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Title: U.S Policy towards India and Pakistan during the tenure of President George W. Bush from 2001- 2008.

A glancing look at the history of U.S. involvement in South Asia would reveal that the U.S. involvement and its policies towards India and Pakistan have been consistently inconsistent and that framing a comprehensive policy towards the two countries has often proved to be a difficult exercise for its policy makers. The intractable rivalry between India and Pakistan, coupled with the tendency of the U.S. to prioritize its policies towards the two countries on the basis of its own geostrategic and global objective of maintaining its dominance in the world, has remained at the heart of this difficulty. Regional considerations and inherent intricacies of South Asia have hardly figured in the U.S. policy towards the two countries. As a result, till the end of Cold War the interplay of these two factors would often land the U.S. at a situation where it would temporarily enjoy good relations with one of these two countries at the cost of the other. With the end of Cold War, South Asia no more remained a priority area for the U.S. even as the overt nuclearization of the region in the wake of 1998 nuclear tests by India and Pakistan made it highly improbable for the U.S. to altogether ignore South Asia in its foreign policy formulation.

The eight years of Bush administration from January 2001 to January 2009 were significant in the sense that a host of factors including 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the dramatic rise of China, and the gradual ascent of India to a viable economic and military power, again induced the U.S. to accord significant importance to South Asia in its foreign policy preferences. During this period the Bush administration sought to de-hyphenate its relations with India and Pakistan with a view to pursue America's security interests in relation to Pakistan, and its economic and strategic interests in relation to India. Bush's preference for a de-hyphenated policy towards India and Pakistan was not only the result of its desire to expand its economic and commercial engagements with India, it was also rooted in its strategic calculation that a militarily powerful and democratic India will serve as an effective counterweight to the potential negative consequences of the rise of China.

Findings:

Since de-hyphenation involved autonomous U.S. engagement with India and Pakistan according to the U.S. perception of the intrinsic worth of these two countries to the U.S. interests, it naturally led the U.S. to far expand its engagements with India than those with Pakistan. And given Pakistan's entrenched perception of an overwhelming Indian threat to its very survival and integrity, the policy of de-hyphenation was more likely to push Pakistan towards a desperate situation. Not surprisingly, since the emergence of Pakistan as a separate nation, its political and military leadership has been consistently emphasizing on achieving military parity with India with a view to counter this envisioned overwhelming Indian threat. The making of short range tactical nuclear weapons, Pakistan's tendency to seek ever increasing Chinese help, and its continued policy to support and back certain armed Islamist groups can be attributed to the desperation that Pakistan assumed as a consequence of increasing U.S.-India bilateral cooperation.

It has been observed in the concluding remarks of the thesis that one of the more plausible and sagacious ways in which the U.S. could have chalked out its strategic future in South Asia, was by seeking to substantially promote normalization between India and Pakistan. And a peaceful India free from its security worries emanating from Pakistan could also have catered to the interest of the U.S. to project India as a strategic counterweight to China.

The U.S. could have used its simultaneous working relationships with both India and Pakistan to encourage more and more people to people contacts and greater regional trade between the two countries. Greater trade and people to people contacts were more likely to serve as an antidote to the forces that support conflict and animosity between India and Pakistan. The simultaneous enjoyment of working relationship with India and Pakistan had also landed the U.S. in a position to play a more active role in facilitating understanding between the two countries over their outstanding bilateral issues, including the Kashmir issue.

Again it has been observed in the concluding remarks of the thesis that the promotion of democracy and the strengthening of democratic institutions in Pakistan should also have received more U.S. attention as a more democratic Pakistan was more likely to cater to its normalization efforts than the military sway in Pakistani foreign policy.

Lastly, like his predecessors, the lack of South Asian experts in Bush's regional policy apparatus also appears to have accounted for the belittling of regional considerations and inherent intricacies of South Asia in Bush's policy towards India and Pakistan.