

## Analyzing the Diplomatic Issues in Pakistan: 2008-2013



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**Abstract:** *The following research paper examines the fragile diplomatic landscape of Pakistan during the 4<sup>th</sup> Regime of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) from 2008-2013. The article focusses on the major issues that had profound impact on Pakistan's foreign relations. The paper includes events likely the divesting Mumbai attack in November 2008 as well as the controversial Abbottabad Operation in May 2011, which resulted the killing of Osama Bin Laden. The research provides a critical appraisal that how the PPP Government handled these events, and more especially its tense relations with the US. The study also examines the impact of controversial Kerry-Lugar Bill (KLB), and NATO forces attack on the Salala Check-Post. Furthermore, the article discusses the Raymond Davis incident, which brought widespread anger of Pakistani nation against the CIA contractor. Keeping in view the above events, the paper offers a detailed investigation of the complexities that marked Pakistan diplomacy under the PPP Regime.*

**Keywords:** PPP regime, Mumbai Attack, Kerry-Lugar bill, Diplomatic issues, Civil-Military Relations.

### Introduction

The year 2008 was the turning point in the political landscape of Pakistan, when the PPP came in power after the tragic death of Benazir Bhutto, who was assassinated on December 27, 2007 at Rawalpindi. It is also the occurrence of the key moment in the 60<sup>th</sup> years of Pakistan, that witnessed the successful democratic transition of power to the next government.<sup>1</sup>

The 4<sup>th</sup> regime of the PPP from 2008-2013 got land-mark constitutional achievements including the 18<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment, as well as the 7<sup>th</sup> National finance Commission (NFC) Award. However, the PPP performance during this tenure was marked as mixture of

success and challenges. Especially the PPP entered into a complex coalition government by forming alliance with rivalry groups likely the PML-N, the MQM and eventually with the PML-Q. In spite of numerous achievements, the PP government faced many hindrances in addressing the key national issues. The most challenging aspect of the PPP government was the complex nature of Pakistan's foreign relations.

The period 2008-2013 was a complicated period in terms of diplomacy in Pakistan, as state faced numerous challenges. The tragic incident of Taj Mahal (Famously known as Mumbai Attack) in November 2008 had strained Pakistan's

<sup>1</sup> It is fortunately happened for the first time since the inception of Pakistan when a democratic government has completed its full term of five

years, and handed over the power to the next democratic government. (The PML-Q completed its term and handed over the power through interim set up to the PPP)

relations with its rivalry neighbor India, leading to heightened tension and diplomatic standoff. The 2011 Abbottabad operation, which resulted in the death of Osama bin Laden on Pakistani soil, raised global security concerns and raised questions about Pakistan's commitment to counter-terrorism efforts. The Kerry Lugar Bill and its implications have sparked controversy in Pakistan, namely the alleged violations of sovereignty and the conditions attached to United States aid. NATO forces attacked on the Pakistani troops at Salal Check-post, the relationship between the Pakistan and United States enter into the stressed situation, since the two countries were the allies group in frightening against war on terror. This incident led to the temporarily suspension NATO supply lines through Pakistani routes. Additionally, the drone attacks from the US forces in the Pakistani soil had challenge the credibility of the PPP government at the diplomatic stand as the nation showed highest anger the United States. The Raymond Davis incident, which took place in Lahore, in which the said CIA Agent (Raymond Davis) has shot two Pakistani citizens and this incident brought the high level of complex relationship between United States and Pakistan. These were the major diplomatic challenges that the PPP government faced in its tenure from 2008-2013. Following are the detail discussion on these diplomatic issues.

### **Mumbai Attack**

Pakistan-India ties suffered a significant setback in November 2008 following a terrorist attack at the Taj Hotel in Mumbai. India promptly attributed the responsibility to Pakistan, as one of the terrorists was apprehended and identified as a Pakistani citizen. According to reports, a group of terrorists arrived via the maritime route from Karachi and executed a meticulously planned operation. India asserted that the Mumbai attack was orchestrated by *Lashkar-e-Tayyaba*, a Pakistani militant organization engaged in the insurgency against India in Kashmir. (Amin, 2021)

The PPP government faced a formidable obstacle in the form of the November 2008 Mumbai attacks, which entangled Pakistan in a web of international scrutiny and diplomatic

turmoil. Nearly 200 people, including many foreign nationals, lost their lives in the well-coordinated assault that a Pakistani terrorist group carried out, drawing attention from around the world. (Kuszevska-Bohnert, 2016) In response to this Mumbai attacks, the tension between the two countries reached at the highest level and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh asked Pakistani Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gillani to send the director general of the ISI to New Delhi to exchange information and exchange ideas. (default/files/SR%20297.pdf) Although Gillani agreed, the decision, taken by the civilian government independently of earlier military talks, appeared to be a bold attempt to allay India's concerns.

However, the military leadership led by General Kayani opposed this political decision and pressured the civilian government to change its position. Ultimately, President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Gillani bowed to military pressure and chose to send an ISI representative instead of the DG-ISI. (Economic Times, 2008) This incident shows the reluctance of the military to give full power to the elected government in matters of foreign relations with India, highlighting the challenges and difficulties in civil-military relations in Pakistan, especially in matters related to India and national security. During this period, the civilian government continued to cooperate with the military in maintaining stability and democracy in Pakistan. It was the need of the hour to bring a mutual consensus on core issues and matter related to India, and in the past these core issues were also discussed in the council which was known as the National Security Council. (Hussain & Salyana, 2021)

The incident in Mumbai has important consequences, especially for Pakistan's relations with the United States. After the attack, the US government strongly supported India and called on Pakistan to cooperate with India in the investigation. However, the Pakistani government under President Zardari lost the support of the Bush administration during this period.

Pakistan's National Security Advisor Mahmoud Durrani met with senior US officials including

John Negroponte and Condoleezza Rice. In these meetings, US officials expressed their anger over the Mumbai incident and shared confidential information with General Pasha, the DG-ISI. The information linked the incident to a Pakistani group. (Haqqani, 2013)

Pakistan's military establishment wants to please the US government, which has provided Pakistan with huge economic and security aid for its war on terror. General Pasha even traveled to the United States to meet with his American counterpart, Michael Hayden, head of the Central Intelligence Agency. During the meeting, General Pasha rejected Indian accusations that the IDF supported the militant group responsible for the attack.

First, the Pakistani government denied citizenship to Ajmal Kasab, one of the attackers who was captured alive in the Mumbai attacks. However, after General Pasha's meeting with the CIA chief, Pakistan's National Security Adviser Durrani publicly confirmed that Ajmal Kasab was indeed a Pakistani citizen. Interestingly, Durrani did not consult the Prime Minister, leading to his resignation. Surprisingly, General Pasha retained his position and no one was appointed as National Security Adviser during Zardari's tenure. This reinforces the military's dominance in Pakistan's power dynamics, as the military often lacks the education and experience of political leaders.

### **Kerry-Lugar Bill**

The long relationship between the US and Pakistan goes back to Pakistan established in the 1950s, when Pakistan joined SEATO and CENTO and received US military and economic aid. This assistance is aimed at modernizing Pakistan's military to address India's security challenges and providing resources for economic development. Instead, the US was provided a major military base at Badaber<sup>2</sup> near Peshawar under Ayub Khan and fostered direct military ties. At that time, the civilian government was considered weak and fragmented, while the military was strong and

influential. This influence continues today, as military leaders continue to shape Pakistan's foreign, defense and national security policies. From 1958 to 2008, three military administrations, notably General Musharraf, who allied Pakistan with NATO and assisted in counterterrorism efforts, backed US policy. Pakistan has incurred significant costs in its efforts to combat the Taliban and Islamic terrorism. Following Musharraf's resign from the office of the President in 2008, Pakistan encountered political instability, terrorist threats, and economic fragility under its subsequent military and political leadership. In Afghanistan, Pakistan fought alongside the United States to defeat terrorism.

President Zardari, who has marked a major shift as the first civilian president in a decade, has expressed a strong desire to improve relations with the United States. As president, Zardari sought to assert his authority in matters related to the military and recognized the importance of US support to achieve this goal. In the political field, relationships are often based on common interests. As a result, the Obama administration has actively built relationships with the civilian government to achieve certain goals (Ganguly, 2022).

In 2009, the United States granted conditional economic aid to the Pakistani government through the Kerry-Lugar-Berman (KLB) bill, which sanctioned \$7.5 billion in U.S. civilian assistance over a period of five years. (The Dawn, 2009)

The following object-able clauses were added in the Kerry-Luger Bill:

- Section 203(B). Efforts are being made to hinder the activities of Al-Qaeda, Taliban-affiliated organizations, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi. This includes shutting down terrorist training camps in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and dismantling operational bases in locations like Quetta and Muridke.
- Section 302(11) (E) refers to a specific

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<sup>2</sup> PAF Camp *Badaber*, formerly known as *Peshawar Air Station*

provision inside a legal document or statute. In order to deter aggression against neighboring nations, Article (13) encompasses Pakistan's nuclear program, while Article (15) addresses the advancement of high-ranking military officials, the requirement for parliamentary supervision and endorsement of the military budget, and the establishment of effective civilian control over the military through a hierarchical chain of command. (The Dawn, 2009)

Kerry-Luger Bill also showed that there is priority between the civilian government and the military, especially in matters of foreign policy. The civilian government believes that the bill will strengthen the civilian and high-level government and its support will be beneficial for Pakistan's economic development. However, the military said it would threaten the company's interests, especially national security, and strengthen its enemy, India. The Pakistan Army was the first to adopt the project. However, the draft was later changed without the approval of the military, which increased the military's displeasure. (Ashraf, 2009)

Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif and Leader of the Opposition Chaudhary Nisar met with the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) in order to introduce the bill into Parliament. This meeting took place in the midst of the national crisis that was occurring in the KLB. In light of the circumstances, Shahbaz Sharif is regarded as a understanding and efficient politician who is able to demonstrate commitment to his party. (Daily Times, 2009)

The meeting between PML-N leaders and COAS suggested that the military has political support in its stand against the civilian government on the KLB issue (India Today, 2009). Unlike the past when political parties supported military rulers for their own interests, now political parties and the military do not oppose the Zardari government and demand military control for broader reasons such as Pakistan's stability, democracy, and national security. The media also supported the military's stance on the KLB, fueling anti-government and pro-military sentiment in the country.

The KLB (Kerry-Lugar-Berman) bill has engendered conflict and misconceptions among the Pakistani government, political parties, and the military. The Pakistan People's Party (PPP), initially considering the Kerry-Lugar-Berman (KLB) Act as a success in democratic administration, encountered internal pressure to release a statement declaring that Pakistan would refuse any assistance from the United States until it resolved the issues faced by Pakistan. It is possible to state that the military is doing its customary function of acting as a superior to the civilian authority in this situation. The military is in control of the democratic government, and the civilian government's job is to carry out its duties in accordance with the directives of the military elites. That being said, this is also the best example of a controlled or guided democracy. (Hussain & Salyana, *The Transition of Guided Democracy in Pakistan. A Study of Military Regimes*, 2022) The government has justified the KLB, asserting that it upholds democracy and seeks to foster civic growth. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated that Pakistan voluntarily chose to receive help for the Kerry-Lugar-Berman (KLB) program. She emphasized that the KLB program is intended to support the democratic government, despite the fact that the United States has also supplied substantial military assistance.

#### **Raymond Davis Case:**

Raymond Davis, a CIA contractor, was responsible for the deaths of two Pakistanis in Lahore in January 2011. He claimed that he was acting in self-defense; the incident took place in a market area in Lahore. Davis placed a call for assistance, and the second vehicle, which had been involved in a tragic collision with a pedestrian, departed the site of the accident. Witnesses gathered around Davis and collected his footage as well as the footage of his vehicle, which was covered in gunshot holes. The police arrived at the scene and placed Davis under arrest so that he could provide a statement. (The Dawn, 2011)

The Zardari government faced criticism from opposition parties and the general population. The media significantly contributes to the amplification of anti-American sentiment in

Pakistan, frequently depicting the CIA and American military in an unfavorable manner. A significant number of Pakistanis believed that their government has granted CIA agents exceptional authority, enabling them to operate without restrictions and even engage in criminal activities within Pakistan without facing any repercussions. The occurrence intensified the prevailing anti-American attitude throughout the nation, and the overwhelming agreement among the populace was that the government had inadequately safeguarded its citizens in a manner unparalleled in Pakistan's history.

Pakistani President Zardari declared that Pakistan could decide Raymond Davis' fate on February 1, 2011. Davis cannot leave Pakistan, according to the Lahore High Court. Davis was linked to the US embassy in Lahore, which the US claimed possessed diplomatic immunity and requested consular immunity under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. After US pressure, Pakistan's military and judiciary permitted Davis to leave safely. On March 16, 2011, the Lahore High Court released him following the payment of \$2.4 million in compensation, referred to as "diyat" or "blood money," to the families of the victims. (The Dawn, 2011) The incident further strained the relationship between the two countries and added to the perception that the PPP government was subservient to U.S. interests.

The Davis case became complicated. The Army, the ISI and the US knew that Zardari had no influence over the Punjab Police and the Lahore High Court which placed Davis' name on the exit control list at the airport so that he could not fly. The US embassy issued a statement apologizing to the families of the victims, but the apology did not work as the public and the family sought justice in Pakistani courts.

### **The Killing of Osama Bin Laden**

In May 2011, the United States carried out a covert operation in Abbottabad, Pakistan, resulting in the killing of Osama bin Laden, the founder and leader of the terrorist group Al-Qaeda. The aftermath of the operation raised many questions on Pakistan's ignorance on Osama Bin Laden presence in military zone as

well Pakistan was accused by giving safe haven to Bin Laden

On May 2, 2011, Operation Neptune Spear occurred in the military zone. This operation is also known as Abbottabad Operation, in which the American Navy SEALs did a secret action. They entered with a mission in searching and killing the Osama Bin Laden, who was involved in the planning of the 9/11 Terrorist Attack and targeted Pentagon and World Trade Center in the USA. Since this tragic 9/11 incident, Osama Bin Laden was in the American hit list. However, the Operation Neptune Spear was occurred with the consent of the Pakistani military and government. During the operation, one of the helicopters developed a mechanical problem and crashed into the perimeter wall of the Bin Laden compound, resulting in its loss. This was the only casualty or damage suffered by American forces during the operation.

The information that led to Bin Laden's location came from Shakeel Afridi, a doctor who had access to the grounds of the house where bin Laden was hiding. He provided crucial intelligence that enabled the SEALs to carry out the raid. A significant aspect of this operation was the failure of Pakistan's political and military leadership to prevent American forces from entering their territory, conducting operations and escaping undetected. This raised questions about Pakistan's knowledge and involvement in the matter, which created diplomatic tension between the US and Pakistan. (Kaleem, 2015)

To investigate the incident, the Government of Pakistan set up the "Abbottabad Commission" in June 2011 under the leadership of the PPP administration. The panel, headed by Justice Javed Iqbal, comprises various members such as a retired army general, a former police officer and others. He allocated funds to conduct a comprehensive investigation into how Osama Bin Laden was able to stay in Pakistan for six years (Kaleem, 2015).

Despite its limitations, the commission's inquiry was seen as an important step towards promoting democracy in Pakistan. The Abbottabad incident was a significant

humiliation for Pakistan but helped improve relations between the military and the PPP government. The government also supported the interests of the military after the incident.

Interests, not friendships, are valued in international politics. The relationship between Pakistani General Kayani and US Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Admiral Mullen illustrates this. Despite their good relationship, Admiral Mullen did not discuss the Pakistani strike with Kayani. This shows that Americans did not consider consulting the Pakistani elite when national interests were at stake. Admiral Mullen called General Kayani at 5 a.m. after Operation Neptune Spear. Pakistan received bin Laden's death news first from General Kayani. This courteous contact showed Mullen's affinity with Obama but also his lack of control over Obama's actions and his unwillingness to express his government's objectives. Even though they had worked together for eleven years against invisible opponents, the operation revealed their personal relationship constraints.

The Obama Administration was unclear of how this incident would affect Pakistan's already split views of the ISI and military's US partnership. The Abbottabad raid deepened Mullen and Kayani's split. Mullen later defended the raid in Pakistan, but General Kayani declined to meet. General Khalid Shamim, CJCS Chairman, was scheduled to meet in Chaklala Headquarters instead of the GHQ. International relations prioritize national interests over personal relationships, as seen by this series of events.

Pakistan faced international condemnation, with the United States in particular, for its failure to notice the presence of Bin Laden within its borders. The episode gave rise to accusations that certain factions within the Pakistani government or intelligence agencies were involved in harboring bin Laden. (BBC News , 2011)

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

Pakistan and the US maintained a partnership throughout the military governments of Ayub and Zia. The two partnerships are founded on the alignment of interests and reciprocal concerns. The third partnership during Musharraf's tenure

differs from the preceding ones. The events of September 11th altered the dynamics of the relationship, and the deficit in trust continued to escalate despite extensive collaboration in eradicating the terrorism menace. The existing lack of trust was intensified during the assault by NATO forces on two Mohamad security checkpoints in Salalah in November 2011. (Sadaf & Akhtar, 2021)

The Salala Check-post incident took place on November 26, 2011, when NATO forces carried out an airstrike on a Pakistani check-post along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. This attack resulted in the killing of 24 Pakistani soldiers including two officers and caused significant tension between Pakistan and the United States.

The incident sparked outrage in Pakistan, with the government condemning the attack and demanding an apology and an investigation. In response to public pressure, the Pakistani government acted decisively and implemented different measures. For the time being, Pakistan cut off all supplies to NATO. (Malik, 2013) The incident brought Pakistan's civil-military leadership together, resulting in a unanimous decision to defend the country. The incident fueled anti-American sentiment in Pakistan, and General Kayani ordered Pakistani soldiers to open fire on NATO forces, which could escalate tensions along the western border.

The international community and organizations, particularly the Chinese government, have expressed significant concerns with the incident, which resulted in a substantial loss of human life. They emphasize the importance of respecting and honoring Pakistan's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence. The US administration made significant efforts to identify an alternative supply route through Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. However, these routes were found to be longer and less efficient, and they also incurred higher costs. Conversely, the political, governmental, and military entities of Pakistan were in agreement to assert their sovereignty and compel the US and NATO forces to acknowledge their error, provide an apology, and provide assurance that similar situations would not occur again in the future. (Kaleem,

2015)

The Salala Check-Post incident prompted the PPP government to reassess its foreign policy, which had initially prioritized close ties with the United States. They faced pressure to take a stronger stance against US drone strikes and incursions into Pakistani territory while seeking a more balanced approach to international relations. Keeping in view all the situations, the government of Pakistan decided to move with the alternative alliances likely China and Russia. Seeing all the situation, US eventually offered apology publically. The US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton emerged on the scene and officially apologized the losses of Pakistani soldiers in the Salala Check-post attack. (The Express Tribune, 2012) The event that occurred at the Salala check post compelled Pakistan to consider the possibility of developing an autonomous foreign policy in which Pakistan places its interests at the forefront of its priorities.

The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) government was forced to cope with a number of difficult situations in the field of international affairs during its fourth democratic term. There was a substantial influence on Pakistan's relations with India and the United States as a result of the Mumbai Attack and Operation Neptune Spear, respectively. It was the Kerry Luger Bill (KLB) and the Raymond Davis case that attracted the government's attention to the need to consider the possibility of an independent foreign policy.

### **Conclusion:**

The PPP government's Fourth Regime presented a number of difficult diplomatic obstacles. The government faced significant challenges that fundamentally altered Pakistan's foreign policy. Pakistan's relations with the United States and India were significantly impacted by the Mumbai Attack in 2008 and Operation Neptune Spear in May 2011 respectively. The government began considering an autonomous foreign policy after the Kerry Luger Bill (KLB) and Raymond Davis case. In the midst of such a challenging circumstance, the persistent drone attacks carried out by the United States

heightened the already robust resistance that the Pakistani people have against the United States. Furthermore, the Kerry Luger bill also cast doubt on Pakistan's ability to pursue an independent foreign policy. The tragedy that occurred in Salala has also taken the relations between Pakistan and the United States to a critical stage, which has resulted in Islamabad expressing a strong reaction from the Pakistani government. The event involving Raymond Davis added gasoline to the fire of public fury. Within the context of these tumultuous circumstances, the diplomatic strategy that the PPP employed continued to demonstrate both flexibility and weakness. Due to which instability in the country increased.

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