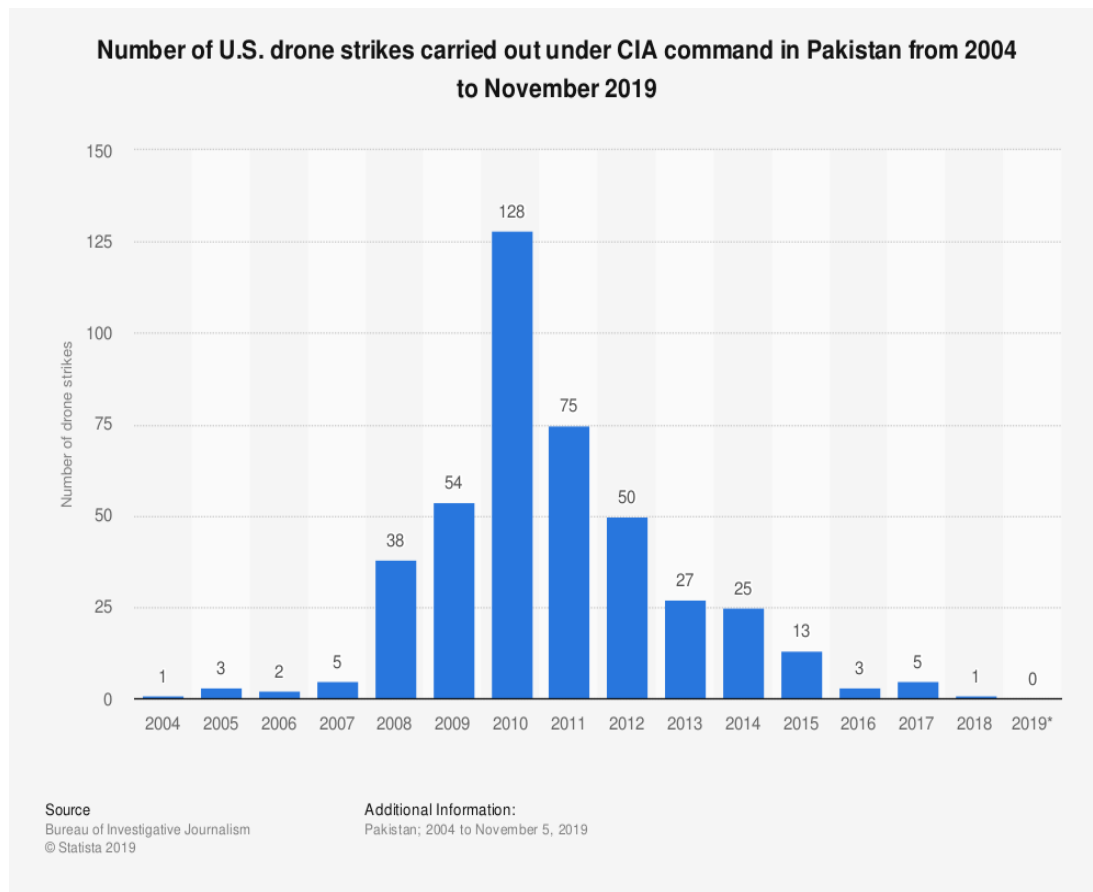
Being the architect and one of the main supporters of K.L.B., Senator John Kerry arrived in Islamabad on October 20 2009, to share the good news of a 7.5 billion dollar five years aid package for Pakistan ([Ashraf, 2009](#)). However, he had to face resistance and opposition from the unhappy hosts, and he ended up saying:

Take it or leave it; we should not play to cheap galleries here. If you don't want the money, say so. We're not forcing you to take it. We are giving Pakistan about 7.5 billion dollars aid and listening to its complaints; we can spend this amount in California were badly needed ([Sehri, 2013, p. 966](#)).

Americans always remained concerned about aid to Pakistan and for its effective utilization. A significant concern for the U.S. was the capacity of the Pakistani government for effective utilization of funds in a system having a higher degree of corruption. Pakistan received massive security-related assistance, including essential items related to counterterrorism operations. The U.S. assistance to Pakistan's civil sector was designed to strengthen law enforcement institutions and enhance their capabilities of a counterterrorism investigation. The American perspective is that after the launching of security assistance projects to the civil sector of Pakistan, the U.S. could not prove quantifiable progress ([The Express Tribune, 2011](#)). Former U.S. ambassador Robert Blackwell said that the policy regarding assistance being provided to Pakistan had failed. He further added that "The Pakistan military is not an ally, not a partner, not a friend of the U.S.". He highlighted that the U.S. should reduce dependency on Pakistan ([Financial Times, 2011](#)). But it was the policy of the Obama Administration to increase non-military aid to Pakistan. President Barack Obama further stated that the U.S. desired to provide civil assistance in addition to military assistance. According to Pakistan's perspective, they faced a huge economic loss of about 68 billion U.S. dollars for 2001- 2011 and received only 15 to 17 billion U.S. dollars as assistance (See Nagra, Mustafa, & Imran, 2019).

## Drone and Aerial Strikes in Pakistan

US Drone Strikes in Pakistan starting in June 2004. However, targeting Taliban and Al-Qaeda militants residing in Pakistani territories was a fly in the ointment, causing embarrassment for Pakistani governments. 47 drone missions were carried out between 2004-2008. Despite Pakistan's concerns, the number of strikes significantly increased To 257 between 2009-2011. The top drones flew into Pakistani territories in 2010, having 128 attacks in a single year. Drone strikes gradually decreased afterwards as the annual number dropped to 50, 27, 25, 3, 5, and 1, respectively, from 2012 to 2018 ([Bureau of Investigative Journalism, 2020](#)).



A maximum number of drone attacks, 353 out of a total 414, were carried out under Obama Administration, 48 were executed by Bush and only 13 done under the Trump Administration between 2004-2020 ([New America, 2020](#)).

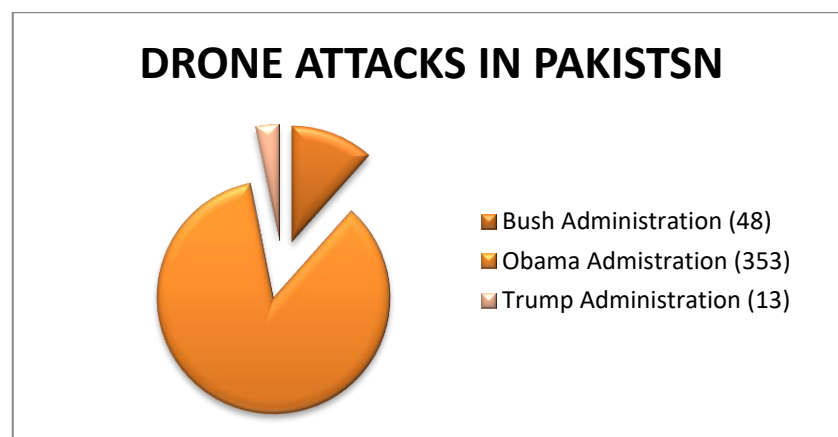


Figure1: Data up to April 08 2020 (New America, 2020)

Since 2008, Pakistan lost many of its paramilitary personnel and other civilian casualties in different aerial, ground, and mortar attacks by US/ISAF and Afghan forces cross border operations ([Yamin, 2013](#)). However, it is essential to note that these attacks were not being stopped even though the Parliament of Pakistan passed a unanimous resolution in 2008 and then in 2010 and condemned the violations of the sovereignty of Pakistan. These Resolutions also approved and call for the closure of NATO supplies. But these resolutions could not be implemented till 2011 ([The News, 2011](#)). On March 17 2011, at least 44 people were killed in North Waziristan in a U.S. aerial strike. Pakistan and U.S. stance was different on such attacks. The U.S. was of the view that militants were killed in the attack. However, Pakistan's officials believed that innocent people in an open-air *Jirga* (meeting) negotiating peace were dead. Foreign Minister of Pakistan said that it was an apparent violation of humanitarian laws and standards ([Government of Pakistan, 2011](#)). Though Pakistan protested, the series of drone attacks continued. In yet another attack, the U.S. claimed to have killed six high-value militants in South Waziristan. With time, Pakistan's stance got more aggressive, so it announced that Islamabad would not participate in forthcoming trilateral talks expected in March 2011 in Brussels ([Tribune, 2011](#)).

On April 22 2011, again, four missiles hit on a house in North Waziristan and killed Twenty-five people, including women and children. On April 23 2011, Imran Khan organized two days 'sit in' at Bagh-e-Naran and blocked National highway, the NATO Supply route to Afghanistan. Imran Khan, then a leader of a minor political party, said that all Pakistani nation should take part and raise their voices to stop the killing of innocent people through drone attacks by the U.S. He further said that 'We shall have a symbolic block of NATO supply line as a statement of our resentment against drone attacks' ([The News, 2011](#)). All protests and efforts went in vain as the U.S. did not stop drone attacks. After the release of Raymond Davis, a U.S. undercover operative in Pakistan charged with the murder of two Pakistanis, U.S. quickly resumed aerial strikes. We launched three missiles, the 16th of aerial strikes in 2011, killing five people in North Waziristan ([Walsh & MacAskill, 2011](#)). In May 2011, the U.S. launched three drone strikes within ten days after the death of Osama bin Laden and killed many people ([Reuters, 2011](#)).

Aerial strikes have been one of the most important causes of tense relations between Pakistan and the U.S. Pakistan always took it seriously, considering it a violation of its sovereignty. However, the U.S. disclosed that president Musharraf was brought on board in 2008 regarding aerial strikes in Pakistani territories. All military operations in Pakistan were with the consent of the Pakistani governments. If the American position is actual, then Pakistan's protest and condemnations seem to appease the Pakistani people and media. According to *Aljazeera*, the U.S. policymakers acknowledged that the two countries understood the issue, but it was not written ([Aljazeera, 2013](#)). When President Musharraf approached the drone attacks issue, he said that Pakistan permitted the U.S. for aerial strikes 'only on a few occasions, when a target was isolated and no chance of collateral damage' ([The Express Tribune, 2013](#)).

It has been revealed that there is a minor bit deal and permission between Pakistan and U.S. behind drone attacks, but after the recommendation of the National Security Committee and approval of Resolution in 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012 from Parliament of Pakistan, the secret deal between both the countries has no value. U.S. attacks after the passing of multiple Resolutions means that the U.S. exaggerated to disrespect Pakistan's sovereignty. After the approval of the 2008 Resolution, drone strikes are illegal under National and International laws and condemned within the U.S. United Nations did not certify the aerial strikes, and it is a violation of international law ([Tribune, 2012](#)) 'by the constitution and by the UN Charter' ([Soofi, 2014](#)). A report by Amnesty International says that U.S. drone strikes are unlawful and it is extrajudicial killing or war crimes. It is also a violation of international humanitarian law ([Amnesty International, 2013](#)). The aerial attacks of the U.S. in violation of Pakistan's sovereignty created anti-American sentiments among the people of Pakistan.

### **The Raymond Davis Case**

On January 27 2011, an American undercover C.I.A. agent, Raymond Davis, killed two Pakistanis in Lahore. He was charged with murder and was arrested by police. President Obama demanded his release, claiming that the accused was a diplomat and entitled to diplomatic immunity ([Dawn, 2017](#)). However, in an emotionally charged Pakistani environment, highly outrageous media and opposition made it difficult for the Pakistani government to accept diplomatic immunity. Finally, the episode ended with the release and repatriation of Raymond Davis a few months later after paying 2.2 million U.S. dollars as 'blood money according to Pakistan's law and an understanding to settle the families of the deceased into the U.S. Then, Hillary Clinton thanked the victims' families for the settlement ([Walsh & MacAskill, 2011](#)).

Although the issue was resolved according to Pakistani law, media and opposition parties criticized the Pakistani government for showing weakness in the case and disrespecting Pakistan's sovereignty. There were calls to review and revisit terms of commitment with the U.S. and demanding immediate cessation of drone strikes, but the U.S. continuously refused ([Malik, 2014](#)).

### **Abbottabad Operation: Yet Another Violation of Pakistan's Sovereignty**

On May 02 2011, U.S. navy SEAL raided at Osama-bin-Laden's compound in Abbottabad. The whole operation was completed in 40 minutes. However, the U.S. authorities did not share any information with Pakistan's government until the Abbottabad operation coded as 'Operation Neptune Spear'. Later, at about 3 am Pakistan Standard Time U.S. Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff called the Pakistani Chief of Army Staff and informed him about the operation. Abbottabad Operation was a severe setback to Pakistan-US relations. The American media and civil society were asking complex and challenging questions to determine if Pakistan as a strategic partner was negligent of its duties or was an accomplice in providing a hideout to Osama-bin-Laden in Abbottabad. On the other side, Pakistani media, opposition parties, and even the government regarded this operation as disrespectful and violating Pakistan's sovereignty ([Haqqani, 2015](#)).

The Obama administration did not indicate to curtail or review financial assistance to Pakistan prematurely after killing Osama-bin-Laden. U.S. officials said that they were taking it as a positive inducement and wanted to find ways to work together with Pakistan more effectively. President Obama supported increasing civilian aid to Pakistan since long before he entered the White House. Obama said that the U.S. needed to give more civilian assistance to Pakistan in addition to military aid. Another Republican senator said about Pakistan after Osama-bin-Laden's death: ' You can't trust them and you can't abandon them', adding that severing ties would be a formula for a failed state' ([Financial Times, 2011](#)).

On May 14 2011, a joint session of Senate and National Assembly of Pakistan held and passed Resolution on 'unilateral U.S. Forces' action in Abbottabad on May 02 2011' to condemn Pakistan's territory and sovereignty as an independent state. It was emphasized that it was not a way to eradicate global terrorism, and Pakistani people would not tolerate such actions again. That Resolution called upon Pakistan's government to review and revisit terms of commitment with the U.S. and ensure respect of national interest. The joint session of the parliament also affirmed resolutions of October 22 2008, and April 2009 and recommendations of the Parliamentary Committee ([National Assembly of Pakistan, 2011](#)). The image of the U.S. in Pakistan further deteriorated after the Abbottabad incident. A study shows that after the operation, the public perceptions in Pakistan of the U.S. as an enemy country were increased to 74.4 per cent as from 68.3 per cent before the incident ([Rafique, 2013](#)).

### **The Salala Check Post Incident**

On November 26 2011, NATO forces attacked two Pakistani military check posts killing 24 Soldiers. This incident gave a big blow to already tense Pakistan-US relations ([Shah, 2011](#)). Many countries also condemned this strike and deeply shocked after the incident, and demanded investigations. Prime Minister of Pakistan said that the incident damaged Pakistan's relations with the U.S. and 28 NATO states ([B.B.C, 2012](#)). In addition to that, the Pakistani Taliban also threatened that the U.S. convoys would be attacked. After the 11/11 attacks, Russia supported Pakistan on the closure of supply lines to NATO forces and condemned the public statement incident ([Dawn, 2011](#)).

Saif-ul-Islam argued in his PhD thesis that the Salala incident was a significant turning point in Pakistan-US relations. At that time, the Pakistani government was already under pressure by its people to withdraw from the American War on Terror, cease cooperation, and review its relations with the U.S. It also cast psychological impacts on the military who sacrificed thousands of its soldiers during the War on Terror. After the attack, Pakistan decided to cut NATO supply lines, evacuate Shamsi Air Base by December 11 2011 ([Islam, 2015](#)). After the 11/11 attacks, Pakistan also boycotted Bonn Conference to show its concerns to the international community that its sovereignty was under attack by the U.S. and NATO forces. Earlier on September 30 2010, a NATO helicopter also killed 2 Pakistani soldiers, and that time border was closed, and NATO supply lines remained halted for three days. The 11/11 attacks by NATO forces targeted two Pakistani check posts at the Pakistan-Afghan border and

killed several military soldiers. In response, Pakistan again closed NATO supply routes and demanded the U.S. formally apologize ([Islam, 2015](#)).

On April 12 2012, the Parliament of Pakistan again passed a resolution to reset Pak-US strained relations to offer ways to reopen NATO supply lines. Parliament of Pakistan unanimously demanded that the U.S. immediately stop drone attacks in Pakistani territory and extend a formal apology ([Oneindia, 2012](#)). The U.S. and Pakistan, high-level talks, were also held at Islamabad but failed without any decision and the diplomatic deadlock remained there. Pakistani officials were determined and conveyed the message to the U.S. government that they would not reopen supply routes until Obama Administration formally apologized

([The New York Times, 2012](#)). After the closure of NATO supply routes by Pakistan, the U.S. tried to reduce its dependence on the former using Central Asian alternate routes, but these routes were more costly than Pakistan's. Charges of one container from Pakistan were about 7000 US dollars, and from the Persian Gulf through air route, its cost was about 17000 US dollars. (See Malik, 2014)

After seven months of stalemate, the U.S. successfully convinced Pakistan to open supply routes without a formal apology. However, on July 03 2011, the U.S. confirmed that NATO supply lines are to be reopened after apologies by the U.S. Administration over Pakistan's death of military personnel. Hillary Clinton, the U.S. Secretary of State, said:

We are sorry for the losses suffered by the Pakistani military ([Tribune, 2012](#)).

She also said:

We are sorry for the losses suffered by the Pakistani military. We are committed to working closely with Pakistan and Afghanistan to prevent this from ever happening again ([U.S.Department of State, 2012](#)).

Leon Panetta, the U.S. Defence Secretary, welcomed the decision of Pakistan to reopen NATO supply routes and said:

We remain committed to improving our partnership with Pakistan and to working closely together as our two nations confront common security challenges in the region ([Monitor, 2012](#)).

A new agreement was negotiated on reopening supply routes, and the U.S. refused to increase the transit fee demanded by Pakistan. However, Pakistan's government did not press hard for its demand and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on July 30 2012 ([Yamin, 2013](#)). To resume the NATO supply lines, the U.S. was finally forced to sign a written MoU with Pakistan to replace earlier verbal understating between the two countries. Eventually, after U.S. apologies for killing 24 Pakistani soldiers and signing a written MoU, Pakistan resumed supply lines under the guidance and recommendations of its Parliament and the UN Charter ([KUNA, 2012](#)). *B.B.C.* also confirmed that NATO supply remained close till seven months, and this closure represented pitfalls in Pakistan-US relations unprecedented before ([B.B.C, 2012](#)). The reactions of the two countries seen in the context of earlier events, discussed above, make both more understandable behaviour. Salala Check Post-incident further severed the two countries' ties and increased mistrust in their relationship. Furthermore, the public image of the U.S. further deteriorated in the eyes of Pakistani society.

## V. DISCUSSION

### **Diplomatic, Strategic, and Financial Implications of the Salala Check Post Incident**

Pakistan displayed its anxiety and reservation about the attack at the diplomatic level ([Shaukat, 2016](#)). The United States tried to resolve the issue of NATO supply lines closed immediately after the Salala check post attack and sent negotiators to Pakistan. Still, the negotiations failed, and Pakistan Chief of Army Staff refused to meet with senior Pentagon officials. After six weeks, the negotiator returned to the

U.S. without any breakthrough. Pakistan's Ambassador to the U.S. was reported to have said, "we are still optimistic that we can reach a mutually satisfactory resolution to these issues" ([Dawn, 2012](#)). It is difficult to say "sorry" and admit mistakes, especially for someone perceived to be more powerful. As the case of Pakistan, U.S. took seven months to do so. In this case, the Obama Administration was reluctant, but it was no less painful to bow before a more petite and comparatively far less powerful country. The U.S. already said sorry on different occasions but not at a higher and elevated level. Earlier, the U.S. used to play the "sorry-sorry" card only on its terms, even as a foreign policy tool. In the case of Salala Check Post Attacks, the Pakistani government desired which appeared a hard pill to swallow for the Obama Administration. The U.S. had no other alternative to get restored NATO supply lines. High-level meetings already failed, and Obama Administration had to say "sorry." In this case, Pakistan had a diplomatic victory.

Four main strategic objectives: handling Taliban, aid to Pakistan, security of Pakistan's nuclear assets, and eradication of Al-Qaida in Pakistan always remained constant for policymakers even after President George W. Bush left the office ([Khan, 2009](#)). President Obama's main focus was to initiate strategies related to those four policy areas to achieve the U.S. strategic interests in the region. Soon after Salala check, post-incident U.S. strategic policy goals were set in abeyance; NATO supply routes were closed, financial aid halted. Salala check post attack sabotaged mutual trust in Pakistan-US strategic relations.

After the closure of NATO supply routes by Pakistan, the U.S. tried to reduce its dependence on Pakistan using Central Asian alternate routes. Still, these routes were more costly than Pakistani supply routes. Charges of one container from Pakistan were about 7000 US dollars, and from the Persian Gulf through air route, its cost was about 17000 US dollars (Malik 2014). During Seven months of the closure of Pakistani supply routes, the U.S. had to bear substantial economic losses. Leon E. Panetta, Defense Secretary of U.S., said that Pakistan's seven months repudiation to allow U.S. and NATO supplies was costing the United States an additional 100 million U.S. dollars a month because pool via air, rail and road through Russia and other countries were more expensive and more prolonged than Pakistan ([DeYoung, 2013](#)). The U.S. realized that if the Afghan war prolonged, the U.S. economy will be affected badly in this competitive economic environment. The seven months between the opening of supply routes and the Salala check post-incident had also seen chaotic political manoeuvring by the United States ([Gulati, 2012](#)).

Pakistan and the U.S. have a history of a love-hate relationship. They neither remained trusted friends nor full-fledged enemies. History shows that their relations depend on their seasonal needs. Pakistanis perceive that when the U.S. needs Pakistan, it opens all doors for the latter, and after fulfilment of its needs, it leaves Pakistan in the lurch. The geo-strategic location of Pakistan is appealing to all big powers. The U.S. policy towards Russia and China has always been to curtail the growth of their area of influence. In this context, Pak-China relation seems a bitter reality for the U.S.

If the U.S. wishes to maintain its relations with Pakistan on a smooth footing based on mutual trust, it will respect Pakistan's sovereignty and security. The U.S. closer relations with India also bother Pakistan, especially in the presence of the Kashmir issue. The U.S. wishes to use India as a counterweight to China but cannot ignore Pakistan because of its geo-strategic location, nuclear status, and relations with China. If the U.S. wishes to maintain its ties with India and Pakistan, it should play its role in resolving the Kashmir issue, the bone of contention between the two South Asian neighbours.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Pakistan-US relations deteriorated in the wake of the Abbottabad Operation, aerial strikes, Raymond Davis case, and 11/11 attacks on Salala check post. The U.S. did not regard several resolutions by Pakistan's Parliament in 2008, 2010, 2011, and 2012 and continued to violate Pakistan's sovereignty. In 2011 besides other significant incidents, the major blow to the bilateral relations was the 11/11 attacks. This was taken seriously by Pakistan because it continued other similar events that disrespected Pakistan's sovereignty. These attacks negatively affected the U.S. goals about terrorism and Pakistan-US engagement in the eradication of terrorism. This also created lousy blood and increased already present mistrust between the two countries.

American authorities look at Pakistan as an unreliable ally. Osama Bin Laden's alleged presence in Pakistani city Abbottabad has been interpreted as either inefficiency or betrayal by Pakistan. While the Abbottabad operation put Pakistan in a defensive position, Pakistani media and the public were furious at violating Pakistan's sovereignty. The U.S. also realized that the foreign policy behaviour of Pakistan is



seemingly the outcome of military-strategic interests. The U.S. felt that a robust civil government in Pakistan is the only way to achieve common goals (C-SPAN Video Library, 2010). Increasing mistrust demands prompt and appropriate actions and remedies from the two countries. The two countries need to understand the requirements of national interests of each other in a more realistic manner. Further, they should also try to understand each other's true capabilities and capacities. The two countries should develop mutual trust by respecting each other's commitments and sovereignty.

## LIMITATION AND STUDY FORWARD

This study is limited because it aims to analyze the series of those significant events that contributed to the deterioration of the Pakistan-US relations before November 26 2011, to analyze ensuing strategic, diplomatic, and financial implications. Future studies can explore other events in history which have affected Pakistan-US relations.

## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

**Muhammad Afzal Sadaf:** Conception of Idea, Literature Review, Data collection, Data analysis, Initial Write-Up, Preparation of Manuscript, Finding the journal for publication, Correspondence with Journal and the Co-author, Preparation of References using reference management software, Mendeley.

**Shakil Akhtar:** Conception of the Idea, Literature Review, Revision of the Draft, Language Correction, Formatting, Preparation of Manuscript, Data Analysis and Discussion, methodology, Proofreading and Editing of the Article, Preparation of References using reference management software, Mendeley, plagiarism check.

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