

# Kerry-Lugar Bill and Aftermath: An Analysis from the Lens of Culture

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## Introduction

Pak-American relationship and its problematics are usually looked at through the lens of *realpolitik*. Analysts tend to describe this relationship as need-based and transactional (Sutter 2014). Both countries would come close to pursue contiguous interests in different phases of history, however, with the passage of time mutual cooperation faced challenges either from divergence of interests or direct mistrust about each other's intentions (Ibid).

Analysis presented in this paper focuses on cultural divergence between the two societies as a factor in complicating their bilateral relationship. It argues that with a better understanding of underlying cultural logics of the two societies, the two states can work toward a more *stable* relationship within the same set of geo-political and geo-strategic realities. To develop our analysis, we focus on a particular *strip* in Pak-American relationship namely Kerry-Lugar Bill as an effort by the two sides to engage with each other at a deeper level by developing ties between the two societies<sup>2</sup>. The attempt faced serious challenges which, in our view, contrary to usual common-sense perception, did not stem as much from a mismatch of priorities on ground, as they did from inability of the two sides to approach each other on the correct cultural footing. These cultural differences, we argue, translated into gaps of understanding leading to adoption of incompatible positions by the policy makers of the two sides. Such positions, held and maintained reflexively, harden into an exchange between the rhetoric of *power* and rhetoric of *honor* characterizing the responses and counter responses of American and Pakistani officials. Using the case study method, we clarify how the underlying cultural logics play out on the surface through front-end positions adopted by the policy makers of the two sides. Our analytical framework is informed by approaches of symbolic anthropology (Schneider 1994, Geertz 2002, Leach 2010) treating culture as a system of symbols.<sup>3</sup>

The discussion sets out with a brief review of literature on cross-cultural comparisons followed by a conceptual lay out of the analysis. In the next part we give the main case narration. The final section presents a deciphering of the case events from the lens of our analytical framework concluding at a set of postulates enunciating *culture* as a perspective for interpreting diplomatic events in a typical

trail of events in Pak-American relationship.

The essence of this analysis is *interpretive*. We are not proposing a universal theory of inter-state relations but rather a contingency model referring specially to Pak-American ties. With further research, it may be extended as an approach to study patterns of Pakistan's relations with other nations.

### **Literature Review**

Since our research deals with cross cultural interaction we present here just a broad review of the literature dilating on this theme directly. Of particular note here are three lines of reasoning: a) Geert Hofstede's (1991) work, in which organizations located in different cultures are classified into cultural archetypes on the basis of their scores on five dimensions, b) Ronald Inglehart's (2005) variable-based analyses of cultural zones through the *World Value Survey* and, c) Samuel Huntington's (2000) descriptions of broad regional or civilizational cultures. Hofstede's (1991) analysis studied societal cultures of 40 countries in the light of a four-dimension model including parameters of power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, masculinity, and time horizon to crystallize their main values. Ronald Inglehart and Welzel Christian (2005) view social change in modern societies as a directional movement towards human development. Different waves of World Value Surveys, being conducted since 1981, provide empirical backing for his analysis. Martin Gannon (2001) another name in this so-called *dimensional* tradition proposed to study cultures through their dominant metaphors. In line with that, he studied cultures of 24 societies under five categories including authority ranking, equality matching, market pricing, and cleft national and torn national cultures. T. Hall's study of communication patterns of a society highlights four bases for cultural comparison, which are context, space, time and information flow. On the basis of these four dimensions, he classifies cultures into high-context and low-context cultures. Building upon his earlier idea of mono and polychromic cultures, he refines this categorization in terms of significance of context in course of communication in a particular culture. Thus, the high context societies are conservative with a lot of nonverbal and informal communication packaged with formal statements. Awareness of norms and values of such a culture is crucial to interpret signals correctly. In low context cultures, there are written contracts, formal communications and objectively stated codes of behavior.

Lineage of most of the above discussions of culture can be arguably traced to a 1961 study by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck who postulated six dimensions describing

the dominant cultural orientation of a society, including assumptions about the nature of people, relationship between person and nature, relationship between people, primary mode of activity in a society, conception of space in a society, and dominant temporal orientation, future, past, and present.

A problem with all these formulations, however, is that they regard culture mostly as a good or bad partner of modernity- highlighting stories of success or failure amongst the organizations, societies and nations and tracing the causes in a set of sociocultural indicators. Issues such as how human actors actually engage organizational or national goals at the level of their individual realities are not adequately tackled by them. Because of this, they do not inform us much about the nuts and bolts of the cultural processes which impact social action-the actual threads through which institutions and cultures engage each other. Culture in such studies appears as a set of universal behaviors which can be measured on a scale of indices. Residing our analysis in one or more of these dimensional approaches will inevitably lead us to the oft-trodden path of comparing the two societies on the scale of modernization achieved by them. This, we argue, is a circular kind of reasoning in which we end up proving the obvious i.e. that a more modern and powerful culture can dictate its terms on a weaker one. The line followed in this analysis, as will be explained in the next sanction, is to treat culture as an independent realm having bearing on social action but not necessarily a direct causal explanation of social action. Our argument will therefore proceed on the basis of statements of *cultural facts* rather than statements of *common sense*. The difference is important to highlight because the two orientations may lead to two very different conclusions.

### **Analytical Framework**

Our conceptual framework draws mainly on the ideas of David Schneider (1976), an American Cultural Anthropologist and Edmund Leach (1982), a British Social Anthropologist. We adopt Schneider's definition of culture as a "system of symbols" and Leach's formulation of relationship as equations of relative "indebtedness". The common symbol chosen by us for examining and comparing respective positions of the two cultures is *kinship*. How the American and Pakistani cultures engage with *kinship* as a system of symbols, in our view, shapes their general conceptualization of *relationship* which in turn explains their respective ways of conducting an inter-state relationship.

Schneider considers kinship systems in the modern western societies as "clearly and sharply distinguished from all other kinds of social institutions and

relationships” (Ibid, vii). He names them as “highly differentiated” systems. This, he argues, is in sharp contrast with societies where “a large number of different kinds of institutions are organized and built as parts of the kinship system itself” (ibid). As a symbol the associated domain of meanings of kinship is focused on “biogenetic” providing a scheme to map out *relations in blood and law* (ibid, p 23).

Using Schneider’s categorization, we have developed a comparison between two hypothetical cultures treating kinship in a highly differentiated system and, alternatively as an over-arching canopy subsuming other systems (e.g. property, politics, religion).

**Table 1: Comparative ways of symbolizing kinship in the two cultures**

Cultures	Level of Differentiation of Kinship	Modes of symbolization	Institutional Manifestation
Culture ‘A’	High- “We” relationship confined to family.	Biogenetic	Family
Culture ‘B’	Low- “We” relationship extended to members of the caste, or village	Charisma	Political Parties, Business, Spiritual leadership
		Status	Caste and profession determine status in social hierarchy
		Vocation	Caste based allocation of trades and consequent division of labor.
		Protection	Ethic of brotherhood ( <i>Barathari</i> ), caste networks operate as social safety networks

From the above it may be argued that social actors operating in these two different cultural traditions will *interpret* the notion of *relationship* differently. How does this difference of interpretation affect the grammar of relationships on ground? We pursue this question with the help of a theoretical premise provided by Edmond Leach. British Social Anthropologist Edmond Leach’s formulation of relationship as “who gives what to whom” provides a useful model to understand these mechanics.

Edmond Leach (1982) extends discussion of kinship to general social roles and thereby tries to provide a broader understanding of how interactions among persons

are perceived as *relationships*- furthermore, how these relational mechanisms iterate horizontally and vertically to provide a social architecture for society at large and the movement of calculus of power in these relationships.

Leach develops an analogue between beginning of a relationship and flowing of an electric current from a point of high potential difference to a point of low potential difference. The resulting interaction materializes in the form of *indebtedness* resulting from interaction between persons of asymmetric proficiency and status. He sees most societal roles as “dyadic” constructions with such asymmetric partnerships e.g. father- son, teacher-student, doctor-patient (ibid). None of these roles can be imagined without its counterpart. That implies a “behavioral reciprocity” between these dyadic components (ibid, 151). The essence of relationship is *reciprocity* which actualizes through a gift-giving behavior translating into a shifting calculus of indebtedness among the two sides to the relationship. Given the usual time gap between gift-giving and receiving return gift, the reciprocity involved is often delayed<sup>4</sup>. Leach highlights “delayed reciprocity” as a mechanism for perpetuating relationships.

Leach captures his understanding of relationship formation through the following schema:

State of indebtedness	=	Social relationship
Payment of debt	=	Manifestation of relationship
Nature of payment	=	Nature of relationship
Reciprocal equal payments	=	Equality of status
Asymmetrical payments	=	Inequality of status: Power flow from higher to lower (ibid, 154-159).

Integrating Leach’s premise into our basic framework provided by Schneider we develop following set of postulates to help steer our analysis:

In a highly differentiated system of kinship, the capacity to extend non-monetary gifts unfolding in a chain of delayed reciprocity will be low. Resultantly, the span of relationships and the tenure of obligations entailed may be short and the possibility of emerging new relationships comparatively higher.

Scope for delayed reciprocity will be greater in a system of kinship with a low level of differentiation. With kinship performing a number of functions in such systems (e.g. protection, allocation of status and vocation), the potential for convertibility of one type of gift into another will be high i.e. relative “A” extending support to

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“B” in a family dispute may later expect reciprocation from “B” to find a job for his grown-up son. Because of this convertibility factor the nature and size of reciprocity (return gift) will be determined by need of the person to whom reciprocity is owed rather than any fixed monetary regime. Because of availability of this flexibility, “A” will like to *prolong* the relationship until there is a situation of need when the reciprocity-deposit held by him may be realized at an optimum value- in-between, a give and take of interim nature (mostly monetary) may continue to sustain the relationship but such monetary gifts will not be considered a substitute for the non- monetary favor originally extended.

Above two postulates help us to develop an important point about the *concept of honor* involved in the handling of relationships in the two cultures. In a culture where the horizon of relationships is relatively shorter and flexibility is available to convert a non-monetary gift into a monetary return, a transactional sense and vocabulary may get associated with the concept of relationship. Hence explicit references to an insufficient reciprocity received against a gift may not be considered offensive.

This is markedly different from a culture where relationships based in non-monetary gifts and delayed reciprocity have a longer time span. To sustain and catalyze such long-term processes and the complex cognitive game involved it is important to enclose it in a regulatory loop and that regulatory loop is provided by the concept of *honor*. Honor as a cultural construct is the sense of legitimate social pride a person is entitled to within the cultural codes of the society. Inability to discharge social obligations gives rise to a contestation about the requisites of an honorable conduct. Parties to a relationship will thus try to craft their narratives (with regard to insufficient reciprocity) in a language of honor- trying to prove their conduct as honorable and the counterpart’s position as arrogant, conceited and domineering. Hence, the gift giver cannot explicitly refer to a gift as a lever in the public domain because that will be considered dishonorable i.e. trying to mix a sacred obligation rooted in a blood relationship dischargeable in terms of money which is a sign of worldliness.

Following matrix captures the above postulates in a juxtaposition:

**Table 2: Linking kinship with the mechanics of conducting a relationship**

		<b>Orientation toward Relationship</b>			
	<b>Level of Differentiation</b>	<b>Character of Gift Exchange</b>	<b>Liquidity of Gift</b>	<b>Reciprocity Sought</b>	<b>Obligations Accepted</b>
<b>Culture 'A'</b>	High- "We" relationship confined to family.	-Monetary -Non monetary	"High"-- Conversion of non-monetary into momentary gift quite possible and acceptable	Immediate/Short term	-Strictly contractual
<b>Culture 'B'</b>	Low- "We" relationship extended to members of the caste, village or both	Non-monetary	"Low"-Attempt at repaying a non-monetary favor through declared monetary gift considered an insult	Delayed	-Broad-family and kinship codes

## **Narration of the Case**

### **Prologue**

In September 2009, while our principles were in a one-on-one meeting, we<sup>5</sup> sat in a small room in the White House, waiting for the meeting to end. With me was a generally agreeable officer of the US National Security Advisor's office. We were discussing the reaction of the people of Pakistan towards an aid package arranged under the Obama administration popularly called Kerry-Lugar Bill.<sup>6</sup>

My interlocutor was shocked at the overwhelmingly harsh reaction of the Pakistani people to the aid package. The quandary was: in the times of acute financial difficulties of its own<sup>7</sup>, the US had provided a substantial amount of aid to Pakistani people, but, as a result, it did not stem but rather fostered negative feelings about the US in Pakistan.

I tried to capture the Pakistani mindset: how they felt historically betrayed by the US, and the allegorical relevance of a love-hate relationship. His response was matter-of-fact: "why do people in Pakistan think in emotional terms; betrayal, love, hate, these are emotions. They have nothing to do with International Relations (IR); which is a game of national interest." I understood what he meant. I was familiar with the notion of Realism<sup>8</sup>; and appreciated the significance of its fundamental attitude.

Apparently, however, at that time 180 million people in Pakistan, with half below the age of 25, did not see US-Pakistan relations through the glass of Realism. Relationship with the US had turned into an emotional issue in Pakistan. There had been umpteen angry public processions against the Kerry-Lugar Bill; and many of the opinion pages in the national newspapers were spewing anti-Americanism.

### **The Kerry-Lugar-Berman Bill**

The announcement of the KLB was made by President Obama during the Summit meeting of the Friends of Democratic Pakistan in New York; where President Zardari, along with the Foreign Minister, had gone to attend the United Nations General Assembly Session. When the Bill was announced, a general feeling of accomplishment pervaded the delegation. Everyone was elated over an apparent achievement of the government; with absolutely no sense of the public reaction that would emerge later. The Foreign Minister went on media, applauding the US' initiative<sup>9</sup>. Happily we slept that day; and moved to California the next day, where the Foreign Minister was scheduled to attend some events.

We were in our hotel in Los Angeles when the news of the growing public

resentment against the KLB started pouring in. The Foreign Minister, who had wholeheartedly defended the KLB only a day earlier, asked me to have another reading of the Bill and brief him on the latest. I went through the text yet again.

### **The Fire-Fighting**

The next day, while we were still in Los Angeles trying to internally synthesize the situation, Foreign Minister received a call from the Prime Minister immediately summoning him back to Islamabad. During the course of our long flight, we kept on refining the arguments in the media strategy that was agreed by the Foreign Minister. By the time we reached back, however, the situation in Pakistan had taken another turn. President Zardari was insistent on defending the KLB in its present form, whatsoever.

Prime Minister, realizing the sensitivity of the issue, played a conciliatory role. The day we reached back from the US - October 10, 2009 – a high level meeting featuring top political and military leadership of the country was held in Islamabad wherein it was decided to ask the Obama administration to address Pakistani concerns, “particularly those pertaining to the controversial clauses relating to national security”. A news report, titled “The Presidency Blinks,” noted: “It was also decided to 'try convincing' the majority of the parliamentarians to desist from rejecting the bill outright and, instead, to pass a resolution that would suggest its acceptance provided the controversial clauses were redrafted [by the U.S.] in a satisfactory manner”.

While I had barely unpacked after our arrival, and was planning to beat the jet-lag with a timely sleep, I received a call from the Foreign Minister; telling me to book tickets on the next available flight to Washington D.C., which proved to be only a few hours away. In less than twelve hours of our arrival back to Islamabad, we were again destined for the US.

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We arrived in the US capital in the morning; and, the Foreign Minister had his first meeting with Richard Holbrooke only a few hours after his arrival. During the meeting, the delicacy of the situation was impressed upon Holbrooke; and the need to work out some system that would stem the tide of public anger in Pakistan. Holbrooke, who was himself under immense pressure because of the situation, agreed to the need of a solution. From meeting Holbrooke in our hotel, the Foreign Minister went to see Senator Kerry at his office in the Capitol Hill. The meeting was long, as Kerry was meticulous in inquiring about various aspects of the issue. He, however, was also convinced that the situation needs rectification.

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In the afternoon, the Foreign Minister had meetings with the US National Security Adviser James Jones and Congressman Howard Berman, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. After the Senate meeting, the Foreign Minister and Senator Kerry told reporters that Congressman Berman will join them for yet another meeting the next day. The agreed idea was that the two US legislators and the Pakistani Foreign Minister will work on a joint statement, which will address all issues relating to the Kerry-Lugar-Berman bill. "All interpretations and misinterpretations will be addressed," said Kerry. "The statement will make it very clear that the bill does not violate our sovereignty or seeks to micro-manage our affairs," the Foreign Minister said.

The 'Joint Explanatory Statement' that was unveiled, and attached to the Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act of 2009 - and signed by the four at the insistence of the Foreign Minister to facilitate visual communication back home - made clear that there is no intent to, and nothing in the Kerry-Lugar Act in any way suggests that there should be any US role in micromanaging internal Pakistani affairs, including the promotion of Pakistani military officers or the internal operations of the Pakistani military. The explanatory note also diluted the requirement that needed Pakistan to interrogate any Pakistani national involved in nuclear proliferation and to allow US officials access to such a person.

Senator John Kerry and Congressman Howard Berman read out part of the statement inside Capitol Hill, standing beside Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi. "This document today is I think a historic document, a step forward in our relationship," the Foreign Minister told a joint news conference with Senator Kerry and Congressman Berman. "I am going back to Pakistan to tell my parliament and conclude the debate on the note that our relationship can move forward, we will deepen it and we will strengthen it," he proclaimed.

Our journey back home started the same evening. During our travel and the lay-over at the Dubai Airport for a few hours, the Foreign Minister kept preparing points for his speech in front of the Parliament. As we reached back, the Foreign Minister went to the National Assembly within an hour. He made an hour-long impassioned plea, extensively quoting from the explanatory statement he secured from the two houses of the US Congress, to reject charges from opposition parties that the new American law's conditionalities would compromise Pakistan's sovereignty. After the concluding statements by the Foreign Minister, the session was prorogued.

## **The Finale**

Despite these efforts, the situation was far from ideal for the US policy makers. In October 2009, Senator John Kerry was in Pakistan, his body language was of total exhaustion indicating his disappointment during his Islamabad visit where he was having ‘so much difficulty in trying to give away 7.5 billion dollar aid.’ Although he was careful not to express his distress after meeting Pakistani politicians and military leaders, a frustrated Kerry 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 to Pakistan about 7.5 billion dollars aid and also listening its complaints; we can spend this amount in California where it is badly needed.”

Amid all this mayhem, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton also visited Pakistan to allay the fears over Kerry-Lugar legislation. She met with both the government and opposition parties. But the focus of her visit was to talk to the people of Pakistan. She confessed that the US made a mistake by abandoning strategic partnership with Pakistan after the Soviet defeat in Afghanistan, thereby contributing to Pakistan’s current terrorist quagmire. She assured Pakistanis that the US was not pursuing yet another traditional state-to-state or government-to-government relationship guided by short-term, real-politick ambitions; rather, for the first time in the history of its relations with Islamabad, Washington was truly interested in long-term strategic ties, whose primary focus would be on strengthening people-to-people relations between the two countries.

Hillary announced over \$243 million US civilian aid, which will be in addition to \$7.5 billion under the Kerry-Lugar-Berman Act, to help improve Pakistan’s energy generation and efficiency, raise the level of its higher education and meet some other urgent socio-economic needs. The charm offensive, though impressive, was too little too late for the future of the KLB.

The bad-blood created by the KLB episode heralded a downward slide in bilateral relations between Pakistan and the US. The Salala massacre, Osama bin Laden episode, Memogate, etc, that followed took the relations towards ever new nadirs. The KLB, on the other hand, floundered. The accountal of receipts and payments on the Pakistani and US sides did not reconcile. US claimed that over \$4.681 billion was paid against the total obligation of \$7.5 billion under the Kerry-Lugar-Berman bill till 2016. It was also reported in the Pakistani Press that the ”caretaker Finance Minister, Dr Shamshad Akhtar, in a meeting conveyed to US Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia, Alice G Wells, that

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America should disburse the \$2 billion pending money under KLB since July 2015". The dispute still goes on.

#### **“Who Gives What to Whom?” Analysis of the Case**

There are two main puzzles in the above case narrative:

1. Use of inflammatory language and, from Pakistani viewpoint, dictatorial conditionalities in the text of the Legislation at a time when the Obama Administration actually wanted to reach out to Pakistani society and democracy?
2. Sudden upsurge of public ire in Pakistan on a legislation that proposed to give assistance worth 7.5 billion dollars to their country which was cash starved and was desperately looking for avenues to finance its development?

In the light of our analytical framework we take up analysis of the two puzzles:

#### **Language of KLB**

The Bill's language is crafted in an assertive symbolism. Why it was considered necessary when the Obama Administration was actually trying to reach out to Pakistan's society and democracy? Our analytical framework provides following insights:

- a) America is a highly differentiated culture where kinship or obligations of relationship are primarily confined to blood relations.
- b) Rational bent of American society structures a relationship in a contract-like fashion based on a clear understanding of rights and obligations of the parties involved. Reciprocity sought in a relationship has a character of a *quid pro quo*.
- c) Nature of exchanges in the relational universe are mostly based on monetary and short term non-monetary gifts. A non-monetary favor if extended has a liquid character and can be *encashed* or converted into a measurable alternative in a short span of time and the parties won't mind that.
- d) Capacity to extend open ended non-monetary gifts unfolding in a chain of delayed reciprocity is low in this society. Resultantly, the span of relationships and the tenure of obligations entailed will be short. *Returns* likely to be collected from an investment have to be in sight.

When such a rationality-based culture contemplates to give an amount of USD 7.5 billion to a country which is socially and culturally quite remote from it-seeking a quid pro quo is no surprise. And not only that, it may also have the expectation from the recipient country to recognize demanding of such a quid pro quo as a legitimate act. Hence the expression of amazement and frustration from the American officials ranging from the White House Official to Senator Kerry on Pakistani public's reaction to insertion of a few clauses in KLB. Why do Pakistanis consider it offensive rather than feeling thankful? - they seem to ask. And that takes us to our second question.

### **Inexplicable Reaction in Pakistani Public on a Beneficial Legislation**

Starting from the same premise i.e. a culture's way of engaging with the notion of relationship, we start unraveling Pakistani public's loud reaction to a legislation which was going to bring so much money into their country.

- a) Pakistan as a state and society is balanced on two different cultural axes. The state is rational-legal while the society is embedded in traditions based in kinship values
- b) Kinship performs a number of functions (e.g. protection, allocation of status, charisma and vocation) in Pakistani society
- c) The universe of "We" relationships encompasses the whole spectrum of proximities whether based on blood or geographical contiguity (caste or village). *Gift* giving and taking may operate across this entire universe. The tenure of relationships is long and delayed reciprocity plays an important role in perpetuating these relationships. Concept of honor regulates the overall structure of relationships.
- d) More precious gifts are usually of non-monetary nature in the form of standing by someone in an hour of need and these are considered non-convertible into cash.
- e) While give and take of interim nature (monetary contributions at marriages for instance) may continue to sustain warmth in a relationship, its ultimate settlement will be in terms of a non-monetary gift of commensurate worth. An overt attempt by a party to a relationship to dispose of a reciprocal obligation entailing a non-monetary gift through cash is considered in bad taste and almost an insult.

In a relatively plain language, a common Pakistani, thinking within the codes of his culture, will find it difficult to mentally handle overt references to money

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provided to his country as a substitute of the sacrifices rendered by his people. Because, in his culture, a non-monetary gift as a matter of principle, cannot be converted into cash. It has to be repaid through, trust, recognition and a needed act of reciprocation in non-monetary terms. In the Pakistani undifferentiated sense of kinship, a relative becomes a co-sharer in the resources and charisma of the other relative and also a bona fide trustee of his confidence.

### **To their Respective Cultural Telescopes**

As the above analysis indicates the two sides seem to have two opposite conceptions of *relationship* as a cultural construct. Without engaging with the substrata of cultural concerns of the other side the Americans and Pakistani spokesmen keep emphasizing the legitimacy of their symbolic constructions.

Following matrix synthesizes these positions of the two cultures:

**Table 3: From kinship to Inter-state relationship**

	Orientation toward Kinship		Orientation toward Inter-state Relationship			
Culture	Level of Differentiation	Symbolic Depictions	Nature of Payment	Nature of Relationship	Mode of Perpetuation of Relationship	Nature of Emerging Rhetoric
America	High- "We" relationship confined to family.	-Biogenetic	Monetary	Asymmetrical: Pakistan not doing enough to protect US interests in Afghanistan. Onus of "indebtedness" on Pakistan	"Do More"	Power
Pakistan	Low- "We" relationship extended to members of the caste, or village	-Protection -Authority, Status, Charisma	Non-monetary	Asymmetrical: Pakistan's sacrifice in terms of loss of life and damage to economy is far greater than the amount of assistance or acknowledgment received.	"Recognize More"	Honor

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Here it may be in order to discuss exclusively the connotations of “Do More” as a cultural construct. As discussed earlier, Pakistan is a socially stratified culture. In a social structure largely influenced by caste hierarchy landed gentry enjoys a higher and privileged status compared to artisan and working classes. Mainstream culture of rural Pakistan regards artisans and working classes distinct from nobility. Artisans work and the nobility supervises and administers. Working classes are considered inferior in rank- those who take orders. “Do More” in that sense invokes a feeling of being treated as an inferior in a relational hierarchy. While in the American slang it may be a candid way of communicating to the other party to honor its part of the deal, for the Pakistanis the expression has a note of contempt.

### **Post KLB Events**

Positions adopted by the two sides in the post KLB events further strengthen our hypothesis about different and incompatible ways of engaging with the notion of relationship by the two cultures playing major part in further diverging their political positions. In support of our

argument we present below an analysis of two major incidents in the aftermath of KLB namely Abbottabad raid on Usama Bin Laden’s compound and shelling at Salala check post. Using our conceptual framework based on levels of differentiation in kinship systems and constructing of relationships on the analogy of debt we explain the inward-looking attitude displayed by the two cultures without taking regard to other side’s concerns:

### **Abbottabad Incident**

“Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden was shot dead deep inside Pakistan in a night-time helicopter raid by US covert forces, ending a decade-long manhunt for the mastermind of the September 11 attacks. “Justice has been done,” President Barack Obama declared in a dramatic televised address late Sunday, sparking raucous celebrations across the United States, after an operation that officials said lasted less than 40 minutes.” (Express Tribune, May. 3, 2011).

**Table 4: Aftermath of Abbottabad Raid, From Lens of Cultural Differences**

Abbottabad Raid							
Pre-incident Context				Post-incident Posturing			
Opposing Views of Asymmetry in Hitherto Relationship		Perception of other side		Opposing Demands		Choice of Rhetoric	
America	Pakistan	America	Pakistan	America	Pakistan	America	Pakistan
Our money	Our sacrifices	They are doing “double talk”	Always asking to “do more”	As agents/allies you need to explain	As ‘kin’ you owe an explanation	<b>Power/toughness</b> President Obama watched the operation from White House.	<b>Honor</b> -Scrambling for face saving. -Could not give its initial reaction for many hours

**Attack on Salala Check Post**

“The Salala incident of 26 November 2011 has caused unprecedented damage to Pakistan-United States bilateral ties and impinged upon their cooperation in the war on terror. The closure of NATO supplies that have gone through Pakistan had seriously undermined such cooperative efforts. On the other hand, NATO supplies stoppage by Pakistan has caused huge uproar in already troubled Pak-US relations. Pakistan exercised its own legitimate security concerns. The Army did not want to re-open supplies until the U.S. offered an apology to Pakistan for killing of its 24 soldiers” Malik, A. R. (2012).

**Table 5: Aftermath of Salala – A Cultural Analysis**

Salala Check Post Attack							
Pre-incident Context				Post-incident Posturing			
Opposing Views of Asymmetry in Hitherto Relationship		Perception of other side		Choice of Rhetoric		Opposing Demands	
America	Pakistan	America	Pakistan	America	Pakistan	America	Pakistan
Our Money	Our Sacrifice	They are doing “double talk”	Always asking to “Do More”	<p><b>Power</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Collateral damage.</li> <li>-Attempt to craft the issue in monetary terms. Talk of comparative expenses in case of adopting an alternative route for NATO supplies.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Honor</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-We were betrayed by our ‘Kin’ - Pakistan was not enhancing Octroi charges for NATO supplies to Afghanistan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Take it easy.</li> <li>-We did not do it intentionally.</li> <li>-Why should we apologize?</li> </ul>	Apology due from you

In the above analysis, again, we see the diplomacy of the two countries taking to their respective cultural ends of the telescope. Americans demanding “Do More” and Pakistan “reiterating “Recognize More”. Both perceiving themselves in an asymmetrical relationship in which their place is at the higher level of potential difference placing the other party in a state of indebtedness. Both think that the reciprocation from other side only partially repaid their investment/sacrifice and therefore the relationship continues but it is a relationship conducted amidst dissatisfaction on both sides. America as a highly differentiated culture failed to appreciate Pakistan’s cultural view of a relationship as a comprehensive package of obligations conducted mostly through non-monetary exchanges - while monetary exchanges though playing an important role in maintaining the relationship were not to be talked openly and were never to be depicted as a substitute for non-monetary obligations, because that meant like *dishonoring* the other party.

## **Conclusion**

In the above analysis, we tried to argue along a thin line setting apart explanations based in culture as distinct from other commonsense explanations located in realpolitik logics to account for problematics in the hitherto Pak-American relations. We have tried to establish the premise that there are no binding inherent constraint hindering Pakistani- American relationship from outgrowing a transactional mode and attaining a substantive character. KLB, by its multi-dimensional approach, was an important attempt by the two *states* to develop a broad-based, long-term relationship. However, adoption of this arduous route demanded a deeper understanding of the cultural structures of the two societies. Misunderstandings based in a lack of cultural knowledge constitute a binding constraint here. *Culture* therefore, in our analysis, comes out as the main explanatory variable rather than the size of the two states and their status as main and peripheral state<sup>10</sup>.

It needs to be underlined here that it was Pakistani *society* not the state that voiced protest against KLB. Trivializing such reactions as “emotional” (constructed as an opposite to “realistic”) doesn’t take forward our understanding about the puzzle. Resorting to judgment rather than untangling a complication indicates a tendency toward intellectual laxity. What sounds emotional to one party is actually formulation of a response or reaction by the other society amidst its *cultural reality*. As for the question, why should a donor country try to learn about the culture of a recipient state and vice versa- the answer is -to obtain maximum *value for money* in the form of greater trust between the two societies.

Two major narratives coming out of this case narration, representing concerns of the two sides, may be summed up as: a) Our Money b) Our Sovereignty. The key words “money” and “sovereignty” have considerable cultural legitimacy in their respective traditions - namely American and Pakistani. Practically the viewpoints of the two sides materialize in the form of binaries: a) *Our* money, *your* sovereignty b) *Our* sovereignty, *your* money. The former half in the two expressions represents the dominant concern of each side the latter an attempt to deemphasize the concern of the other side.

An American citizen has a deep cultural involvement with symbols such as democracy, people, tax payers’ money, no free lunch, you scratch my back and scratch yours. Hence the Bill’s language is crafted in an assertive symbolism. To get it through the House where representatives have to justify their voting for a Bill through a correct moral and political rhetoric KLB was dressed up in an instructive

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and sometimes intrusive language placing the onus of fulfilling of a number of obligations to qualify for assistance on Pakistan. From the Obama Administration's viewpoint, it was mere bark than bite which was necessary to pilot the Bill through the House. Requirements of different certifications to receive each installment of assistance enshrined in the Bill could in their view be neutralized through Presidential waivers as had been the case in the past with Symington and Pressler Amendments. For the American policy makers therefore the reaction of Pakistani public was enigmatic.

Pakistan as a *state* and a *culture* has two very different voices. As a country its weak economic indicators, tough security environment and internal challenges of stability call for a dispassionate and calculated approach in inter-state relations. However, as a culture it is embedded in a deep tradition of *honour*. Any event, process or argument, constructed as an insult to this sense of honor may allow evocation of a flamboyant reaction from the man in street. Disinclination to give due regard to this cultural aspect resulted in a surprise for both the US and Pakistani policy makers when the legislation launched in a celebratory mood at Friends of Pakistan meeting was received with a negative reaction in Pakistan.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup>Based on a case narration “The Impact of Culture on Kerry Lugar Bill” by Ameer Khurram Rathore, an officer of Foreign Service of Pakistan in 109<sup>th</sup> National Management Course (NMC 109).

<sup>2</sup> Erving Goffman in “Frame Analysis” defines “strip” as an “arbitrary slice or cut from the stream of ongoing activity, including here sequences of happenings, real or fictive, as seen from the perspective of those subjectively involved in sustaining an interest in them.” See Goffman (1986).

<sup>3</sup> Edmond Leach a Social Anthropologist is not formally categorized as a symbolic anthropologist but the way we make use of his ideas in this analysis necessitates for us to include him in the same domain. Further his declared way of doing anthropology more in the way of Levi Strauss rather than Redcliffe Brown lends support to our claim.

<sup>4</sup> The formulation of “delayed reciprocity” basically comes from French anthropologist Levi Strauss’s writings. However, Leach gave it a wider connotation by applying it to economic and other transactions (Leach 1982, 149-175).

<sup>5</sup> The author is a member of the Foreign Service of Pakistan; and served as the Director of the office of the Foreign Minister of Pakistan, 2009-2011.

<sup>6</sup> The US Senate in Sept 2009 unanimously passed the Kerry-Lugar-Berman bill, which tripled non-military aid to Pakistan to \$1.5 billion per annum for five years, pledging America's long-term commitment to its key ally against extremism. US President Barack Obama in this regard made the announcement during his address to a meeting of the Friends of Democratic Pakistan at the UN headquarters in New York, Sept 2009.

<sup>7</sup> As a consequence of the financial crisis of 2008/9.

<sup>8</sup> Realism: is the dominant theory of International Relations (IR). Power is crucial to Realist Lexicon and has traditionally been defined narrowly in military strategic terms. Yet irrespective of how much power a state may possess, the core national interest of all states must be survival. Like the pursuit of power, the promotion of the national interest is, according to Realists, an iron law of necessity. P.87. *Realism, Tim Dunne, Brian C. Schmidt, The Globalisation of World Politics.*

<sup>9</sup><https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sW64sDG6QxI>

<sup>10</sup> Just to remind the reader we employ the concept of culture in the Schneiderian sense as a “system of symbols” rather than just an assortment of values and artefacts.

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