

Abstract

America was highly involved in South Asia during the cold war. The countries of South Asia were directly involved in the cold war between the US and the Soviet Union. The disintegration of the Soviet Union brought an end to the cold war. This change in the political scenario of the world could not undermine the geo-strategic and political importance of South Asia. The changing behavioural pattern of American foreign policy in South Asia is the focus of our study. The conceptual framework revolves around this principle that foreign policy of a nation is determined by her self-interest and the cardinal principle of American foreign policy is pursuance of her national interests.

Being the sole superpower, free from the constraints of bipolarity, America reformulated its foreign policy. Under Presidents George Bush and Bill Clinton, the United States took the first step towards redefining its world role in the post cold war era. 'Foreign Economic Order' emerged as a major preoccupation in the mid 1990s. Most encouraging was Clinton's recognition that the United States could not play the role of a major power in the absence of strong economic base. Therefore, America had adopted a policy of greater engagement in South Asia to take advantage of opportunities and to advance the United States commercial, security and global interests in the region. The South Asian countries especially India got immediate American attention as a 'Big Emerging Market'.

The United States had also demonstrated amazing amount of leadership and became superpower of the world and was trying to create her hegemony in the strategically important area of South Asia and Indian Ocean. Therefore, in the pursuance of its objectives, America even picked up those issues that were ignored in the cold war confrontation i.e., nuclear non-proliferation and terrorism. America declared these issues as a threat to world peace, especially in presence of the unresolved Kashmir issue. Pakistan had encouraged the US role in seeking a solution to Kashmir dispute since the United States was the only power that had good relations with India and Pakistan and was capable of being an intermediary.

Another security issue in South Asia was Afghanistan. America left this war torn area without any permanent political solution. On the other hand America adopted a hard stance against the people who fought against the Soviet Union with the help of United States. America declared that terrorism emanating from Afghanistan was a national security priority. America urged, Pakistani government to force the extradition of Osama Bin Ladan. The 1998 air strikes in Afghanistan on camps of Osama Bin Laden were exhibitions of strong American resentment over terrorism. September 11 attack on the world trade center changed the world political scenario and put Pakistan in a situation where America used it for her interests. The change in Pakistan's policy towards Afghanistan and terrorism was in the interests of Pakistan also. Hence, the interest of the US and Pakistan converged on these issue and lately, therefore, this is a new closeness in the relations between the two.