

## **Abstract**

Pakistan considers a friendly government in Afghanistan crucial for peace, stability and economic development of Pakistan. Afghanistan also depends on Pakistan for trade and access to Indian Ocean. Pakistan also desire to develop close relations with the US because the US, being a super military and economic power, can help in developing Pakistan's economy and military and neutralizing the Indian threat to Pakistan. After the 9/11 incidents, the US invaded Afghanistan to punish Al Qaeda and overthrow the Taliban government in Afghanistan for its alliance with Al Qaeda. On the contrary, Pakistan at that time was supporting the Taliban government in Afghanistan since 1996 to counter anti-Pakistan Northern Alliance and Indian influence in Afghanistan. The US invasion of Afghanistan put Pakistan in a foreign policy dilemma about policy towards Taliban. This research has explained Pakistan-US relations after 9/11 in this context of conflicting interests of Pakistan and the US over Taliban role in Afghanistan. The US demands from Pakistan regarding the Taliban and Pakistan's responses to the US demands determined the relations of the two countries. Bilateral relations initially improved when Pakistan complied with the US demands of counter-terrorism cooperation against Taliban. However, soon the differences of interests of the two countries vis-à-vis Taliban compelled the two to adopt different paths in Afghanistan that resulted in the creation of trust deficit and tensions in their bilateral relations. The researcher found that the Taliban factor remained the most important factor in determining Pakistan-US relations after 9/11 till US withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021. The US had compromised its democracy, non-proliferation and other foreign policy agendas for the sake of getting Pakistan's support against Taliban. However, the Taliban formed their government in Afghanistan in 2021 which marked the success of Pakistan's foreign policy objectives against the US. This research recommends that Pakistan and the US should not limit the scope of their bilateral relations to mere security related issues and should expand the scope of their relations to extensive cooperation in trade, education, science and technology sectors etc.