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In the background of emerging global challenges, Pakistan is actively playing the role of a responsible nation to maintain peace in the region. Though our country is confronting with both internal and external variegated challenges yet we believe that days are not far ahead when we will achieve the ultimate destination of peace and stability both on the economic and social platforms. Pakistan Army has successfully met the target of defeating terrorism and militancy within the county by virtue of unprecedented professionalism coupled with the sacrifices which have been acknowledged by all nations in the world. The current operation '*Radd-ul-Fasaad*' to eliminate terrorists across Pakistan will prove peacemaker for the society and pacemaker for the economy; with special reference to China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. We believe in peaceful coexistence and expect of all our neighbours' to honour our peaceful existence in the region. We strongly condemn all shapes of aggression and extremism and respect the integrity and sovereignty of our neighbors'.

Our professionalism and commitment which we have displayed during our war on terror has been acknowledged by the international power-players. This capability and performance of Pakistan Army remains unprecedentedly unique in the world. No doubt our achievements would not have been possible without the support of our nation.

The latest edition of *Margalla Papers*, offers a panorama of defence and security related strategic issues with the solution oriented objective judgments and views of various scholars in the relevant fields. The objectivity and impartiality is commendable. The peer reviewers and editorial boards deserve appreciation.

**Major General
Ghulam Qamar, HI (M)
Director General
Institute for Strategic Studies Research and Analysis**

MESSAGE OF PATRON-IN-CHIEF

In an environment of rapidly transforming geopolitical realities, a constant and timely reckoning of policy substitutes is necessary to evaluate the veracity of present course of action. South Asia has long been a sensitive region, destabilized by the complexities arising out of international power play, bitter internal and mutual conflicts and hindered growth despite its enormous economic potential. Thriving in such an environment poses a huge challenge to Pakistan whose frontline status has often embroiled it in situations detrimental to its core interests.

The demands of desired progress entail a delicate strategic balancing and intricate policy maneuvers. It is incumbent upon the cognoscente to acquaint the decision-makers of the eminent potentialities in order to adjust to the shifting sands of regional and international phenomena. Fortunately, our intelligentsia is alive to this obligation and fully perceptive of the portents of future changes.

I congratulate the Editorial team of "*Margalla Papers*" for providing a platform that affords an uninhibited intellectual discourse aimed at situational and policy assessment. My appreciation is also due towards the contributors for their incisive inquisition into the thorny labyrinth of foreign relations which has made this publication a valuable study into geostrategic evolution. I sincerely hope that in its coming issues, "*Margalla Papers*" will emerge as a dependable source of creditable opinion on matters of national and international significance.

**Lieutenant General
Rizwan Akhtar, H.St, HI(M)
President National Defence University**

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CHINESE VISION OF ONE BELT ONE ROAD AND STRATEGIC DIMENSIONS OF CHINA PAKISTAN ECONOMIC CORRIDOR

*Zahid Latif Mirza**

"Whoever controls the Indian Ocean dominates Asia. This ocean is the key to the seven seas in the twenty-first century, the destiny of the world will be decided in these waters".¹

Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan

Abstract

Since last three decades, China has successfully adopted foreign policy of non-confrontation and has laid undiluted emphasis in pursuit of her political and economic interests. Resultantly, China has emerged as second largest economy of the world. One of the most fascinating manifestations of China's rise is the One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative, running overland along the Silk Route Economic Belt (SREB) and through the seas along Maritime Silk Road (MSR).

Keywords: China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Land Bridge, Strategic Patience, Game Changer.

Introduction

In pursuit of her national objectives², China has successfully explored alternatives and working on regional economic connectivity. To protect her economic interest, China is keenly integrating shoreline nations of the region. CPEC is OBOR's³ hinge and the first of its six envisaged corridors. Based on only a small part of total OBOR investment, CPEC is a multi-sector development framework. China's gains from CPEC are likely to be a whole lot more than its investment. For Pakistan, CPEC promises to bring huge economic and geo-strategic spin-offs.

Competing interests between China and US will lead to assertive behaviours in pursuance of geo-strategic interests. US rebalancing Policy has impacted geo-politics of entire region including ASEAN, Japan and India. Pakistan enjoys geo-strategic significance in South Asia; it has traditional ties with China and maintains balanced relations with US as well.

* Zahid Latif is a PhD candidate in Science of Diplomacy at School of International Studies, Peking University, Beijing China. Has extensively delivered lectures in US on issues related to Pakistan and Afghanistan in the context of war against terrorism. He holds M.Phil degree from Faculty of Contemporary Studies, NDU Islamabad with specialization in Peace and Conflict Studies and is also an alumni of Near East South Asia Centre for Strategic Studies Washington DC, USA.

US rebalancing of Asia vis-a-vis geo-economic ventures⁴ of China at one end offers Pakistan greatest opportunity but *places her diplomacy to a great test* warranting wholesome and integrated response.

Geographical Significance and Regional Geo-Strategic Construct

Integrated oceans spaces in Asia Pacific (AP) and Indian Ocean Region form Indo-Pacific Region, which has smaller sub regions having 60% of the world's population. AP includes Russia, Northeast Asia (Korean Peninsula and

"Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland; who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island; who rules the World-Island commands the world".¹

Japan), China, Southeast Asia (Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Philippines, Cambodia, Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia), Oceania (Australia and the nations of the Pacific from Papua New Guinea east, but not the Malay Archipelago or

Indonesian New Guinea) and South Asia⁵. Whereas, Indian Ocean Region neighbouring Asia in its north, Africa to its west, Indo-China to its east while Antarctica to its south contains fifty one coastal and thirteen landlocked states which include twenty six Indian Ocean Rim states, five Red Sea states, four Persian Gulf states; and in dependent landlocked states it includes Afghanistan, but excludes Central Asian states.⁶

Russia, Western China, Central Asian Republics (CARs), and part of Pakistan and Afghanistan join to form *Mackinder's Heartland* (pivot area). Main heartland, stretching from the Volga to the Yangtze and from the Himalayas to the Arctic is the region which in 1919, Mackinder summarised in his theory as "Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland; who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island; who rules the World-Island commands the world".⁷



Strategic Nerve

Five main trade routes navigating through the Lombok, Ombai-Wetar Strait, Makassar Strait, Straits of Malacca and the South China Sea, and six major ice free harbours (Subic of Philippines, Incheon of Korea, Kaohsiung of Taiwan, Shanghai of China, Singapore and Hong Kong) of the world make this region as strategic nerve. The region provides an ideal route to the international trade joining East Asia to Middle East making it a maritime highway “*Super Region*” due to the growing economic, geopolitical and security connections. Out of 5 strategic chokepoints⁸ across the globe, Strait of Malacca is the key maritime chokepoint in Asia.⁹ Around 70,000 to 80,000 ships in a year (around 600 vessels everyday) passes through this important shipping route that makes around 1/4th of world trade.¹⁰ Although The ‘Strait of Sunda and Lombok’ located between Islands of Java and Sumatra; and Bali and Lambok respectively are considered alternative routes to the Strait of Malacca but in addition to adding another 3.5 days of shipping time, the straits have serious navigational and shipping facility issues.

Economic Hub

Economic developments transform the region into global economic and strategic centre of gravity. The region has 20 economies out of 188 economies of the world with an accumulated GDP of \$67 trillion - 60% of world economic output.¹¹ Six out of world’s top economies are located in this region with China and Japan are ranked 2nd and 3rd largest economies of the world.¹² It is a logistic lane for oil and gas supplies from Middle East and North Africa. This reliance also creates a sense of vulnerability among the countries in the region which has influenced diplomacy and mutual integration, as well as triggered naval modernization.¹³

Indian Ocean Region continental shelves despite being rich in minerals including Tin, Gold, Uranium, Cobalt, Nickel, Aluminum and Cadmium are yet to be explored - 40 types of raw materials used by US industry are supplied by the Indian Ocean.¹⁴

Geo-political Landscape

Economically rising China, ambitious India, assertive Japan, resurgent Russia and US pivot have brought great uncertainties in the Region. Peace and prosperity of the region in specific and of the globe in general is largely

associated with the nature of mutual relations between these major powers. Any mis-calculation or irrationality may turn the Asia-Pacific or Indo-Pacific region a critical flashpoint.¹⁵ Emerging out of Sino-US, Sino-Indian or Indo-Pak affray,

Control of Strait of Malacca facilitates speedy inter regional shifting of forces from the Pacific to the Indian Ocean Region.

volatile regional stability has transpired into a complex myriad of wide ranging geo-strategic and geo-economic challenges starting from disputed island and shoals in north China Sea to Gulf of Aden.¹⁶ Control

of Strait of Malacca facilitates speedy inter regional shifting of forces from the Pacific to the Indian Ocean Region. Beijing views US rebalancing approach in league with India focussing on containment of China."

Geo-Strategic Construct

US Rebalancing Strategy

US remains sensitive to rise of any power that can influence geostrategic areas of the world. Maintaining strong influence in Asia-Pacific region is a crucial part of US strategy. The Korean and Vietnam wars are pertinent examples that the US has the tendency to opt for conflict to restore its vision of balance in the region. Post-Cold War, US remained focussed in Euro-Asia and after 9/11 in the Middle East and Afghanistan; meanwhile, China had been consistent in peaceful rise, pursuing its political and economic interests. US took this development as alarm and a potential challenge to her hegemony in the region. Although US has been reinforcing its regional alliances and off late US has taken a clear shift from Euro-Asia to Asia-Pacific with extension to Indo-Pacific. US has devised a strategy that aims at reinforcing the advancement of other nations around China's periphery as a way of "weaving the net" that produces a "moderating effect on Chinese behaviour."

Strands of US Policy of Asia Pacific and Indo Pacific Region Diplomatic Dimension

- Influencing military and trade relations, ensuring access to natural resources and markets and ensuring the security of Sea Lines of Communications (SLOCs) and maritime checkpoints.
- In Defence strategy and policy, US is considering carefully the changing strategic nature of the Indian Ocean region. Concurrently, it takes a

multi layered and multilateral approach to maritime cooperation In the region to counter China,

- Strengthening diplomatic relations with her allies Japan, South Korea, Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia and Australia. Cultivate special relationship with Taiwan, Vietnam and Singapore.
- Growing relations with India, Japan and Australia providing diplomatic leverage to affect the rise of China.

Economic Dimension

- Increased economic collaboration with multilateral institutions such as ASEAN and APEC.
- Pursuing Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) to counter regional trends of greater economic integration, which excludes US.
- Seeking improved economic ties with Japan, Singapore, Myanmar and Indonesia.
- Backing India's "**Look East**" efforts that include Indian renewed dialogue with Japan and Australia with a vision for economic integration and political stability of South and Central Asia, assigning India the role of regional sentinel and net security provider.

US Assertive Behaviour

- Expanding military presence in Asia-Pacific, Australia, New Zealand, and US Security Treaty (ANZUS) has been revived.¹⁷ US is building a naval base in Singapore and establishing military-political partnership with Vietnam.
- Deepening her alliances with South Korea and operationalizing integration to facilitate combined capabilities.
- US and India have agreed on a new 10-year military cooperation agreement "2015 Framework for the US-India Defence Relationship", and have agreed to amplified partnership in maritime security and development of Indian naval muscles.
- In March 2016, the Philippine announced opening of five of her military bases to US forces under the Enhanced Defence Cooperation Agreement (EDCA). These locations also include "Antonio Bautista Air Base" on Palawan Island which is directly adjacent to the disputed Spratly Islands.¹⁸

- Deployment of US Pacific Command (USPACOM) with the largest of all US naval fleets has been realigned to strengthen its position around Strait of Malacca.

Chinese Interests in the Region

Security of SLOCs

Shen Dingli, a professor at Fudan University in Shanghai, asserts that “It is wrong for China to believe that we have no right to set up bases abroad. It is not terrorism or piracy that’s the real threat to China. It’s the ability of other states to block China’s trade routes that poses the greatest threat.”¹⁹ China needs energy security for her economic growth. China is the largest importer of crude oil and gas energy in the world.²⁰ 80% of Chinese oil imports are shipped through the Straits of Malacca.²¹ China considers SLOCs vital for her national interest. Presently, Chinese energy without any effective apparatus for security of her SLOCs is with a serious vulnerability and in any conflict with regional countries or US, supply of oil to China can easily be disrupted.

Naval Build-up

China is developing navy to extend sea control till second island chain by 2020 and attain blue water navy by 2050.²² In mid-2015, the latest Chinese Defence White Paper plainly signalled “China’s ambition to become a maritime power and one not confined to East Asian waters”.²³ China is already becoming much more assertive in its maritime and territorial claims, indicating its rightful concerns.



Chinese Views of US Rebalancing Strategy

China views US realignment of its connexion with South Korea and Japan as crafting an anti-China alliance in Northeast Asia. China takes US invasions of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003, Indo-US strategic partnership with India and the recent nuclear deal with Iran as counteracting the Chinese influence in South Asia. Zbigniew Brzezinski in his book "The Grand Chessboard" is of the view:

"US is burying hatchet with Iran to control / enhance influence in Eurasia. For America, the Chief geopolitical prize is Eurasia and America's global primacy is directly dependent on how long and how effectively its preponderance on the Eurasian continent is sustained. It is not in America's interest to perpetuate American-Iranian hostility."²⁴

China's Response Strategy

China has the potential to become world's largest economy by 2025; China's military capability may be close to matching that of the US by 2045.²⁵ This necessitates China to adopt concrete measures to counter US Rebalancing.

Maritime Silk Road Initiative, OBOR and Open Sea Protection

In 2013, China embarked upon an elaborate, extensive geo-political and geo-economic strategy that facilitates its peaceful rise coupled with articulating a indirect response to US strategic initiatives in Asia Pacific. It is commonly named as the "21st Century Maritime Silk Road (MSR) and One Belt One Road (OBOR) (comprising 6 land corridors)". Main salients of OBOR are as under:-

- Land infrastructure development includes construction of approximately 80,000 km of Belt, rail links, with a major route running from western China to Russia and Europe. Other routes join Southern China to South East Asia and Xinjiang province has been linked with Pakistan's port of Gwadar.
- The Sea route focuses on the development and extension of port facilities along string of pearls particularly in South East Asia from China to Europe, and China to Kenya to integrate Africa.
- Beijing is allocating up to \$1.4 trillion to finance wide array of infrastructure projects. Besides the fund releasing, China is

endeavouring to lower or remove trade barriers and other obstacles to economic integration with regional countries.

- An initial \$50 billion has been provided to the recently established Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), which is projected to have at least \$100 billion in funds. Silk Road Funds have already released \$40 billion for projects in Central Asia. China is financing \$46 billion in CPEC. China has already made an initial contribution of \$10 billion to the BRICS-led New Development Bank. The China Development Bank has declared that it will fund up to \$1 trillion in OBOR projects.²⁶

The venture envisions development of massive infrastructure to link China by land and sea with Eurasia and Africa. China is making enormous investment in infrastructure expansions as well as increasing trade and economic assistances. Chinese President Xi Jinping announced \$40 billion Silk Road funds in November 2014 for development of MSR.²⁷

India's Emerging Role in Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Indian Endeavours

The Indian geo-strategic location is akin to a large aircraft carrier jutting out in Indian Ocean and gives her a complex mix of opportunities as well as critical security threats. With 7% economic growth rate, India is one of the emerging economies of the world.²⁸ With over 90% sea based oil supplies and possessing sizable waters of Bay of Bengal, Indian Sea and Arabian Sea; India considers Indian Ocean as backyard. In addition to protect over 7,000 Km long coastal boundaries, India endeavours to maintain regional hegemony; protect important SLOCs for trade; ensure sustained development and exploration of marine resources; and block the undue influence of extra-regional powers in Indian Ocean Region. Terms coined in reference to “**Look East**”, “**Act East**”, “**Look West**”, “Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)”, “**Indian Ocean Zone of Peace (IOZOP)**” and “**Indian Ocean Naval Symposium**” coupled with Indo-US, Indo-Japan and Indo-Australian diplomatic rapprochements are few strategic initiatives for meeting the grand policy means in Indian Ocean Region. ‘Chahbahar Port’ of Iran is critical to India for counter-balancing Chinese, alongside seeking access to energy rich Iran and open ‘**North South Trade Corridor**’ for reaching up to Central Asian States.²⁹

Indian Strategic Orientation

India's strategy for the Indo-Pacific region draws convergences with the US pivot as it allows her leverages in Indian Ocean and check Pakistani and Chinese naval presence acting as a policeman for maritime stability. She espouses a permanent blue-water naval presence in both the western and eastern theatres of the Indian Ocean. India's maritime sea denial is predominantly oriented towards the importance of denying China's South China Sea Fleet an operational domain in the Indian Ocean.

Russian Interests in the region

Since 2009, Russia has placed Asia Pacific at priority of its foreign policy. Russia is pursuing hard to develop Siberia and the Far East provinces. With rise in global economic predominance of Asia-Pacific, Russia has revived political and economic cooperation with regional countries. Such revival forms basis of multipolarity which worries US the most. Russia has been associated within framework of the 2001 Russian-Chinese Treaty of Friendship. Russo-Chinese relations have grown deeper after EU imposed sanctions on Russia in result of Ukraine crisis. Moscow has initiated cooperation with Beijing on energy, defence, and agricultural trade and investments.

Endeavours of Asian Pacific Countries

Japan

Japan is also following an assertive foreign policy towards China. Tokyo is considering transfer of defence equipment and latest weaponry to the Philippines. Japanese and Filipino troops have conducted number of joint maritime exercises near disputed waters of South China Sea. In April 2015, US and Japan issued defence cooperation guidelines which allow greater Japanese autonomy in security affairs while presenting China as the competing power. Indo-Japan enhanced security and economic partnership and Japanese establishment of base in Djibouti is more of Indo-Pacific in character.

ASEAN Countries

Despite historical ties with US, South East Asian states seek out Chinese economic integration. However, some of these countries may encourage permanent Indo-US involvement for balancing out Chinese dominance.

Australia

Australia-US alliance has grown further. Australia has strong diplomatic relations with Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia. Its relations with Japan and South Korea have also been strengthened in couple of years. Under Australia-US Free Trade Agreement 2005, trade between two countries has increased by 74% and services trade by 48%.³⁰ US and Australia signed a partnership agreement to provide improved intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities.

Overview of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on CPEC Long Term Plan was signed on 5th July 2013 in Beijing. It is a 15-year-long project to be completed in 2030, and a comprehensive developmental framework. CPEC is breath-taking in its ambition because, in one giant leap, it aspires to convert an existing road into a multimodal economic corridor³¹ involving investment of over \$ 46 Billion in energy, infrastructure and industrial projects in addition to development of Gwadar Port.

CPEC, a trans-regional project, will benefit three billion people of the region through enhanced regional connectivity and it promises positive impact on all regional countries. If this enormous potential is turned into opportunity it will enhance geographical linkages with recurrent exchanges of growth and people to people contact, enhancing trade activity, producing and moving energy to have more optimal businesses. The enhancement of co-operation by win-win model will result in well connected, integrated region of shared destiny, harmony and development. CPEC does promise to become an unprecedented opportunity to enhance Pakistan - China military, economic, political, societal and environmental security³² but this monumental opportunity is wrapped in multiple layers of threats.

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), being one of the first amongst the six OBOR corridors, is receiving a Chinese investment worth 46 billion dollars and a further injection of \$ 1.6 billion³³ agreed in August 2015. Construction of the CPEC is already well underway and gaining momentum with hundreds of kilometers of roads already constructed. The projects include more than \$ 1 billion worth of projects to bring Gwadar Port to international standards; \$ 33.8 billion and 16000 MW worth of energy projects;³⁴ \$ 11.8 billion in

infrastructure projects; and long term industrial cooperation.³⁵ CPEC spans 15 years, 4 phases, 51 projects, aligned along 3 routes.

Strategic Importance of Gwadar Sea Port

Gwadar as western most pearl in Indian Ocean, effectively dominates Strait of Hormuz and serve as most critical outpost from Indian Ocean to Middle East. It is a natural gateway for an important artery of OBOR via Pakistan to Western China and via Afghanistan³⁶ to Central Asia, projecting Pakistan as a 'South Asian Gate Keeper for Southern, Central and Eastern Asia'. This land route to China is aimed at enhancing energy security and reducing China's dependence on the Malacca Strait chokepoint. The importance of Gwadar Port has further increased manifold with geo-strategic construct evolving world order and energy based politics.

Exploiting gains in present milieu, Pakistan is rapidly elevating Gwadar project. From a defence perspective, Pakistan Navy would find it easier to operate closer to the Gulf thus enjoying relative advantage against the Indian Navy. China would be able to monitor her SLOCs originating from Persian Gulf.³⁷

Gwadar is the pivot of this corridor and the most viable and economical access for landlocked Afghanistan, Central Asia connecting Asia Pacific region with Indian Ocean and Europe through a combination of sea and shortest land access for 20 countries. Trade routes have historically been a source of great social interaction. Christianity, Buddhism and Islam all spread through traders but with the passage of time some became less frequented and ultimately died such as Silk Road and Amber Route. CPEC's utility is projected to be enduring especially in view of its connectivity with MSR (akin to Grand Trunk Road paved by Sher Shah Suri from Delhi to Central Asia) as it is the shortest and the best alignment from China, Asia to West and East to Mediterranean.

Comparison with other Corridors of OBOR

In Chinese OBOR enterprise, southern route is the best and the most critical gateway. Some of the distinct advantages being offered by CPEC over others routes are as under:-

- Dictated by geography, CPEC figures out as the shortest as well as the most viable route getting integrated into Maritime Silk Route (MSR) through Indian Ocean as a flagship project. Through CPEC, Pakistan in

fact becomes a '*Land Bridge*' or a '*Modern Day Suez Canal*' with unrestricted and assured availability of (the only available deep sea port in the region) port facilities for Chinese trade and quest for cheaper energy import (Chinese progress is dependent on energy import as China imports approximately 60% of its energy from gulf region.)

- CPEC assumes fundamental importance in sustaining Chinese economic miracle of sustained double digit GDP growth in highly competitive markets. With the shortest land and sea access to China, CPEC has the potential to completely replace the current trade route for south/west Asia and Europe involving only 2000 Km of land journey unlike journey of 4000-5000 Kilometers from eastern port cities to Uighur region of western China and reducing the long arduous sea voyage through Malacca Straits.
- It is only CPEC which connects Central Asia with the South and West Asia and onwards to Middle East, Africa and Europe.
- CPEC has the unique potential to sustain Chinese growth by utilizing youth bulge of Pakistan with median age of 25. Moreover, Chinese major worries of environmental degradation and meeting international obligations for limiting greenhouse effects can be addressed by utilizing sparsely populated vast rocky landscape of Balochistan with contiguity to Indian Ocean.

Perspective of Global Players over Chinese Economic Ventures

Although Chinese economic ventures including CPEC are not in direct conflagration with any of the regional country and propose win-win alignment yet, there exists global geo-economic and geo-political divergences. Some of the most relevant global players perspectives with reference to CPEC are as under: -

- **USA:** The larger geopolitical context of CPEC is characterized by western concerns about the rise of China as a potential challenger to the US led global order. Hence US will be inclined to view CPEC as essentially a geopolitical response to its dominance and its pivot to Asia.

This antagonistic perception may lead to negative consequences that Pakistan will have to be prepared to deal with.

- **Russia:** Resurgent Russia is balancing eastward and the intrinsic leverages and economic imperatives of Pakistan, China and Russia seem to supplement each other well.
- **EU:** Despite its close geopolitical affinity with the US, EU is likely to continue to maintain a largely development centric foreign policy based on positive economic engagement with China. Chinese have offered a so appealing model that hardly a country can resist. EU itself is a legendary example for intra-regional connectivity. In a significant development, the United Kingdom has become a partner in China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and agreed to provide \$121.6 million in grant to fund construction of Burhan-Havelian Expressway, which falls on the northern route of the corridor).

Regional Perspectives

CPEC development framework's politico-economic ramifications offers enhanced regional cooperation, wider and deeper socio-economic development and likely to positively affect security situation in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Nations afflicted with simmering socio-economic, religio-ethnic and political conflicts in Central Asia and Eastern Europe are viewing this Chinese initiative as an apt response and viewing economic integration with China as one pill for most of their ills through intensification of globalisation. Nevertheless, some of the regional players view it as an endeavour to marginalize their influence in the region. Stiffest resistance from negative quarters is envisaged during the initial development stage of CPEC. Varying perspectives of regional countries about the CPEC framework is covered below:-

- **India:** In strenuous response, India has publicly opposed CPEC development and objected the alignment of route passing from the so called disputed territory of Gilgit Baltistan. India has repeatedly asked China to respect other's strategic interests and called for specific actions to "*prevent growth of negative perception*".³⁸ Moreover, Indian heavy investment of US \$ 500 Million³⁹ in phase-1 of development of Chahbahar is being considered as counter weight to Gwadar.
- **Afghanistan:** Afghanistan may evade internal collapse, but volatile internal security situation is not likely to have a stabilizing effect on the

region. Relentless violence in Afghanistan will continue to impasse the expansionary potential of CPEC to Central Asia. Therefore, it is necessary to intensify Afghan-reconciliation process and efforts leading to stability. The prospective trickle down effects of CPEC in the shape of its lateral expansion would definitely fetch positive dividends for Afghanistan. Likewise, Chinese stakes in the corridor and her relevance for Afghan regime are also likely to attract positive response from Kabul.

- **Iran:** While our long-term cooperation with Iran will remain hostage to the wider Middle East turmoil, lifting of nuclear sanctions offers some opportunities for cooperation around the CPEC framework. On 21 September 2016, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani in meeting with PM Nawaz Sharif during United Nation General Assembly (UNGA) session and later on 4 October 2016, Consul General of Iran Mohammad Hossein Bani Assadi during his visit to Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) have publicized Iran desire to be part of CPEC.
- **CARs:** In terms of regional integration, Russia's enhanced engagement with Central Asian states and Afghanistan increases Pakistan's relevance as a regional hub and opens up possibilities for a meaningfully multi-vector foreign policy.

Strategic Dimensions of OBOR / CPEC

Since its announcement, OBOR initiative is acting as a catalyst for heralding some of the important regional developments. Some of the fundamental benefits of this mega enterprise are as under:-

- Chinese OBOR vision aims at harvesting the dividends of globalization through strategic interconnectedness in Asia, Europe and Africa. OBOR envisages connecting hydro carbon supply reservoirs, manufacturing giants, consumer communities and demand nodes for realizing the dream of 21st century as Asian century also being branded as the Marshall Plan of Asia and harbinger of new centers of power.
- OBOR with multiple connecting off shoots is expected to foster regional integration in South, East, West and Central Asia by connecting developing countries with the developed countries in a strategic interconnectedness model as stakeholders (with a win-win situation, instead becoming a cold war client, satellite or a dominion) like never before.

- Regional integration fostered by OBOR can end up geo-political mess by projecting geo-economics over geo-politics in South Asia as well similar to other economically integrated regions.
- OBOR / CPEC give multiple options (strategic flexibility and cushion for conflict avoidance) to China in pursuit of her vision of 'Peaceful Rise' circumventing Pacific / South China Sea.
- With the baggage of century of humiliation at the back of mind, so far Chinese have outwitted US and rest of the world in focused pursuit of her national security imperatives through successful mitigation of threats at policy tier (avoiding conflict) by coining universally appealing visions of 'Harmonious World' and 'Peaceful Rise'. OBOR / CPEC becomes tangible and apt manifestation of Sun Tzu famous maxim saying, ***For to win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the acme of skill. To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill.***⁴⁰ This by all means is a strategically brilliant use of soft power and synchronized application of statecraft / elements of national power a socio-economic response to the US dominated world order.
- OBOR / CPEC is an apt example of guiding principal of Chinese Foreign Policy and Confucius ideals as alluded by Deng Xiaoping's counsel of 'Doing Things Calmly' reflecting China's official stance of a 'Defensive Security Outlook' in the face of all kinetic or non-kinetic threats.⁴¹

Challenges for Pakistan Emanating From Chinese OBOR Vision

In the context of Chinese rise and its challenge to western hegemony, CPEC has a pivotal role to play. Formidable challenges emanating from Pakistan's integration into Chinese OBOR Vision due to its irreplaceable strategic location can only be understood with geo-strategic prism. Prima facie OBOR / CPEC is a benign economic enterprise; nevertheless, facilitating China in her elevation to a super power status heralds a multitude of inevitable and critical geo-strategic challenges. Some of the important challenges are discussed in succeeding paragraphs.

Zhu Rongji former Prime minister of China laid the foundation stone of Gwadar Port along with General Pervez Musharraf on 23 Mar 2002.⁴² His view was that every super power had access to the sea on all sides of its borders like the USA has an east coast and a west coast. For China, Pakistan is its West coast.

Thus economically, Pakistan can be to China what California is to the USA. Pakistan is China's West Coast and no other country can play that role; hence need to seamlessly integrate the economies of Pakistan and China.⁴³

Fundamental Importance of Pakistan's Geo-Strategic Location in Chinese Response to US Rebalancing in Asia and Pacific

Freedom of navigation in Asia Pacific and protection of global commons with concomitant containment of China through trans-pacific partnerships and active military signature is a strategic imperative for US. Pakistan by virtue of its geo-strategic location offering the most viable alternative to South China Sea as well as Malacca strait dilemma gets inextricably linked in geo-strategic calculus of Pacific as a pivotal state in Chinese response to US strategic encirclement of China. Harvesting of geo-strategic dividend of Pakistan's location by Chinese is bound to precipitate some serious consequences as it directly contributes towards virtual death of US Pivot to Asia and Pacific. Much more proactive response than mere demonstration of '*Strategic Patience*' (as Pakistan is no more exclusive from Pacific calculus) would be required (Pakistan will either have to intelligently balance out and address US concerns with a proactive diplomacy or brave out US wrath, much desired by its Eastern neighbour. It is also widely believed that India is intelligently manipulating Sino-US rivalry to its own advantage). Oversimplified view of CPEC being projected by some quarters as a simple and win-win rhetoric (for economic benefit only carrying no hidden agenda) for all needs a reality check. Some of the ramifications for Pakistan may unfold as under:-

Kinetic Challenges

- Increased violence on our Eastern Border (Line of Actual Contact, Line of Control and Working Boundary).
- Increased terrorist activities all over the country especially in GB and Balochistan.
- Violent provocations by ANA or ISAF / NATO on western border for causing national embarrassment and giving a policy message to Pakistan. Prevailing Afghan conundrum suits those averse to CPEC for breeding and projecting insecurity.
- With Modi's hawkish approach, India will exercise all her leverages on Pakistan's eastern border, west (using Afghan bullies) and south (using

Iran and Indian Naval presence in Indian ocean) coupled with water aggression to penalize Pakistan for joining OBOR and constructing CPEC (Modi's brazen intent can be deciphered from his speeches being a major foreign policy vehicle).

- Increased signature of Extra Regional Forces, Indian Navy and US Navy in Indian Ocean.
- Luke warm international response to Indian hoax of surgical strikes in Kashmir by terming it as new normal may encourage Indian side for undertaking such venture in future.
- Targeted violence against Chinese nationals working on CPEC related projects or residing in Pakistan and outright support of East Turkestan Islamic Movement by hostile intelligence agencies.

Policy/Non-Kinetic Challenges

Pakistan is at crossroads in balancing out competing strategic interests of key regional and global players.

Managing Derailing Forces

It is estimated that once successfully completed/functional, the CPEC project is expected to lift Pakistan's economic and geo-political ranking with envisaged increase in GDP by 15%. Being a 'Game Changer' for region in general and for Pakistan in particular; CPEC becomes a nightmare and an appalling enterprise for those inimical to envisage a financially and strategically autonomous and stable Pakistan, hence expected to keep germinating/cultivating troubles consistently.

Not Russia but China is unambiguously figuring out as a potential challenger to US dominated hegemonic world order and by far the most formidable post-cold war challenge for US led global order US commitment to calibrate China's rise through a complex myriad of politics, diplomacy, strategic and economic and cultural leverages is no more secretive as US strategic foresight views OBOR/CPEC only a means to end and not an end in itself. John J. Mearsheimer in his book, "The Tragedy of Great Power Politics," asserts that 'the most dangerous states in the international system are continental powers with large armies.' Nevertheless, US considered Chinese threat manageable as long as it remained confined to land and Chinese ambitions of building a blue water navy did not become public.⁴⁴

Handling Indian Offensive Posturing

Since getting identified as one of the key state in Chinese OBOR enterprise, Pakistan is being projected as potential global turnaround story. With enhanced economic and strategic relevance, stable Pakistan has always been an enigma for India. Therefore, alongside US, most of the external challenges get linked to Indian opposition with tacit support from actors averse to China's rise. Sensing a serious setback to Indian design of isolating Pakistan, growing Indian political and diplomatic frustration is already getting clearly manifested in the form of increased endeavours for fuelling instability and violence in Pakistan.

In a bid to regulate Chinese aspirations, thriving Indo-US Strategic nexus is adding fuel to already volatile regional situation. Massive US military and civilian aid is rapidly unsettling regional stability and balance of power in South Asia.

Accentuated Regional Dissensions and Aggravated Geo-Political Alignment Dilemma for Pakistan

Somewhat similar to the legacy of cold war division, regional convergences and divergences have started getting played in more unequivocal manner than ever. Setback to US efforts for securing NSG membership for India due to Chinese opposition is a case in point.

Dilemma for Pakistan is far more complex than others as it has to manage US / west as an ally in global war on terror on one hand and perennially belligerent India on other hand while pursuing its thriving strategic partnership with China.

Iranian legacy of projecting Chahbahar as a strategic competitor and a viable alternative to Gwadar now stands a better chance of success than yesteryears of isolation/sanctions. Iran is proactively pursuing bilateral and multilateral international engagements including development of Chahbahar port by India since lifting of sanctions as a matter of policy.

Conclusions

CPEC poses serious and sustained tests for policy makers in Pakistan. The first few years of mega enterprise of OBOR / CPEC are critical for its success. Nevertheless, after successfully negotiating the testing time, the world at large is expected to reconcile and make peace with its success.

This paper flags the geo-strategic challenges faced by China and Pakistan so that contours of a wholesome Sino-Pak response can be figured out based on shared threat perception.

Pakistan as well as China together should realize each other's obligations, compulsions and limitations in mitigating threats and challenges en-route by forces inimical to this mega enterprise. No amount of diplomatic skills can be qualified as enough for managing challenges and harvesting dividends of this super strategic venture.

CPEC is undoubtedly a '*Game Changer*' and a solid foundation to finally consolidate over 6 decades of Pak-China strategic partnership with a shared world-view. Stint of interesting time seems to be in full swing, wherein slogans of "Pak-China friendship being branded as sweeter than honey, higher than Himalayas and deeper than oceans" has started getting manifested into irreversible geo-political, geo-strategic and geo-economic integration with a shared Pak-China destiny in the form of OBOR/CPEC.

With materialization of CPEC, much awaited time for leveraging Pakistan's geo-strategic location with contiguity to Heartland as well as Rimland has arrived as India's further growth is hostage to trade/energy transit. This leverage can be used to incentivise India for resolving all pending issues bilaterally.

Successful operationalization of CPEC may not leave any other option with Indo-US nexus except to reconcile with ground realities and bandwagon the regional integration drive for reaping economic dividends converting Pak-China win-win into a multi-win.⁴⁵ Hence a lot of resilience during testing times would be expected out of both the partners till logical fruition of enterprising CPEC venture.

With the preceding debate on OBOR/CPEC, it can be safely concluded that this is not merely an economic enterprise but a '*Comprehensive National Security Undertaking*' and a magic pill for most of the ills (if not all) for both the countries surfing the tide of globalization through strategic connectedness instead of containment for achieving ends of national security. While CPEC has added to Pak-China security demands in the short term, its successful development will surely enhance comprehensive national security for both in the long term. Comprehensive security concept based on geo-economics and shared

stakes is a more sustainable model than conventional security based on realpolitik and geopolitics. Trading with India and other competing powers including US as the largest trade partner amply demonstrates Chinese multilateralism. It is envisaged to be a mix of conventional and unconventional means of achieving ends of national security.

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RESOLVING KASHMIR DISPUTE ANALYZING VARIOUS APPROACHES

Dr. Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema*

Abstract

No dispute has taken such a heavy toll of both neighbourliness and periodically emerging desire for normalization than what has been consistently done by the ongoing Kashmir dispute. The efforts to resolve the dispute have been regularly made by various quarters without any tangible outcome. Three types of approaches can be easily identified; bilateral, multilateral and third-party involvement. This article describes the contours of the dispute which is followed by a discussion on various approaches and outcomes.

Keywords: Dispute, Multilateral, Approaches, Resolutions, Peace.

The Origin of the Dispute

The ongoing Kashmir dispute is the product of hurriedly worked out partition plan by the British empire. Not much attention was paid to the consequential impact of ill-planned partition of India. As far as the future of princely states was concerned, only scant attention was paid to the issue and a set of guiding principles announced without focusing on cases of possible violators of the guiding principles.

At the time of partition, there were 580 princely states with an area of approximately 712,000 square miles and with a population around 93.20 million.¹ The Indian Independence Act of 1947 clearly indicated that the His Majesty Government's rule over the states would lapse on 14th August 1947. Both the last Viceroy Lord Mountbatten and Secretary of State for India clearly advised the rulers to opt either for India or Pakistan. They forcefully stressed not to opt for an independent status as the British government would not recognize anyone as an independent state. Technically these states would become independent on 14th August 1947 with clear option either to join Pakistan or India according to the spirit and guiding principles contained in 3rd June 1947 plan. The guiding principles of states' accession to the either India or Pakistan were laid down by Mountbatten on 3rd June 1947. These principles included the idea of geographical location and the ascertainment of aspirations of the people.

* Dr. Cheema is a scholar of international repute. At present, he is Dean Faculty of Contemporary Studies at NDU Islamabad. His articles have regularly appeared both in National as well as International Academic Journals, Popular Magazines and daily Newspapers. He has published more than 120 research articles and over 600 other general articles/columns etc.

This meant that if a state is physically located next to territories that are forming Pakistan and the majority of its population is Muslim, who is aspiring to join Pakistan, a case for accession to Pakistan could be easily and convincingly made. Similarly if a state is located next to the territories that were to be part of India and the majority of population is Hindu and they are aspiring to join India, the case for joining India could also be justifiably made. Almost all of rulers of these states had given their decision by 14th August 1947 either to accede to one dominion or the other except a few. Among the states that had failed to decide by the 15th August to join either India or Pakistan included Jodhpur, Junagadh, Hyderabad and the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

The origin of Kashmir dispute was, in many ways, is the product of hurriedly worked out partition plan and Mountbatten's somewhat biased role in influencing many rulers of these state to join India disregarding, if the need be, the principles, he himself laid down, to facilitate the process of partition and accession of states.

Discretion to decide whether to join India or Pakistan was given to the ruler. But it was also stated that the decision of the ruler should be qualified by the geographical proximity, people's aspiration and religio-ethnic composition of the state. As far as Junagadh, Hyderabad and Jodhpur were concerned India insisted that these states should join India primarily because of the Hindu majority population in those states despite the fact that the rulers of Junagadh and Jodhpur opted to join Pakistan, whereas Hyderabad opted to stay as an independent state. By this criterion, Kashmir should have automatically joined Pakistan as it enjoyed overwhelming Muslim population and physically contiguous to territories forming Pakistan. However in the case of Kashmir India not only applied concerted political pressures on the ruler to accede to India and once the ruler of Kashmir had signed the instrument of accession, India relegated the guiding principles of geographic proximity and aspiration of the people to a secondary place and forcefully projected the legalistic approach as the primary basis for accession.

Policies

Compared to India's vacillating Kashmir Policy, Pakistan's Kashmir policy has all-along been quite extremely balanced and consistent. India has been changing its policy objectives and tactics with the passage of time according to periodic developments. Undoubtedly, Kashmir dispute is a

complicated issue became of India that has exercised overwhelming influence over their policies since partition. While India views Kashmir as a Muslim majority state whose ruler opted to accede to India. India strictly refrained from applying the same principle to Junagadh whose ruler decided to join Pakistan. Instead India forcibly occupied the state. The Kashmiris freedom struggle is often termed by the Indians as Pakistani inspired rather than acknowledging it as a genuine expression of Kashmiris' desire for self-determination. To the Pakistanis, Kashmir dispute has become a symbol of Indian highhandedness and broken promises and commitments.

India has been consistently trying to inject well calculated moves to erode the special status it had given to J&K under its Constitution.

What the Pakistanis argue is that the people of Kashmir are allowed to exercise their inalienable right of self-determination under a UN supervised plebiscite in accordance with the resolutions of 13th August, 1948 and 5th January, 1949. The intensified freedom struggle in the late eighties and the early 1990s along with current developments in Kashmir are not only viewed as the expression of extreme discontentment of the Kashmiri people but also as a periodic assertion to secure their legitimate right of self-determination. All what Pakistan stresses is that the Kashmiris are allowed to exercise their right of self-determination as promised by the UN. India has been arguing that the intensification of the Kashmiris' freedom struggle since 1990 is not an indigenous. Compared to India, which has systematically eroded the special status it gave to the State of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), Pakistan did not absorb either the Northern Areas or the Azad Kashmir though in case of the Northern Areas only recently a special status has been assigned as the Gilgit-Baltistan region. Determined to retain Kashmir as a part of the Indian Union, India has been consistently trying to inject well calculated moves to erode the special status it had given to J&K under its Constitution with the intention of finally merging the state completely into the Indian Union. This was facilitated initially by British surrender of its impartial role in partition processes enabling India to gain the necessary foothold there in the state towards this end.

Over the last 70 years, Pakistan has periodically but successfully managed to internationalize the Kashmir dispute. Pakistan's multi-pronged approach facilitated the process of internationalization. To begin with, Pakistan allowed the local as well as the international press to cover the developments and consequences of the crisis on this side of the Line of Control (LoC). All interested visitors, journalists and human right activists are allowed to visit Azad

Jammu and Kashmir (AJ&K) and interview the unfortunate victims of the crisis. Second, Pakistani government intensified its efforts to present the dispute to many international organizations such as United Nations (UN), Non Aligned Movement (NAM), Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) etc. Third, many delegations consisting of parliamentarians, thinkers, analysts and journalists are periodically sent to various countries with a view to educate those governments. Finally, the government of Pakistan has established a Kashmir Committee to monitor developments in Kashmir as well as suggest policy measures to the government.

In addition to Pakistan's concerted efforts, many other factors also facilitated and contributed towards the internationalization of the dispute. To begin with many research organizations, foundations, institutes and universities

The advent of social media has further facilitated the projection of Kashmiri cause.

are encouraged to hold seminars/ conferences both inside the country as well as arranging periodically such activities in other countries. Second, many members of Kashmiri diaspora

living outside South Asia not only intensified their efforts to project the Kashmir dispute but also injected renewed enthusiasm among inactive members of diaspora and they began to regularly highlight the plight of the Kashmiris with a view to educate the public in at least those countries where they are residing. Third, marches are now regularly organized to highlight the Kashmir cause in Pakistan as well as in those countries, where the Kashmiri diaspora is temporarily residing. Fourth, the negative attitude of the Indian governments with regard to opening Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK) to international journalists, representatives of various human rights groups and OIC contact group inadvertently facilitates the process of internationalization of the dispute. Fifth, the acquisition of nuclear capability along with continuous hostile relationship between India and Pakistan works as a constant reminder of likely nuclear exchange between the two countries. Sixth, the advent of social media has further facilitated the projection of Kashmiri cause.

Compared to Pakistan's successful pursuit of internationalization of the dispute, India tried not only to paint it as an effort directed to highlight the Islamic character of the conflict but also to establish links between the freedom movement and terrorism. Undoubtedly these were and are crude attempts to divert the attention from the real issues. The employment of terms like international Islamic Mujahedeen tended to generate the impression that some

kind of Islamic conspiracy exists which is continuously working against the established order.

Approaches

Many approaches based on negotiations exist but none of them would work if an involved party is determined to withhold its cooperation. Among the known approaches, these include bilateral, multilateral approaches and the involvement of a third party. Objective analysis leads us to conclude that the Kashmir dispute is essentially a political dispute requiring a political approach based on continuous negotiations. However it needs to be stressed that if any one of the involved parties is not genuinely interested in resolving the dispute, the political approach is unlikely to pay desired dividends. While the Pakistani and the Kashmiri people appeared to be genuinely interested to resolve the dispute, the Indians have repeatedly demonstrated that they are not interested in resolving the dispute in accordance with the UN resolutions.

Multilateral Approaches

It is well known that neither country can change the geography but both India and Pakistan can adopt policies aimed at securing the much desired normalcy. While the past is filled with series of broken promises, wasted proposals, and missed opportunities, the efforts should be focused on to avail every opportunity to move towards the desired goal of attaining peace in the region.

The multilateral approaches include the UN, the Commonwealth and the OIC. It was India that took the case to UN and filed a complaint against Pakistan under Chapter VI of UN which relates to 'Pacific Settlement of Disputes', on 1st January, 1949. Initially the UN Security Council passed resolution asking both parties to desist from aggravation of the situation. Later through another resolution established UN Commission on India and Pakistan (UNCIP). Undoubtedly, the UNCIP made concerted efforts to resolve the dispute and even managed to secure the consent of both India and Pakistan and in consequence the UN resolutions of 13th August, 1948 and 5th January, 1949 were passed and accepted by both India and Pakistan. Taken together these resolutions entailed ceasefire, demilitarization and plebiscite. The ceasefire was quickly attained but the UN was unable to secure an agreement on the process of demilitarization. Demilitarization plan in the resolution suggested that the Pakistani force would be first withdrawn. The territories vacated by Pakistani forces would be

administered by the local authorities under the supervision of the Commission. Following Pakistani withdrawal, India would withdraw bulk of its forces. The Commission even asked the two governments to present plans on their own for the withdrawal of forces. The proposal presented by India and Pakistan substantively differed from each other. When Pakistan asked for strength, composition, and location of Indian forces along with the withdrawal schedule, India refused.²

Having failed to secure an agreement on demilitarization, the UN Security Council decided to request the then President of the Security Council General A.G.L. McNaughton of Canada to discuss with Pakistan and India with the objective of securing their consent on a practical formula. General McNaughton worked out a feasible plan. The plan implied the 'withdrawal of all irregular forces from the disputed territory and to jointly establish and monitor law and situation which would be followed by pulling out the regular forces. The plan also called for the establishment of an interim administrative set up which not only would command the confidence of the people but would also make arrangement for conducting plebiscite under UN Security Council'.³ The crux of the proposal was simultaneous withdrawal of forces. Pakistan was willing to accept with some provisions of minor importance but India refused to accept.

Following the failure of General McNaughton proposal, the UN decided to appoint a special representative to resolve the issue of demilitarization. The first UN representative appointed was Sir Owen Dixon. Dixon worked hard and presented many proposals but unfortunately was unable to secure Indian agreement. The Dixon report in many ways reflected his disappointment. He even appeared skeptical of the ability of the UN to force upon India any just solution.⁴

Following Dixon's failure to secure an agreement over demilitarization of Kashmir, the UN demonstrated little bit of reluctance to resume the debate over Kashmir immediately. One of the reasons for delay was the impending Commonwealth Prime Ministers' meeting which was scheduled to be held in early 1951. The Pakistani Prime Minister threatened to boycott the meeting unless the Commonwealth conference discusses the Kashmir dispute. The British government was somewhat reluctant to discuss as it was 'anxious to avoid taking sides in the conflict'.⁵ However, the Kashmir dispute was discussed informally and suggestions were made how to deal with the problem of demilitarization.

The Australian Prime Minister Robert Gordon Menzies advanced three proposals, to station Commonwealth troops, to have a joint India-Pakistan force and finally allowing the plebiscite administrator to raise a local force.⁶ While Pakistan accepted all of proposals, India rejected all of them.

The next few years saw attempts being made to solve the dispute by direct negotiations between India and Pakistan without much success. With the publications of the news in 1953-54 that Pakistan has agreed to accept American military assistance, India began to back out of its commitment to hold plebiscite in Kashmir by asserting that military aid to Pakistan had upset the balance of power in the subcontinent

Pandit Nehru used the change in Pakistan's foreign policy as grounds for the rejection of the already promised Kashmir plebiscite.

which in turn has changed the entire context of the Kashmir negotiations. Pandit Nehru used the change in Pakistan's foreign policy as grounds for the rejection of the already promised Kashmir plebiscite. Just because Pakistan signed a military assistance agreement with another country to cater for its security requirements and why the Kashmir's should be denied their legitimate right of self-determination. Although ostensibly Nehru tried to blame Pak-US arms aid as the major factor causing change in India's Kashmir policy the real reason was its own policy—summersault along with the ascendancy of Hindu revivalists and reactionaries. They were able to exert considerable influence over the policies of central government.

The adoption in the Constitution of Kashmir that the 'State is and shall be an integral part of the Union of India and Pundit Nehru's assertion in 1956 that he is no longer in favor in holding of plebiscite and influenced Pakistan to request UN Security Council on 2nd January, 1957 to take up the Kashmir issue again. The UN passed a resolution clearly indicating that 'any action taken by the Constituent Assembly of Kashmir would not constitute a disposition of the State'.⁷ On 14th February, 1957 UN passed a resolution requesting the then president of the Council Gunner Jarring to help the two governments' to secure an agreement and to consider Pakistani proposal revolving around the use of UN force.⁸ According to Jarring the issue of demilitarization should be taken to Arbitration along with other complaints. Again, India refused to accept but Pakistan accepted Jarring's proposals. In September, 1957 the Prime Minister of Pakistan announced that it would not only be willing to withdraw all the soldiers

but also expressed to meet all Indian objections in order to facilitate the demilitarization process.

Recognizing the need to further explore the possibilities, the UN again sent Dr. Graham to the area with the objective of securing an agreement of both India and Pakistan. Dr. Graham announced a new set of proposals but these were again rejected by India but were accepted by Pakistan. The UN Security Council did not discuss the case for the next few years. The case was again brought to the attention of the Security Council by Pakistan in February 1962. The case was discussed but no resolution was passed because of Soviet veto.

The third multilateral forum which made lukewarm efforts to resolve the Kashmir dispute is the OIC. Having been disappointed by the UN's inability to resolve the dispute, Pakistan sought help from the OIC. Recognizing the need to resolve the ongoing Kashmir dispute the OIC made concerted efforts towards this and even established a Contact Group which has been meeting almost regularly. However, it needs to be stressed here that the group has not been able to make any headway towards the solution.

Bilateral Efforts

Just as a multilateral approach failed to produce any tangible outcome, bilateral negotiations have also been unable to resolve the Kashmir dispute. Among the bilateral approaches, efforts at four occasions need to be discussed and highlighted. These are direct negotiation during 1953-56, six rounds of talks that took place between Sardar Swaran Singh and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Simla agreement and finally the peace process of 2004-2008. Failure of UN and UN's special representatives generated the feeling that it might be a worthwhile exercise to put the onus of settlement upon India and Pakistan. Not only Dr. Graham had proposed that India and Pakistan should discuss the dispute bilaterally, the Pakistan Prime Minister Nazimuddin initially stressed the need for resolution of the Kashmir dispute in January 1953, later the new Prime Minister of Pakistan Mohammad Ali Bogra met Nehru informally in London during the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in June 1953.⁹ The two prime ministers met for serious negotiations in Karachi on 25th July 1953 and the joint communiqué indicated that the two prime ministers had talked cordially but the discussion was primarily of preliminary nature. It was followed by another meeting that took place on 16th August 1953 in New Delhi and the two prime ministers agreed

to settle the Kashmir dispute in accordance with the wishes of people of Kashmir.¹⁰

With the advent of Pak-US security pacts, Nehru began to blame Pakistan's receipt of American arms for sabotaging the cordiality of atmosphere and in consequence a breakdown in India-Pakistan negotiations took place. An astute observer of Kashmir Prem Nath Bazaz stressed that by the time security pacts came into existence, 'the Hindu revivalists and reactionaries' had acquired sufficient influence to radically alter the adopted policies of the Central government. Besides, India had already demonstrated its double standards. For instance, India condemned all those who wished to label China as the aggressor in Korean War on the grounds that it will only increase tension and reduce the chances of a peaceful settlement.¹¹ Not only Indian troops were sent into Korea under UN banner, arbitration was recommended as a method of resolving the issue. Whereas in case of Kashmir, India vehemently opposed the presence of UN troops and vociferously rejected the submission of the Kashmir dispute to arbitration.

In 1962 Sino-Indian border war took place in which India was badly thrashed. The often proclaimed nonaligned India sought help from both US and UK and requested for weapons. At that juncture of history Pakistan asked its alliance partners to influence India for talks on Kashmir. Consequently six rounds of talks between India and Pakistan took place without any tangible outcome.

The third occasion that experienced bilateral discussions on the Kashmir dispute was during the negotiation process of Simla Agreement in July 1972. While the two countries discussed the Kashmir dispute but were unable to agree upon its resolution. Clause 6 of the Simla Agreement categorically stated that the two sides will meet to discuss at a mutually convenient time in future for a final settlement of Jammu and Kashmir.¹² Under clause 4(ii) of the Agreement the existing UN cease fire line was replaced by 'Line of Control' (LoC) resulting from the cease fire of 17th December, 1971. It further states that the LoC 'shall be respected by both sides without prejudice to recognized position of either side. Neither side shall seek to alter it unilaterally'.¹³ Pakistan's recognized position is that Kashmir is a disputed territory and dispute should be resolved in accordance with the UN resolutions. Indian position has been changing periodically in accordance with the suitability of given time. It also started with UN resolution,

later it changed its position and currently Indian stress that it is an integral part of India.

Next occasion is that of peace process of 2004-2008 which focused on various issues including Kashmir. While both sides seriously discussed various aspects of the Kashmir dispute over the next four years (2004-2008), they were unable to develop any consensus over the dispute. The Pakistani sides mostly highlighted the need to resolve Kashmir dispute whereas the Indian side focused on cross border terrorism. The Pakistani President advanced many workable proposals to tackle the complex Kashmir dispute but none carried favor with the Indian side. Among those proposals four points formula attracted the attention of many on both inside as well as outside South Asia. The proposal included the concept of soft borders, self-governance, demilitarization and a joint mechanism to resolve the complex issues. It seems that Pakistan regularly demonstrated flexibility and kept on putting forward different proposals to resolve the dispute whereas the Indians continuously made efforts either to evade the issue or focused on sabotaging all efforts towards the desired resolution of the dispute.

The November 2008 tragedy led to abrupt discontinuation of the ongoing dialogue process. While Pakistan made concerted efforts to resume the dialogue, India did not respond or even seriously considered responding to Pakistanis efforts aimed at resuming the dialogue. For next few years India opted to capitalize on the tragedy in securing sympathies of the world and painting Pakistan as a country sponsoring terrorism.

Third Party Involvement

Among the cases in which a third party was involved, three need to be highlighted here. Perhaps, the most important is the Indus Water Treaty. The unjust and unimaginative Radcliffe award confronted India and Pakistan with the problem of river water distribution. Without giving much thought to the fact that 'two-thirds of the irrigated areas and 40 million people dependent on them are in Pakistan', the award gave the head works of the major irrigation systems of Pakistan to India.¹⁴ Admittedly, Radcliffe was given assurances that the existing irrigation arrangements would be respected by the succeeding governments in both countries but soon after partition, India stopped the flow of waters to Pakistan.¹⁵ This created a problem of enormous gravity and brought the two countries to the brink of war. Although the two countries managed to provide a temporary respite but were unable to secure a permanent solution. Luckily at

that stage the President of World Bank Mr. Eugene Black offered the good offices of the Bank for resolving the water issue.¹⁶ The continuous efforts of the Bank produced Indus Water Treaty which allocated three Eastern rivers (Ravi, Beas and Sutlej) to India with certain specified exceptions and three Western rivers (Indus, Jhelum and Chenab) to Pakistan.¹⁷ Not only the treaty was signed by both countries in September 1960 but also India promised 'to let flow for unrestricted use by her neighbor all the waters' of western rivers 'subject to the provision that some of these waters may be used by India in areas upstream of the Pakistan border for development of irrigation, electric power and certain other uses spelled out in detail in annexes to the treaty'.¹⁸ Undoubtedly not only efforts of Bank need to be appreciated, but credit must also be given to the President Eugene Black whose untiring efforts in securing the requisite consent of the two governments.

The division of rivers necessitated transfer of water from the major Western river to those areas which were catered by the three Eastern rivers. It was decided to build eight link canals, two earth-filled dams, a power station, and 2500 tube-wells and drainage to overcome water logging and salinity in irrigated areas.¹⁹ While the treaty was viewed by the Pakistanis as a compromise as they had lost the waters of Eastern rivers, Nehru termed it as a memorable 'not only for the material benefits which it would bring to the cultivators in India and Pakistan but also for its psychological and even emotional effect'.²⁰

So far, the treaty has been working well with minor irritations which periodically emerged and handled by already provided mechanism in the treaty to resolve disputes. In this connection, the case of Baghlihar dam can be cited which was resolved under the mechanism provided in the treaty. However, in recent times not only the treaty has been subjected to biting criticism, but the violation of its provisions has also raised complex issues. Already the issues revolving around the construction of Kishanganga and Ratle dams on Neelum-Jhelum and Chenab rivers are being handled by the Bank. Currently Modi regime has been making wild statements and promises to annul the treaty causing further tension between the two countries.²¹

The second important case that has been resolved through the efforts of a third party is the Rann of Kutch case. The dispute over Rann of Kutch was inherited by both India and Pakistan. It was a dispute between the British India and the state of Kutch. Since the border between the province of Sindh and the

state of Kutch was not clearly defined during the British Raj, there was scope for claims and counter claims. Consequently conflicting claims of India and Pakistan came into existence. Historically Pakistan's Sindh province enjoyed administrative control over the Rann of Kutch but after acquiring independence

Historically Pakistan's Sindh province enjoyed administrative control over the Rann of Kutch

Pakistan claimed the northern half of the Rann of Kutch whereas India laid claim to the whole of Rann of Kutch. The conflicting claims of the two new states

resulted not just into a dispute but also armed clashes took place in the first week of April 1965. India launched an offensive operation against a Pakistani post at Ding.²² Not only the Indian army was unable to attain its objectives but it also began to experience reverses when the Pakistani forces launched its counter offensive. According to a well-known British newspaper the Indian army hurriedly left the area leaving behind even their 'homely things like pyjamas and boots and half eaten chappatis'.²³

In order to resolve the dispute, Pakistan, at the time, a three-point proposal was put forward by Pakistan envisaging (i) ceasefire (ii) restoration of the status quo (iii) negotiations to settle the Rann of Kutch dispute.²⁴ Instead of seriously considering the Pakistani proposal, the Indian leaders began to indulge in speeches promoting war hysteria and consequently hysterical outbursts of anti-Pakistan feelings began to dominate the headlines in the Indian media. The Indian Prime Minister even went to the extent of threatening Pakistan with military action 'on a battleground of India's own choice'.²⁵

Cognizant of deteriorating nature of the crisis, the British government decided to play constructive role in averting a major catastrophe. The British Prime Minister Harold Wilson managed to convince both India and Pakistan to sign an agreement which entailed to discuss the dispute bilaterally and if no compromised worked out, then it should be submitted to an arbitration tribunal consisting of three individuals. Both India and Pakistan would nominate a member of the tribunal and third would be nominated by the Secretary General of the United Nations. Not only India and Pakistan were unable to reach an agreement, but and inconsequence a tribunal had to be formed. The tribunal announced its verdict in 1968 awarding 90 per cent of Rann of Kutch to India and 10% (about 800 square kilometers) to Pakistan.²⁶ India got much larger share than Pakistan, but it was mostly sea-marsh and frequently under water whereas Pakistani share included some crucial elevation points.²⁷

The third case in which the third party played significant role was the signing of the Tashkent Declaration. The 1965 war ended because of concerted UN efforts. Following the cease fire, the peace efforts started to secure some kind of agreement. A third party role was successfully played by Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). The Soviets were able to play mediating role mainly because of two reasons. One the Americans had temporarily become unpopular with both India and Pakistan. Second, 'the gradual shift in Soviet policy from one of complete support of India to one of neutrality in Indo-Pakistan disputes' made her acceptable in the eyes of the Pakistanis. Through the untiring efforts of the Soviet Prime Minister, not only Tashkent meeting was held in January 1966 but and an agreement was secured known as Tashkent Declaration. In terms of concrete achievements, the declaration entailed 'withdrawal of forces to position held before August 1964' which was achieved by February 1966.²⁸ In addition, Tashkent Declaration provided for the resumption of diplomatic relations, exchange of prisoners of war, repatriation of refugees', restoration of economic and trading relations, resumption of communications, and discouragement of the hostile propaganda against each other.²⁹

Conclusion

A simple examination of the three approaches clearly indicates that the third party involvement has been successful with reference to some other issues. Thus this approach needs to be employed on the Kashmir dispute. Both India and Pakistan have met many times to resolve Kashmir issue bilaterally but most of the time they failed to reach an agreement. Among the four examples discussed under bilateral approach only one could be termed as partially successful while other bilateral talks to resolve the Kashmir dispute failed. Undoubtedly Simla Accord can be viewed as partially successful in terms of outcome of bilateral talks which not only enshrined the principle of bilateralism but also transformed the existing UN cease fire line into (LoC).³⁰ Apart from minor agreements covering some aspects of dispute, comprehensive discussion on the dispute, with a view to resolve the Kashmir dispute once for all, was left to future negotiations.

NOTES

- ¹ For details see Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, *Pakistan's Defense Policy*, (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1990), pp.34-35.
- ² See Korbelt, Josef, *Danger in Kashmir*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1954) pp.156-157.
- ³ See Burke, S.M., *Pakistan's Foreign Policy: An Historical Analysis* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp.28-It is not too farfetched to assume that both parties have employed political as well military approaches with a varying degree of emphasis. Until the peace process that began in 2004 and the current initiation of bilateral dialogue process, India seems to have opted to focus more on a military than a political approach. The freedom fighters claim that they have been compelled to take up arms by the state and Indian governments' policies, the Indian government had opted for a military approach right from the beginning of the crisis. The IHK had remained under the Governor's/President's rule for quite some time though half-hearted attempts to introduce the political approach had been made from time to time. Also see Josef Korbelt, *Danger in Kashmir*, Oxford University Press, 1954), pp.166-168.
- ⁴ Korbelt, op.cit., pp.174-175.
- ⁵ Korbelt, op. cit. ,pp.176-177.
- ⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷ Burke, op. cit., p.228
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ See Burke, Op. Cit.pp. 39-42. Also see Gupta, Sisir, *Kashmir: A Study in India-Pakistan Relations*,(Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1966) PP.253-309.
- ¹⁰ Burke, Op. Cit., pp. 39-42.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² See the actual text of Simla Agreement in Chari,P.R. and Cheema, PervaizIqbal , *The Simla Agreement 1972: Its Wasted Promise* (Colombo: Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, Manohar, 2001)pp204-6.
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ For details see G.W. Choudhury, *Pakistan's Relations with India 1947-1966* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1968) PP.155-169.
- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ See Burke, Op.Cit., pp.11-13.
- ¹⁷ See Choudhury, Op. Cit, pp. 155-169.
- ¹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁰ Ibid.
- ²¹ See 'Modi woos Punjab voters with pledge to annul Indus Waters Treaty' in Dawn, 28th Jan.2017.
- ²² Choudhury, Op. Cit., pp.289-290.
- ²³ Ibid.Dr. Choudhury quoted an article published in the Sunday Times. See ' War in the Desolate Place' by Tom stacy in Sunday Times May 2, 1965
- ²⁴ Ibid, p.290.
- ²⁵ Ibid
- ²⁶ See 'The mysterious Rann of Kutch' by Isha M. Kureshi in Dawn, June 3, 2009.
- ²⁷ Burke, Op. Cit., p.526
- ²⁸ Ibid
- ²⁹ Choudhury, op. Cit.P.302.
- ³⁰ For a detailed discussion see Chari, P.R. and Cheema, Pervaiz Iqbal, *The Simla Agreement 1972: Its Wasted Promise* (Colombo: Manohar, 2001).

STRATEGIC CONUNDRUM OF US – CHINA AND INDIA – PAKISTAN: A PERSPECTIVE

Dr. Zulfqar Khan*

Abstract

The study observes that transforming geostrategic landscape of South, South East Asia, and IOR is remolding the existing contours of various alliances and partnerships' structures. This is increasing the strategic significance of India and Pakistan in US and Chinese calculus. The growing centrality of South Asian rivals in US and Chinese strategic equation is expected to prominently surface in geostrategic and geo-economic trajectories. In essence, it is a struggle for the retention of US primacy, which ipso facto is being contested by rising China. It analyzes the prospects of peaceful rise of China or otherwise vis-à-vis US. In contemporary world, nuclear is fundamentally a critical deterring factor, which in past did not exist to prevent rivals from wars.

Keywords: Nuclear, Geostrategic Contours, Trilateral Security Dialogue.

Introduction

It is always a challenge to analyze the transforming geostrategic contours of the world, in which the global and regional players' threat perceptions and capabilities are moving on divergent trajectories. This is directly impacting the geopolitical landscape, not only of South Asia, but also of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), and South-East Asia. The 'threats and vulnerabilities' can arise from multiple factors, which motivate states to securitize to a referent object so as to calibrate counter strategies.¹ History testifies that the rise and the fall of the 'Great Powers' were invariably as a result of long and violent struggle, writes Paul Kennedy. In his perspective, the outcomes are primarily determined by the 'state's productive economic resources in wartime' and 'relative to the other leading nations, the decades preceding the actual conflict.'² Furthermore, the states ensures 'balancing of ends and means' both in war and peace, managing of national resources, effectiveness of diplomacy to improve its relative position, and to crafting of its 'grand strategy' and policy to 'bring together all...elements' of national power.³

From ancient time to the renaissance, the world was immensely influenced by the precepts of 'divine providence' that had revolved around the

* Dr. Zulfqar Khan is a Professor and Head of the Department of Strategic Studies at the National Defence University, Islamabad, Pakistan. The views expressed in this piece are those of the author and should not be taken to represent the views of NDU.

primacy of ‘revolutions of the throne,’ rules of various princes, families and dynasties to ‘accelerate or suspend’ the downfall of the empires. The driving forces behind the decline and the fall or transition from one empire to another, victories, defeats were invariably triggered by religions, dynasties and empires through the application of force.⁴ For instance, Edward Gibbon attributes various factors behind ‘the decline and fall of the Roman empire,’ including the ‘temporal sovereignty of the popes,’ and the ‘disorders of military despotism,’ parochial tendencies of monarchies and Christianity, and the conquests of Muslims and Turks that in his perspective were ‘the most awful scene, in the history of mankind’ that led to its decline.⁵ Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth argue that power transition from one to another is different from the analogies drawn about the old great powers. They view that the present-day technological revolution, relative military advantages vis-à-vis the adversary, and ‘converting economic capacity into military capacity makes the transition from a great power to a superpower much harder now than it was in the past.’⁶ Moreover, history testifies that whenever there is a shift in the balance of power equation, writes ancient Greece scholar Thucydides, it leads to generation of fear about the rising power’s claim to pride and rightful place in the changing structural dynamics of the system that creates apprehensions and make ‘war inevitable’ between the states. Historically, Athens’ rise and ‘the fear which this caused’ in established power – Sparta, created a ‘trap’ dilemma.⁷ Thucydides writes Athens civilization and naval capabilities were at its zenith. This surprised and caused fear in major land power (Sparta) about the potential competitor’s potentials to swing the pendulum of balance of power.

In contemporary world, China ostensibly is pursuing a policy to secure its ‘*rightful place under heaven*’ that has strategic philosophy and history stretching back to 2000 years.⁸ Sun Tzu states that the principles of ‘invincibility lies in defense; the possibility of victory in the attack.’⁹ To this strategic conceptualization, Mao Zedong observed that in the case of failure of deterrence, then the defensive war preparation capabilities be enhanced for a long war of resistance.¹⁰ But, according to some Chinese scholars, United States’ (US) crafting of ‘pivot to Asia policy’ is perceived as an instrument of US well-calibrated strategy to reinforce its chain of regional strategic alliance system with objective to contain the rise of China.¹¹ Balancing takes place ‘against regional states,’ writes T. V. Paul, when the established power perceives the emerging power as a ‘revisionist.’¹² Chinese leadership’s quest to reassert its rightful position is in accord with its traditional strategic philosophy. China’s ‘peaceful rise is a

comprehensive long-term strategy,' writes Vincent Wei-Cheng Wang, 'leveraging globalization as a catalyst to accelerate its own economic development and elevate its power and stature.' He further states that 'language is peace and stability; the style is constructive diplomacy; and the substance is economics.'¹³ This is clearly in accord with Dao's strategy: 'Only after victory is certain does one give battle; only after the scales have been weighed does one move.'¹⁴ The long-term peaceful rise strategy of China versus the US China containment policy is premised on multi-pronged strategies that have potentials to further intensify their mutual mistrust, rivalries, and tensions resultantly escalating crises in South China Sea and East China Sea due to variety of factors, including opposing strategies of US and China from South-East Asia to IOR. In this scenario, it is argued that the South Asian rivals – India and Pakistan have enormous strategic leverage to influence the future contours of the regional geopolitics.

While the Western Pacific is witnessing transitory and destabilizing developments due to ongoing military and economic power capabilities of China against US. It is *prima facie* challenging and gradually reducing US influence in the region, especially at a juncture when both countries are vying to secure their respective spheres of preponderance. 'China cannot rise peacefully,' writes John Mearsheimer, and it is likely to escalate 'intense security competition' with US due to Beijing's 'considerable potential for war' that could alter the entire 'architecture of international system.' Hence China would dominate Asia.¹⁵ This is creating a numerous security, economic, and diplomatic-related complexities that is persistently impacting the shifting contours of the regional geopolitical and geo-economic landscape *ipso facto* leading both countries toward understanding the imperatives of evolution of a shared, stable and balanced power readjustments with a view to create some space for China. Currently, as per the International Monetary Fund, Chinese economy accounts for 17.3 % of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP - based on purchasing-power parity criteria), and its annual growth rate in GDP term is 6.7 % that is equal to world's 1.2 percentage. This has evolved a close dependence of the regional and extra-regional economies, including that of Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Russia, and Brazil, which in Stephen Roach's perspective, account for nearly '9 % of world GDP.' He further states that the developing Asian economies of Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand, including the more developed economies of Japan, Korea, and Taiwan as a whole make them 'China-dependent Asian economies' that amounts to '11% of world GDP.' In addition, China is United States' third

largest export market (of US \$ 659 billion in 2015), and similarly in the case of Germany, China is the third largest export market after US and the European Union.¹⁶ The total volume of India-China trade was worth US \$ 80 billion in 2015 with rebounding upward trends.¹⁷ Pakistan-China bilateral trade's volume in 2016 was US \$ 16 billions; however, political and economic factors are analyzed in the backdrop of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) that is a symbol of their 'all-weather strategic partnership.' Incidentally, regional and other major economies' increasing dependence upon China could prove another *key* factor in determining the future realignment of their relations with the two power camps - US and China.

In the ongoing global transformation, Pakistan in spite of its multiple internal difficulties and external constraints, it is argued would continue to have a key role in the emerging geopolitical and geo-economic transformation. Furthermore, it is observed that ongoing power struggle between the US and China per se is to sustain former's hegemony and to contain latter's rising economic, industrial, scientific, and military profile that is swiftly increasing Beijing's claim to gain a rightful global position as a great power. The present transforming geostrategic environment accords China a powerful role in the power struggle, which is shaping up the new realignments, new treaties and partnerships between the two. On the other hand, India and Pakistan too are gaining pivotal roles to balance out the emerging geostrategic trajectories. In the case of Pakistan, it is viewed that it possesses a critical geopolitical centrality, and with the establishment of CPEC it will eventually provide China a critical two Oceans – Pacific and Indian - strategic connectivity stretching right from China, Central Asia, Iran, Middle East to Africa and Europe. The growing Sino-US adversarial trajectory is liable to influence the foreign and security policies of New Delhi and Islamabad. In addition, it would impact the emerging regional security alliances and strategic partnerships' structure; consequently negatively impacting the fragile security environment of South Asia, South East Asia, and the IOR. This is expected to intensify South Asian asymmetries both in the realm of geo-economics and military. Actually, US objective is to maintain its global unrivaled military superiority. The 'primacists' school of thought, Jeffrey Sachs writes believe in 'a new arms race' as a 'necessary price' to sustain the 'global balance of power and preserve US security.' While the other school of thought calls for a realistic balance of power arrangements rather than US primacy.¹⁸ On the other hand, India's growing geopolitical and economic alignment with US is perceived by its policymakers as an essential instrument to attain the status of a

great regional power, if not a global power by projecting itself as a counter-weight to China, and Pakistan. In this environment, Pakistan too has a crucial role to play with the launching of CPEC, which is Beijing's instrumental artery of 'One Belt, One Road' (OBOR) vision to influence the future geopolitical and geo-economic configurations.¹⁹ The paper would analyze the contemporary environment: that how influential would be the role of China-Pakistan strategic equation, and the US-India partnership's impact on the global and regional structural dynamics? Whether the rise of China be peaceful or not, and the role of geo-economic and nuclear weapons' on the escalating rivalry between US and China?

The Emerging Geostrategic Contours

Neorealist Kenneth Waltz observes that 'realist theory is better at saying what will happen than in saying when it will happen.'²⁰ The states functions under the environment of anarchy where states are compelled to cater for their own security. Incidentally, when states amass power, even for defensive objectives, it is perceived as a threat by the rival state. In fact, the anarchic system at occasion generates emasculations that have potentials to prove perilous, especially with excessive accumulation of power.²¹ In this context, it is significant to delineate the distribution of power that is required so as to bring about structural changes, advocates Brooks and Wohlforth.²² They further explain that: 'How far did the Soviet Union have to fall for the system to cease being bipolar?' They further observe that: 'How high does China need to climb before the system changes?'²³ The fundamental question of transformation from unipolarity under the US to bipolarity with the emerging peer competitor(s); China, or Japan, Russia or India, it is observed is likely to intensify the 'trap.'

It is significant to note that Asia and IOR are mix of different religions, civilizations, including Buddhism, Confucian, Christianity, Hinduism and Islam, which thrive in various parts of Asia. This makes the 'region's complex tapestry,' writes Henry Kissinger. He further delineates that the Republic of Korea, Japan, and Singapore with high economic and industrial standards are rivaling their Western peers. There are three states – China, India, and Russia with rising economies and technological and industrial bases.²⁴ In the emerging multipolarity, China, Japan, and US are the key players, contends Joseph Nye, Jr.²⁵ In his point of view, the rise of China and India 'may create instability.' He further maintains that it is significant to manage the rise of competitor(s) -

otherwise their rise – like in the case of Germany that had led to World Wars, could now also result in ‘devastating world wars.’²⁶

Power is a hybrid matrix of military and economic capabilities, which as a consequence influences and conditions states’ behavior.²⁷ It demonstrates that power is comprised of various capabilities, including economic, military, soft, political, technological; other elements of ‘fourth generation warfare’, and Information Age’s revolutionary access to mass-communication systems and other mediums of knowledge explosion.²⁸ Economic rise need to be complemented with the scientific, technological and industrial capabilities that directly impact the information age’s Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA). Such capabilities enable the states to demonstrate their power projection far beyond their geographical boundaries.²⁹ Presently, the ‘technological gap between China and the US is so massive, the process of closing it will be lengthy’ as per Brooks and Wohlforth.³⁰ On the other hand, the volume of US and Chinese wealth in 2010 was US \$ 144 trillion and US \$ 32 trillion respectively. Moreover, economic and technological indicators suggest that to bid for a superpower status Beijing requires proportionate latent material capability.³¹ This gap between the two is persisting even in their defense expenditures, latest hi-tech weaponry and innovative technologies, GDP, scientific and industrial bases, and in other economic indicators prerequisite to qualify as a great power; and even in the fields of science Nobel prizes, for instance, since 1990s - China lags behind US.³² Brooks and Wohlforth concludes their argument by stating that ‘China has very far to go to reach’ this benchmark, including in ‘latent technological and economic capacity’ to enhance its global power projection, which in essence is prerequisite to qualify as a superpower.³³

According to Graham Allison, since World War II, US maintained its hegemony in the ‘*Pax Pacifica*.’ He explains that ‘when rising assertiveness becomes hubristic and fear turns to paranoia,’ and it creates ‘mutual exaggerations’ that ‘can feed misperceptions and miscalculations,’ and spurs ‘unintended consequences.’³⁴ Whilst David K. Richards, explaining the significance of Thucydides analogy of ancient Greece and the pre-1914 Europe, observes that it overlooks the factor of nuclear deterrence in present day world. He elaborates that the growth of China’s economic power, regardless of how the size of its economy vis-à-vis US, or how large former’s defense budget is (US-China spends \$ 600 & 145 billion, respectively), in his perspective, ‘will not change this equation.’³⁵ In the context of nuclear deterrence, Matthew Kroenig

observes that invariably our nuclear strategy stems from the Cold War bipolar geostrategic paradigm, which now has been transformed into a multipolar Asian nuclear order – with the nuclear weapon states status of China, India, Pakistan, Israel, and North Korea.³⁶ This is drastically influencing the geopolitical dynamics from Middle East to East Asia. Thus it has posed a serious security dilemma for the US

policy-makers, as how to deal with the emergent challenges from the new categories of Nuclear Weapon States (NWS). Induction of nuclear weapons has changed the traditional causes of conflicts; hence prevent countries from

It becomes difficult to sustain a semblance of rationality and control particularly when states are expected to 'blust...bluff' with intent to create ambiguity, to cloud their intentions, and to carve deceptive strategies. Such tendencies possess the seeds to spiral situation out of control.

initiation of war with conventional weaponry.³⁷ The multipolar architecture is being ignored, which could mislead thereby resulting in 'incorrect and potentially disastrous policy choices.'³⁸ This amply reflects the tapestry of multipolar nuclear structure of the present-day world right from Middle East to South-East Asia. However, in addition to traditional utility of nuclear weapons for deterrent objectives - the strategic arsenals too carries huge prospects of 'misperceptions...overestimation or the underestimation,' which could in fact trigger miscalculations. Hence, it becomes difficult to sustain a semblance of rationality and control particularly when states are expected to 'blust...bluff' with intent to create ambiguity, to cloud their intentions, and to carve deceptive strategies. Such tendencies possess the seeds to spiral situation out of control. However, with the induction of nuclear weapons, it is expected to prevent states from initiation of all-out conflicts.³⁹

On the other hand, China is in pursuit to regain its rightful place with perceived intent to claim its sovereignty over the entire South China Sea region. In December 2016, China deployed its only aircraft carrier in South China Sea. Chinese 'Area-Access' (A2) and 'Area-Denial' (AD) strategies for South China Sea and the Asia-Pacific, which is being countered by US through calibration of a 'Joint Operational Access Concept' of 2012 and the 'Asia Pacific strategy' to sustain its control over the Pacific Ocean and IOR. Additionally, in February 2017 aircraft carrier USS Carl Vincent along with flotilla of warship was deployed to patrol the South China Sea. To further expand US naval fleet, it is reportedly investing US \$ 13 billion on building of Ford-class aircraft carriers, and 355 ships

to sustain its naval dominance.⁴⁰ This sufficiently highlights Washington's national interests to project its power projection that includes plans under the 'Air Sea Battle'⁴¹ strategy to regain 'access.' In spite of Chinese assertiveness, it poses little threat to the US primacy in region due to multiple factors coupled with latter's existing naval edge over the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), which is still considered to be two/three generations behind US naval capabilities.⁴² Obviously, US considers itself as an indispensable Asian player set to build an elaborate network of alliances, strategic partnerships along with cultivation of relationships with other regional states and bodies with intent to foster strong trade and commerce ties with them, which China considers it a threat.⁴³ To further crystallize United States' Asia-Pacific and IOR strategy, it considers India a linchpin country that can in parallel play a significant role in East Asia as well. This indicates that the growing Indian influence in league with the US and other regional allies would put India as a challenger to China's 2A/AD plan to assert its claim and influence in South China Sea and to prevent the littoral states from gravitating towards China. However, with coming into office of new President of US, Donald J. Trump, whose vision is to re-establish United States' 'greatness' is expected to increase unpredictability in Sino-US relations. Moreover, US withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) in January 2017 is anticipated to undermine its image in region, and consequently China would endeavor to capitalize from it by expediting its efforts to establish alternative Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership forum. But, the new Trump administration's Defense Secretary during visit to South Korea and Japan in February 2017 re-emphasized the significance of US alliance with the regional allies, and reaffirmed its insurance to provide 'protective blanket' to them.⁴⁴ The significance of U-Japan alliance was also termed by Trump administration as a cornerstone of its policy.

To further harness China containment strategy, US-India 'Trilateral Security Dialogue' was started in 2005 that later on culminated in the shape of Indo-US nuclear and strategic partnership thereby setting in motion the India-US Strategic Dialogue in 2009. This has given a distinct trajectory to the transforming geopolitical state of affairs, for which the word Asia-Pacific has now been substituted by 'Indo-Pacific.' This US policy under the rubric of 'pivot' has given it a critical significance.⁴⁵ This is resulting in cementing of a chain of alliance system stretching right from Japan, South Korea to Vietnam and India along with regular holding of naval exercises and strategic dialogues. Moreover, it is increasing the orbit of US-Indian partnership thereby escalating tension

between India-Pakistan, and generating a sense of insecurity in Pakistan due to already expanding military asymmetry in India's favour, and the dove-tailing of latter by US/allies.

The fluctuating geostrategic setting and other developments in Indo-Pacific is furthermore intensifying mutual fears between US and China. On the other hand, it is exacerbating the gulf of mistrust between India and Pakistan as well. In the absence of a credible mechanism of mutual restraint regime, dialogue process or conflict resolution mechanism and in the presence of disputes, including that of Kashmir, and water issue is complicating the strategic stability of South Asia. Moreover, India's evolution of Cold Start Doctrine (CSD) or pro-active strategy in 2004 has prompted Pakistan to evolve a 'full spectrum' nuclear deterrence strategy to calibrate a proportionate response right from the conventional, battlefield nuclear to strategic nuclear weapons to contain the perceived Indian plan of launching Integrated Battle Groups (IBGs) within short timeframe of 72-96 hours reportedly to achieve limited objectives - is creating a fertile ground to trigger a chain-reaction between the rivals.⁴⁶ Unfortunately, when each state thinks that peaceful resolution or arbitration chances are slim, then, tendency to strike first in spite of high cost associated with such behavior would increase. For instance, before the outbreak of World War II, Japan had decided 'to go to war against an enemy whose military power and potential were so vastly superior to its own.' It is a classic 'mutual failure of deterrence.' Consequently, Japanese government perceived that 'Empire has no alternative but to begin war.'⁴⁷ Both countries would try to deny adversary any military advantage by striking first with intent to disable the command and control structure, and counter-value and counter-force capabilities.⁴⁸

In Indo-Pacific, the Sino-US strategic rivalry intends to retain and assert their geostrategic and geo-economic influence. Kurt M. Campbell writes that Middle East is the 'arc of instability,' which is 'stretching from Japan through China and Southeast Asia to India' as an 'arc of ascendance.' The future chronicle of the region would be determined here in which US is planning to invest heavily to establish itself as a 'pivot' to 'rebalance' the strategic contours of region.⁴⁹ The US pivot strategy in league with its allies - Japan, Indonesia, and India would be an essential instrument to regulate the future geopolitical setting to sustain their ascendancy.⁵⁰ To achieve its strategic objectives, US is pivoting in collaboration with its regional key players and defense treaty partners to boost its traditional alliance structure with Japan, Australia, South Korea, the Philippines, and

Thailand to rebalance the rising China. On the other hand, Washington formalized a number of strategic partnership agreements with India, Indonesia, Vietnam, Brunei, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, Taiwan, and is reviving its relations with Burma.⁵¹ However, in the case of Philippines, its new president Rodrigo Duterte during visit to China in October 2016 stated that his country was restructuring its foreign policy with intent to reduce the US influence, and to forge closer ties with Beijing.⁵² Interestingly, in November 2016, Malaysian Prime Minister, Najib Razak, during visit to China too stated that despite its disputes with China over islets, reefs and Spratly archipelago, which according to satellite imagery China has placed military equipment on them despite its pledge not to militarize them. However, both countries still agreed to sign a defense deal and showed intent to further enhance bilateral cooperation. It signals a strategic shift of Philippines and Malaysia towards US and China.⁵³ Zhang Baohui commenting about this noticeable strategic shift writes that Southeast Asian countries desired good relations with Beijing that in his point of view would strengthen their national interests.⁵⁴ ***To transform the geostrategic environment in its favor, US is working on a multi-pronged strategy to confront the emerging challenges from the potential superpower – China.***⁵⁵ It reflects US substantive policy of realignment due to contemporary geo-economic and strategic imperatives. The US has demonstrated its ‘resolve to pivot to Asia without pivoting away from other obligations and opportunities,’ remarked Clinton in her memoir.⁵⁶ Henry Kissinger considers this policy as ‘inevitable.’⁵⁷

Chinese Strategy

China’s emerging profile in the realms of geopolitics, geo-economics, geostrategic and its launching of OBOR project is of immense strategic consequence. OBOR in essence is influenced by its historic Silk Road route, and President Xi Jinping’s vision of ‘China Dreams’ associated with its national heritage and systematic quest to regain its historic position,⁵⁸ which stretches over two thousand-year history; and secondly with objectives to face the contemporary challenges that are unraveling with ongoing geostrategic transformations. The flux situation seemingly prompts China to proportionately tailor the broader contours of its foreign and security architecture to safeguard its national interests with the initiation of ‘Silk Road Economic Belt’ and the ‘Maritime Silk Road of the Twenty-First Century,’ which are designed to foster linkages with the Central Asian, the European, Southeastern, and South and North Asian states to achieve its long-term strategic and economic goals.⁵⁹ These

initiatives were launched by President Xi Jinping in October 2013. In March 2015 it was accorded a wider and ambitious directions under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' concept of '***Vision and Actions on Jointly Building the Silk Road Economic Belt***⁶⁰ with visible plan to ascend to a global arena through its economic, industrial and military prowess, and to build linkages with the regional and extra-regional countries as an off-shore balancing strategy vis-à-vis US that too is following a similar plan against Chinese rise.

Seemingly, OBOR's declared aim is to establish trade, commercial and security relationships with over sixty countries from Asia, Middle East, Europe and right through to Africa.⁶¹ In spite of its elaborate economic and industrial base and rising clout in relation to US, Beijing still has considerable steps to climb before acquiring its rightful place under the heaven – in line with its traditional strategic philosophy. With rising economic and strategic profile and its extensive network of export-oriented industrial trade with various countries since 2008 had subsequently led to adoption of a systematic assertive foreign and security policy. It eventually sensitized the Chinese policymakers about the imperatives of establishment of multiple institutions, including Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), ASEAN Plus China (10+1), China-ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Expo, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Greater Mekong Sub-region Economic Cooperation (GMS), and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to augment its economic and strategic outreach, and to foster strategic integration with the regional and extra-regional states, which had traditionally depended upon US for their defense and strategic requirements. Taylor Fravel maintains that Xi's policy is not proactive rather it is reactive.⁶² while Hong Yu argues that Chinese policymakers demonstrated resolve to 'reshape the world order' by simultaneously sustaining its cordial relations with the regional countries by facilitating these states in building their infrastructures (presently China has over US \$ 3.5 trillion in foreign exchange reserves) in line with its OBOR vision; to increase connectivity and to develop infrastructure projects in these countries in order to gain its strategic objectives in parallel with boosting of exports of its manufactured goods; to secure import of raw-materials for its industries; and to protect the sea lines to ensure smooth flow of trade and commerce, especially the imports of petroleum products.⁶³ In line with OBOR, Chinese leadership reportedly aims to expand its orbit right from Gwadar (Pakistan) to Colombo Port City (Sri Lanka), and Kyaukpyu Port (Myanmar), and to construct Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor by settling regional states'

territorial disputes. OBOR forms China's decisive foreign, security and commercial philosophy that is expected to determine its future influence and rise.⁶⁴ Beijing's US \$ 10.98 trillion GDP is double the size of Japan's US \$ 4.12 trillion that is equal to 60% of the US (US \$ 17.94 trillion) economy.⁶⁵ China's total investment in the AIIB is US \$ 429.78 billion that accords it 26% share and voting rights, and to change this clause requires 75% votes. On the contrary, the World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB) does not possess similar financial capacity to meet the increasing investment demands. Therefore, AIIB's focus would be to build and invest in the Asian states⁶⁶ to further increase these states' dependence on China thereby increasing latter's influence over them.

All these measures are increasing Chinese influence at the global level, and to sustain its economic growth rate and to further explore foreign markets for its goods, which is vital for its future economic and industrial growth and military modernization and power projection capabilities and to enhance its strategic trajectory; and to realize the 'China Dreams' philosophy to emerge as a regional and global power. In this connection, CPEC is its 'flagship' scheme that would provide access through Pakistan to IOR, the Persian/Oman/Aden Gulfs, Red Sea, Straits of Malacca/Hormuz/Bab-e-Mandeb, Middle East and the Central Asian states. This would go long way in alleviating China's 'Malacca dilemma,' as presently, 85% of its oil imports passes through the Straits of Malacca.⁶⁷ Pakistan and China are partners since 1960s, and the establishment of CPEC is an exhibition of their budding partnership especially complementing Beijing's growing geopolitical and geo-economic ambitions. It is vital for Islamabad both economically and strategically to capitalize on it when the quantum of threat to latter's internal security and to its cohesion is intensifying due to alleged infiltration of non-state actors (NSAs) from Afghanistan into Pakistan. For instance, from 2005 to 2016, China undertook 44 construction projects with total investment of US \$ 35 billion and 11 investment ventures with US \$ 7 billion. In essence, CPEC plans to transform Pakistan both economically and strategically by pumping in US \$ 50 billion for these objectives. (With inclusion of four new schemes in Pakistan, its volume has gone up to US \$ 54 billion. It is also termed as Chinese Marshall Plan.) It is the most critical subsidiary of China's ambitious visionary OBOR venture. Additionally, China reportedly has already invested US \$ 1.3 trillion globally during 2005-2016 in various construction contracts. Actually, CPEC would construct a variety of energy and infrastructure development schemes in Pakistan, including roads and railway networks of 3,000 kilometers that will reduce Chinese shipping route

distance of over 10,000 kilometers and linking Gwadar with Kashghar, China. It is termed a pivotal venture, primarily due to its extensive linkage with OBOR. In the case of Pakistan, it is projected to attract/increase foreign investment by US\$48.5 percent from July to October 2017.⁶⁸ On the other hand, US and India are too planning to increase their present trade volume from US \$ 100 billion to US\$500 billion per year in line with their strategic vision.⁶⁹ The expanding orbit of US-India trade is expected to lead to forging of a free-trade agreement (FTA) between them, which as per Tarun Das would make US\$500 billion bilateral trade target achievable.⁷⁰ Like CPEC, Washington and New Delhi are supposedly planning to launch India-Pacific Economic Corridor (IPEC) in unison with India's 'Act East policy' that would complement US rebalancing policy⁷¹ as a counterweight to Chinese OBOR and of course, to enhance their trade. It would consequently offset the broader contours of OBOR's plan to link it through Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor, if it is realized. In the case of India's economic relations under IPEC, it would play a major role in further cementing India's power to protect US primacy and consequently to buttress its potentials to counter-balance China, and to sustain its ascendancy.⁷²

South Asian Security Matrix

The South Asian environment is being influenced by micro/macro-level changes that are directly disturbing its security matrix. This as a result is motivating India and Pakistan to realign with the existing hegemon – US, and the potential competitor – China, respectively. The factors influencing the behaviors of India-Pakistan include: the widening military, strategic, and geo-economic asymmetries in India's favor and, on the other hand, Pakistan is at a clear disadvantage. This has increased India's international clout thereby leading to its emergence as a key regional power. In spite of Pakistan's declared NWS status, its internal security situation is still in a predicament because of multiple internal/external factors, including rising wave of terrorism that has not only increased its internal instability but has also tainted its image abroad. This has created various governance-related issues, aggravated its economic woes, fueled sectarianism and enhanced political polarization that is further magnifying its difficulties. This fluid strategic context is constraining Pakistan to evolve different doctrinal concepts and constructs: one to increase the efficacy of its forces, and two to craft its overall strategy in more realistic and efficacious way.⁷³

'Pakistan's strategic cultural matrix and the security structure of South Asian environment' is consistently keeping Pakistan's and India's relationships

on 'acrimonious and antagonistic trajectories,' write Zulfqar Khan and Ahmad Khan. They maintained that the 'conventional forces' ratio is favorably tilting to India's advantage.' On the contrary, 'Pakistan's robust strategic and conventional capabilities and posturing is all set to neutralize India's aggressive military doctrines.' As per these writers, in such a 'geostrategic environment, Pakistan's role in the turbulent Middle East and Indian Ocean regions too cannot be ignored, as the recent establishment of CPEC is supposed to regulate the geostrategic trajectories of the coming decades.'⁷⁴ That Pakistani geopolitical significance has enhanced in spite of its socioeconomic and law and order related difficulties. It is well poised to play a central role in the regional geopolitics, and through CPEC it could even provide Russia access to the warm waters of the Indian Ocean. In the transformed geopolitics, Russia-Pakistan relationship has 'particular and intrinsic value' for which the former is expected to have a separate track – both for India and Pakistan.⁷⁵ Prima facie, the transforming geostrategic landscape of South Asia and Pakistan's fundamental role in the transforming geostrategic trajectories - would prove to be of decisive consequence in determining the future geopolitical structure of the region, in which ostensibly Russia, China, and Pakistan seems to be in strategic concord. Moreover, Russia along with Iran could also be co-opted in CPEC following Trump administration's confrontational policy toward Tehran, which Russia would consider favorable to its national interests.

Historically, Pakistan's strategic culture and security moorings were primarily influenced by its experience immediately after its independence in 1947 from the British India.⁷⁶ This conditioned its 'political, cultural and cognitive characteristics' and its elites' perceptions about India.⁷⁷ On the other hand, Indian elites were actually influenced by its size, ancient civilization factors that essentially molded their thinking to be a natural great power.⁷⁸ Such Indian strategic outlook had immensely shaped its perceptions vis-à-vis China and Pakistan. This consequently complicated India-Pakistan foreign and security relationship. Incidentally, since the development of nuclear weapons in 1998, it generated a perilous strategic impasse that further intensified their security dilemmas. Alexandra Wendt writes that 'fundamental principle of constructivist social theory is that people act toward objects, including other actors, on the basis of the meanings that the objects have for them.' He further observes that: 'Anarchy and the distribution of power are insufficient to tell us which is which.'⁷⁹ Hence, such perceptions and approaches towards each magnified the security dilemma for both of them and created a state of stability-instability

conundrum. This situation later on further intensified their military asymmetries, which motivated them to evolve 'more offensive conventional and nuclear posturing.'⁸⁰

In such a shifting security structure, Pakistan's affiliation with Chinese OBOR and CPEC initiatives were seemingly perceived by Pakistani elites as a rational and balanced strategy to hold the Indian conventional, strategic, and diplomatic advantage at bay. However, its strategy and power potentials can only be made vibrant with a viable economic base, which as per Bernard Brodie only comes with a 'dollar sign.'⁸¹ This would be only possible if it could effectively capitalize from the inflowing benefits of the CPEC. In addition, Pakistan is also confronted with a 'two-frontal' security dilemma due to fast aggravating security situation in its Northwest/Tribal belt, India-sponsored terrorism in its tribal and urban areas, and the ongoing India's deliberate violations of the Line of Control (LoC), and Working Boundary.⁸² Such an aggressive attitude, as one Pakistani writer puts it, is a ploy of the Indian prime minister, Narendra Modi, to shift focus away from the ongoing unrest and gross human right violations in Kashmir, which New Delhi is exploiting to its advantage due to 'indifference of major powers' about the volatile situation in the Indian occupied Kashmir.⁸³ Other factor behind the increasing escalating tension between the rivals is due to expanding Sino-Pakistan economic and strategic orbit that accord them critical significance and leverage in multiple avenues.⁸⁴ Similarly, India is too increasing its influence and role in Afghanistan, which is perceived by Pakistani strategic community as a part of Indian plan to push Pakistan into a two-frontal security dilemma.⁸⁵ In strategic realm, India has shifted its traditional doctrinal structure of 'minimum' to a 'credible' deterrence, and is augmenting it by commissioning the indigenously manufactured nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) *INS Arihant* that was commissioned in August 2016. It is equipped with nuclear-capable missile called K-4 that would give it an assured second-strike capability.⁸⁶ Besides, it is also developing anti-ballistic and intercontinental ballistic missiles, Multiple Independently-Targetable Re-entry Vehicle (MIRV), and is piling up hi-tech conventional weaponry. In response, in January 2017 Pakistan too successfully test-fired Babur-3 – submarine launched cruise missile (SLCM - with range of 450 kilometers), from an underwater mobile platform, which would reportedly accord it a fairly reliable (not necessarily an assured second-strike) capability.⁸⁷ To augment its deterrence, correct the regional ballistic missile defense imbalance and to counter Indian CSD, in January 2017 Pakistan tested MIRV - *Ababeel*. On the other hand, India in order to reinforce

its deterrence and influence - Indian Navy (IN) is furthermore building nuclear-powered second aircraft-carrier INS Vishal (it is not expected to come into service before 2030) with the collaboration of US under the Joint Working Group on Aircraft Carrier Technology Cooperation (JWGACTC) as a part of their reported bilateral Defense Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) that are some of the major developments relating to the regional security reconfigurations.⁸⁸ All such plans were conceived under the 2005 ten years New Framework for the US-India Defense Relationship, which also included the Commercial Space Launch Agreement (CSLA) under their Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP) program and the Technical Safeguards Agreement (TSA) of 2009.⁸⁹

Later on, India was offered anti-ballistic missiles defense system. This ultimately enabled it to indigenously built supersonic interceptor missile (in May 2016) as an advance air defense system capable of intercepting incoming ballistic missiles in mid-air. The post-2000 period clearly demonstrates the growing imperative relevance of the space-based assets for an optimal employment and deployment of conventional and nuclear forces in any future conflict. In this connection, India is no exception, and prima facie it is developing civil-military satellites, including for military and command, control, communications, and computer objectives, especially in the aftermath of Chinese expanding space capabilities.⁹⁰ In addition, US and India in August 2016 signed a defense - Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) that will seemingly facilitate two allies to use each other's military facilities to check China's growing influence. Also the Communications Interoperability and Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMOA) and the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-spatial Cooperation (BECA) between US-India, is a part of United States' defining policy to contain China. Besides, Indian Defense Minister Parrikar and US Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter in April 2016 agreed to increase bilateral ties in order to widen the scope of 'military-to-military exchanges, to expanded collaboration on defense technology and innovation.'⁹¹ Similarity, in December 2016 US termed India a 'major defense partner' actually to streamline and to facilitate bilateral defense, trade and technology sharing architecture. While with the commissioning of Arihant, India's supposed triad capability coupled with its expanding blue water naval potentials would extend its strategic outreach in IOR and accord its Strategic Naval Force Command a necessary flexibility in tailoring its future strategic requirements and doctrines without even deviating from its stated 'No First-Use' nuclear policy. However, some scholars maintain that *India is in process of restructuring its nuclear doctrine*.⁹² These are perceived in

Pakistan as existential threats, which are expected to compel Pakistan to craft proportionate counter strategies to neutralize it.

All these developments appear to be India's plan to indirectly operationalize its CSD to pressurize Pakistan in line with Modi government's alleged anti-Pakistan policy in league with its existing doctrine in spite of Pakistani government's efforts to improve relations. This strategy was evolved by India to abridge the lack of 'inter-service cooperation' mechanism. As per George Perkovich and Toby Dalton, it is very significant 'because even if Indian leaders chose to respond with limited military force to a future terrorists attack attributed to Pakistan,' then it 'would still need to prepare for escalation of an ensuing conflict.' They further maintained that Pakistan would attempt to counter such an offensive intrusion into its territory through 'battlefield nuclear operations.' Obviously, then, Indian Air Force and Navy would too come into action.⁹³ This would consequently multiple the prospects of spiraling situation out of control thereby dragging both countries even to a nuclear precipice. In such eventuality, it would be *naïve* to expect Pakistan's inaction against Indian military posturing. It surely has inbuilt seeds to escalate a crisis with high probability of conflagrating it to a full-blown conflict. On the other hand, then Pakistan's 'full-spectrum' nuclear strategy in all probability would too come into full-swing, as its non-operationalization would make it dependent on the Indian goodwill, which otherwise is not bound by institutions.⁹⁴ Rationally speaking, keeping in view Pakistan's conventional military disadvantage against India, its policymakers would take all necessary measures to contain India's reported blitzkrieg under CSD and to minimize the risks to its security from military intrusion.⁹⁵

As previously argued that Pakistan has been entangled in a 'two-frontal' security-dilemma, which in view of growing asymmetries with India, and the latter's entrenchment in Afghanistan is expected to further intensify Islamabad's two-frontal security conundrum that is clearly detrimental to its national interests. In the context of China too, such developments would prove inimical toward the realization of goals of the OBOR/CPEC, stabilization of its Xinjiang Uyghur autonomous region, sustaining of its strategic relations with Pakistan that is intrinsically linked with the stabilization of Afghanistan, Xinjiang, Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan and the resolution of Kashmir dispute so as to materialize these mega projects and to protect its both short and long-term objectives. In fact, lately the Uyghur minority and the East Turkestan Islamic

Movement seemingly escalated their activities, which warrant synergy between

Here the geopolitical and geo-economic interests of four countries seem to be in a conflictual state: China-Pakistan on one hand and US-India on the other.

China and Pakistan to ensure the viability of CPEC.⁹⁶ Here the geopolitical and geo-economic interests of four countries seem to be in a conflictual state: China-

Pakistan on one hand and US-India on the other. Such diametrically divergent national interests in future could become a major source of friction between them. The OBOR/CPEC is not only China's largest foreign investment venture,⁹⁷ but it could also prove instrumental in stabilizing Pakistan's internal security situation

India appears to be striving to attain a regional power status with aims to gain a global role and the memberships of the United Nations Security Council and the other multilateral non-proliferation cartels, including the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) that gained impetus after the signing of path breaking Indo-US nuclear deal, in 2005. India subsequently managed to sign a number of similar nuclear agreements with other states right from North America to Far East and Australia. India's access to critical dual-use technologies and joint research and development (R&D) projects with the developed countries would exert a phenomenal impact over its future economic, industrial, military, strategic and diplomatic rise. To assess the power potentials of a country, a basic measuring yardstick remains the material capabilities, including socio-economic conditions, technology, education, scientific, industrial and military R&D, natural resources, trained manpower, and military strength to balance the power of adversaries with sufficient military forces in league with conceptualization of appropriate response strategies. Consequently, Pakistan would be under constant pressure to invest in these sectors with objective to correct the imbalance of power⁹⁸ by becoming a linchpin of the OBOR/CPEC.

Carl Von Clausewitz writes that the threat of use of force in essence is 'a continuation of politics by other means,' which does not necessarily mean the 'actual' employment of force; rather it hangs in-between a 'twilight zone between diplomacy and war.'⁹⁹ Hence, calibration of a multi-pronged strategy would enable Pakistan a sufficient flexibility to confront the emerging contemporary challenges. Fundamentally strategy has to be 'pragmatic' otherwise it's a futile exercise.¹⁰⁰

Analytical Conclusion

The study explains the salient contours of the United States' primacy and China's strategic outlook and latter's growing assertiveness to secure its rightful place under the 'heaven.' Moreover, there are multiple other interconnected factors, including geo-economic, geopolitical, technological, industrial, and military that are divergently propelling them toward crafting of policies to secure their conflicting national interests. Competing strategic and philosophical moorings of both countries are reconfiguring the geostrategic environment on divergent trajectories both at global and regional levels. It has increased their bilateral wedge thereby furthermore intensifying the complexities. History testifies that invariably the rise of a peer-competitor against the established predominant power had led to violence and war. It has created a typical modern-day complex Thucydides 'trap.' But, today's 'trap' is more intricate due to onset of Information Age's technologies, RMA, state of geo-economic interdependence between the states, and the existence of multilateral nuclear-order (in comparison to Cold War's bipolar nuclear order), which would continue to prevent the adversaries from triggering a catastrophic war. In this environment, Pakistan-India, and the IOR would remain the central theatres that would influence, if not determine, the future contours not only of the region, but, also of the world. India and Pakistan have key roles in the emerging geostrategic power-bloc politics – one under US primacy, and the other one under China. China has ventured on visionary OBOR/CPEC mega-projects and, on the other hand, US has fine-tuned its 'rebalancing' and 'pivot' policy to contain the rise of China. In South Asia, the micro/macro-level changes are also markedly influencing India's and Pakistan's strategic outlooks consequently motivating them to craft perilous conventional and nuclear doctrines and strategies that in the absence of dialogue process, frequent eruption of crises, and non-resolution of bilateral disputes, or any other resilient architecture of mediation had persistently aggravated the structure of strategic stability and intensified security complexity. It is deduced that it is expected to further enhance the momentum of their mistrust, miscalculations, estrangement, and thereby increasing the prospects of crafting of dangerous doctrines. This is expected to negatively influence the future evolution of multilateral and multi-pronged strategies between India and Pakistan flanked by US rebalancing/pivoting policy reinforced by India's 'Act East' policy, and China's A2/AD strategies in parallel with OBOR/CPEC to regain its rightful place under the 'heaven.'

The paper analyzed the emerging multi-dimensional dynamics of the global and regional geo-economic and geopolitical environment that is influencing and remolding the whole gamut of geostrategic transformation toward a more conflictual direction. Although, galaxy of scholars have denied the existence of 'trap' dilemma, as indicated by Thucydides. But, the Chinese ascendancy and assertive policies could too amplify the prospects of a low-key escalation despite existence of multilateral nuclear order in South East Asia and South China Sea. However, all the visible indicators points toward erosion of US primacy and the growing strategic influence of the emerging peer-competitor's (China) race to catch-up would complicate the 'trap' phenomena. In this connection, South Asian centrality and strategic significance would continue to be of immense consequence.

For China, CPEC would provide unfettered access to two oceans – Pacific and the Indian/IOR consequently overcoming its Malacca dilemma by boosting its connectivity from Central Asia to Middle East through to Africa and Europe. On the contrary, India's growing trade and strategic cooperation with US/allies along with expanding of naval capabilities would expand New Delhi's influence and strategic outreach. In this scenario, it is crucial to fathom the critical role of NWS in the emerging multipolar nuclear order both at the regional/geostrategic pedestals that would prevent rivals from resorting to direct conflict. In the case of India and Pakistan, the widening geo-economic and military imbalance is leading to conceptualization and crafting of CSD and full-spectrum nuclear deterrence type of divergent conventional and nuclear strategies, which would make the strategic stability of South Asia volatile and intensify nuclear conundrum. However, the prospects of low-key indirect sub-conventional conflicts between their allies or through employment of proxies' would prominently surface in the coming decades. Though, there is no-space for a limited war between India and Pakistan due to inclusion of nuclear weapons and crafting of proportionate conventional and nuclear strategies. In the case of US-China, the factors of economic inter-dependence and the existence of Asian nuclear order would continue to dissuade rivals to initiate a full-blown war despite presence of modern-day Thucydides 'trap.' However, the prospect of tensions, crises, and rivalry is expected to increase volatility in world politics. Consequently it would persistently intensify the regional/global complexities, increase instabilities, and impact the overall security structure of South, South East Asia and IOR.

NOTES

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THE SYRIAN CRISIS AND THE CONTOURS OF EMERGING ORDER IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Dr. Nazir Hussain and Amna Javed*

Abstract

The Syrian crisis is quite important for Middle Eastern Security dynamics because it has gradually transformed the entire regional order. There are many regional states involved. Moreover, the crisis has seen how foreign involvement became a new norm for the semantics. The placement of Turkey and Iran and the formation of a triffecta between Russia-Turkey-Iran are of large value. The added plunge of China in Syria is going to have certain impacts for both Middle East and China. Furthermore, non-state actors have a role to play as well. All in all, the regional order and the security milieu give an insight as to the multiple impacts for the region due to the lingering Syrian Crisis.

Keywords: Non-State Actors, Emerging Order, Middle East Dynamics, Syrian Crisis.

The international order at all times, remains highly elusive. Similarly, the regional order is no different because it is something which cannot be at one time calculated as a whole and is abstract. Middle East is a valid example because its regional order is full of significant cracks and craters and is manifest in a war without end. This is largely because of various wars and conflicts. The Syrian crisis is no doubt one which is highly intricate and important for the region. And because of the high stakes, it has become equally important for the international realm as well. Thus the international order and the regional order become somewhat tangled in the realm of Syria.

The Syrian crisis has given birth to a series of important features and is responsible for transforming the regional order and with it, perhaps, the international order as well. Its history shows how complex all the actors involved in it have been and going further it will be noticed that though the dynamics greatly changed, the complexity remains obscure. The US remains an involved state but new actors like Russia and China have also become involved. Not only that the regional actors like Israel, Iran, Turkey and KSA have greater stakes and have fairly used non-state actors. The inception and spread of the armed non-

* Dr. Nazir Hussain is Director School of Politics and International relations, Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad and Ms. Amna Javed is Security Analyst focussing on Middle East affairs.

state actors is another phenomenon which has grown steadily after the Syrian crisis. All in all, the quest for the transformation of security regime and the regional order has manifold impacts which will be insightful. Therefore, this paper looks into the Syrian crisis through the role of state and non-state actors involved and the emerging regional order in the region due to the lingering crisis and conflicting interests of the actors involved.

Role of State Actors

- **Iran:** Initially, Iran sought out to support logistically the Assad's regime, which had deep rooted history with Iran as a chief ally in the region. Iran soon took a more hammering role and entering militarily in the conflict alongside the Syrian forces. In 2013, Iran met with other pro-Assad states in Doha as 'Friends of Syria' and this turned out to be mainly a bid to supply ammunition to the regime and the pro-regime factions.¹ This also marked the active support of Iran politically, logistically and strategically.
- **KSA:** The inherent antagonism of the KSA towards a secular and Ba'athist regime in the conflict impelled the Saudis to join the communiqué of Assad opposition alongside Turkey, Jordan and the Western states. Another factor was that with a weakened Syria, the KSA figured that the time would be perfect to instigate instability or at least aim to blunt Iran's growing influence. Under its influence, the Arab League suspended the Syrian government.² It has many stakes for the anti-Assad rebels and to this end it has supplied military and economic aid to many of the insurgent groups. They also joined US-led forces for the ground attacks in Syria as well.
- **Israel:** The role, which Israel has played in the crisis, is one which can be called highly 'watchful.' Israel for that matter never got along with the Assad's regime as it always saw in it, a strategic and military competitor for influence in the region. As soon as the Syrian conflict came on the surface, Israel plunged into hope for a diminishing influence of Assad in the state. At one end, Israel wished an end to the regime, but at the same time it was highly unsure and somewhat troubled at the concept of a government which could take over as one being more hostile towards Israel. Thus, its role in the conflict has been watchful as to how it could leverage the situation to its cause.

- **Turkey:** Initially, Turkey sought out to have a very strong and monochromatic policy towards the Syrian crisis; helps the rebel groups to gain control and power in a bid to get rid of Assad's regime whilst hitting at the ISIS for security purpose in the region. That is why it was quick to group together with other oppositional states and supply armament to the rebel forces.³ It also formed the Syrian National Council in 2011 with the aim of getting rid of Assad without showing signs of support to ISIS and the likes.
- **US:** When the initial shades of conflict emerged in Syria, of course the US under President Obama was well aware of the looming dangers. Yet the motivating force of the then Obama Doctrine was the bid to not use any force within Middle East. But of course, this form of idealism was short-lived and very soon the US began to embroil in various textures of the conflict. In 2013, after the growing use of force by the Assad's regime towards the demonstrators and the rebels came on surface along with the question of use of biological and chemical weapons, both the US and the UN began to take keen interest in the crisis.⁴ The quest for the global war on terrorism made the case quite simple for the US, to get rid of ISIS at all costs. Thus, Turkey, France and KSA motivated or rather forced US to streamline its cause for the military incursion.
- **Russia:** Russia and Syria had always been strong allies in all major realms building bridges between soft and hard powers. Syria had high stakes for the Russians because of trading, political and other reasons which included to stop the propagation of terrorism within any Russian zone of influence. When the crisis began, it was a cause of major alarm for the Russians because not only did it mean weakening of the regime but also the birth of active Islamist factions. In the initial phases, Russia had all the logistical and political backing for Assad. Moreover, it was the core state to make the bid for no-military intervention in Syria after the chemical weapons fiasco in 2013.
- **China:** When the Syrian crisis began, China was the most neutral state of all. Having economic interests in and out of the region which it had to look out for, it remained elusive and largely invisible. It only became somewhat visible on the whole idea of military interventions by the West. Not only would that disrupt the Middle Eastern non-existent stability for economic prowess of the Chinese to influence but also would make the US become a focal state within the region.

Involvement of Non-State Actors

- **Free Syrian Army:** The major role within Syria when talking about the non-state actors largely was put forth by the Free Syrian Army. This was the armed rebel group which leaped in the conflict. Had they not been so active against the Assad's regime, the conflict might have died down. These armed rebels were active in instigating the crisis and standing up as an armed opposition to the regime which made the regime arm up as well. The faction was then militarily supported by the US-led alliances and mostly by Turkey which only complicated the situation.
- **ISIS/IS:** It was another faction with its own interests and aims which thrusts its existence in Syrian crisis and emerged to be a part of the framework in 2014. This entity was not just a common insurgent but was at one time an active part of al-Qaeda and its very existence in Syria meant alarm bells for the region as well as for the West. The basic aim of ISIS was, and perhaps will always be, to ouster the secular government of Assad and enforce a radical version of Islamic government and also to eradicate Assad and expel Western powers from the region.⁵
- **Al-Nusra:** Initially, the Al-Nusra Front had been a part of al-Qaeda as well, and when the ISIS detached itself from al-Qaeda, Al-Nusra came into existence in 2011 and entered Syrian crisis in 2014.⁶ "In late July 2015, Al-Nusra expanded its operations against US backed forces and attacked the US-trained Division 30 (D30) in the town of Azzaz, kidnapping seven of its fighters."⁷
- **Hezbollah:** This was perhaps one earlier faction which had an active part throughout the history of the crisis. Hezbollah was, and still is, heavily pro-Assad and it was one non-state actor, which was armed to protect and aid the Assad's regime. It had the aid from Iran and a heavy military and logistical participation in the Syrian war.
- **NATO:** Just like the armed insurgents which made up the non-state actors league, the NATO was another non-state actor of a different sort which had major stakes in the crisis. France and Germany were the other primary powers which had great influence in the Syrian conundrum and weighed heavily under the pretext of NATO.
- **UN:** The role of UN had been somewhat blurry throughout the Syrian conflict because its main job initially was to prevent an actual war

within Syria and it failed in that. In terms of mediation and sponsoring negotiations, it had a role in brokering various chemical weapons resolutions, monitoring various ceasefires and peace deals.⁸

- **Kurds:** The Kurds were really not a part of the conflict dynamics but were made to be, because of their own political and military impacts which they saw on the horizon as how ISIS is taking power in the crisis. Moreover, the aggression from Turkey prompted them, which was further aggrandized by various international and regional actors approaching them for help.
- **Others:** The Syrian crisis was not just subject to these non-state actors but it turned out to be a vast web of convoluted actors with various interests. The crisis saw that there had been various pro- and anti-Assad non-state armed groups which had their own interests within the conflict.

Contemporary Security Regime in Middle East

The contemporary security regime in the region is dictated largely by five factors: proliferation of the conflict dynamics, Russian entry into the entire war arena with its own set of agenda, setback to the position of US dominance in the region, formations of new alliances between Russia-Turkey and other actors, the state versus non-state actors and finally the non-state versus non-state actors. An in-depth analysis will give an insight of the contemporary security dynamics of the region.

Proliferation of the Conflict

It looks pretty simple as to how the crisis was only manifested within Syria because of the actors involved and the objectives of the various actors. The Syrian crisis began spreading out to other states as well and it soon entered Libya and Iraq. These were not separate conflicts even though some analysts believe them to be, but they were all a part of larger control and influence. The structure and the system within the region was wrought with intricacies and it also became a motivating factor.

Moreover, it was a larger race for power which took its roots and very soon Mosul in Iraq was captured by ISIS in 2014 in a bid of an assassination attempt on Maliki in Mosul.⁹ Soon it had not only Mosul but Fallujah and other cities came under its control. It was in 2015 that ISIS formally took control of

some areas of Sinai Peninsula and the Libyan city-Sirte which was also the throttlehold of Qaddafi. Moreover, Libyan city Derna for a short amount of time also came under ISIS influence. It also began to nurture itself in Benghazi, Ajdabiya, Misrata and etc.¹⁰ This gave all the active states in Syria an opening to enter Iraq as well and Libya was not very far behind as ISIS out-paced and out-manuevered the militarily strong state actors regionally as well as internationally.

Russian Entry in Syrian Crisis

Russia had always stayed out of the region for its volatility and war culture. Yet in 2015, there was a radical change in Russian policy towards Syrian crisis and Middle East. Perhaps there was a consideration that their long-standing ally needs more than just logistical support or maybe it was some other politically motivated reason. Whatever the case was, Russia after careful deliberations finally entered into the foyer of Middle East and Syria served as the entry point. For Russia, an entry in Syria served as a mean for an entry into Middle Eastern affairs, because the Syrian crisis is a focal crisis upon which depends much of Middle Eastern fate.

Russia made an entry by moving beyond the logistic support and striding ceremoniously on the pretext of military intervention. "Over the course of two weeks, Kremlin commenced a major military intervention into the brutal four-and-a-half-year-old conflict, deploying thousands of troops, breaking ground on a new air base in Latakia, and dispatching an array of heavy war material (including tanks and fighter aircrafts) to the Syrian theater."¹¹ Russia propelled its way by moving its troops within Syria and perhaps even branching out some necessary means of hurling massive air-strikes.

In the first place, there were some clear military achievements for Russia. These came in the face of blocking the grim defeat which the Assad's regime was about to face at the hands of US-led forces and particularly ISIS. It was also an add-on that because of the military intervention, the siege of Aleppo by the Jahabat-al-Sham and its affiliates was mainly diminished.¹² Moreover, the Russian forces made progresses in diminishing the ISIS and its affiliates from Syria. In the second place, Russia achieved some political gains as well. In the Geneva Peace Talks held in 2016, President Putin embraced the idea of being able to hold a ceasefire successfully in February 2016 brokered between all the participants of the crisis.¹³

Impediments to US Dominance in Middle East

In the backdrop of a broken Syria and an addition of another power-broker in the shape of Russia within the crisis, the US power has faltered to a great extent. The US may have initiated the entire fabric of war to topple ISIS in the region, yet it had many failures which out-grew the achievements. This ultimately led to a change in the security equation in which the US no longer was the lone protector. The US role was thwarted towards the assembly of Syrian Opposition and establishing safe-zones and has to some extent isolated Raqqah for ISIS.¹⁴ Yet, somewhere along the line failed to up-hold its position in the area despite its many military incursions.

It took President Obama a fair amount of time to actually enter the crisis state. But as per the same idea, there was seen to be on the surface a US foreign policy which seemed to be getting nowhere. At one time, there were careful steps taken and at other time the US tried to supersede its own power in the conflict. While at one time, President Obama wanted to re-balance at the other there was seen that he wanted US to stay committed to Middle East.¹⁵ Moreover, the US considered ISIS and its elimination to be the ultimate goal to resolve the conflict but ISIS had only been a symptomatic feature of a larger issue of turbulence to be dealt with.

Another factor happens to be the US-led forces and the direct arming of forces opposed to the regime, simultaneously warding off ISIS. This was perhaps a paradox for the US policymakers and one which cost them substance. "That the endeavor ended in a fiasco in which, for example, the US-trained rebels surrendered equipment to al-Qaeda-linked Al-Nusra Front in exchange for safe passage, was as much a result of the administration's fecklessness as it was bad luck."¹⁶ Moreover, it was a decision which spread crisis instead of curbing it.¹⁷ Then, the debacle of US-led NATO forces and certain instable moments within it weakened the entire resolve for the conflict. As claimed by some analysts, "Policy inconsistencies, intermittent support for the rebels, confused messaging, and the absence of strong international leadership have contributed to this protracted conflict and allowed space for regional and international actors to rip the country apart."¹⁸

Role of Russia-Turkey-Iran Trifecta

The troika between Turkey, Russia and Iran is actually one prompted by not just political motives, as claimed by many, but is in fact a politico-security alliance. This is due to the fact that all the states have individual interests which are similar, yet varied. It can be said that it was security which built the political need for them to get together and this political need further escalated in making certain security changes in Syria and the region. The states came to a point where all of these began intersecting and the one common goal emerged; peace and stability in Syria with minimum damage to their own power. The idea behind growing Russia-Iran ties was obviously grounded within the mutual need to secure the Assad's regime. This largely manifested itself into out-maneuvering the US in the war.

Then there is the Turkey-Russia alliance, which has seen its fair share of ups and downs but in the post-2016 coup in Turkey, Russia and Turkey have only grown close. What started as diplomatic rapport between them further aggrandized to a military affinity.

State Actors versus Non-State Actors

The Syrian conflict may go deep and becomes entangled in various complexities but largely it is about power; this is the dictate of the international system. Yet there is a slight addition in this aspect, especially in the current century which has seen a rise in many armed non-state actors. This has come to dictate the newly emerged security dynamics of Middle East because the Syrian crisis is mainly a battle fought between state and armed non-state actors.

First of all, for the US, the chief armed non-state actors, which are also their foremost enemy, is the ISIS in the crisis. It was ISIS which roped the US into the Syrian crisis and steadily warding off ISIS became an active part of the global war on terror. The US actually has formed a milieu of strategies and policies in the Middle East and Syria to topple ISIS,⁹ Al-Nusra Front and al-Sham with their many affiliates and splinters. The main idea is to stop the proliferation of the ISIS and their ideology in Europe, Middle East and even Afghanistan.

For Russia, ISIS and Al-Nusra Front like branches pose a threat to not just the Assad's regime and their Middle Eastern interests but if these strands of extremist ideologies are not taken care of the Caucuses and the Central Asian region will become highly vulnerable to them. This is not in the interest of the

Russians since both these regions are the direct Russian influence zones. This will heavily undermine the Russian presence in these areas.

Thirdly, for Turkey warding off Kurds gains primary position rather than ISIS. In fact, initially Turkey started off by hitting the ISIS in Syria when it joined the conflict. But with time when Ankara noticed that many states are using the Kurd forces as their proxies; this meant trouble. For Turkey, Yekîneyên Parastina Gel (YPG) (Kurdish People's Defense Unit) and the importance given to it meant that Turk interests are being played with. Thus it began hitting the Kurds more than it hit the ISIS. For Iran of course, keeping ISIS away and out of the region and Syria is the main objective. For this purpose, it has used its own proxies and military scrimmages to ward off not just the ISIS but all Sunni-led militias which challenge Iran-led dominance within the region. This includes Al-Nusra, Ahrar-al-Sham and the multitude of splinter groups which are active in Syria and Iraq.

Non-State Actors versus Non-State Actors

The contemporary security structure is multi-featured. It not only sees states opposing other states politically and diplomatically, but states fighting non-state actors militarily. Moreover, another somewhat new feature of this security scheme happens to be the various non-state actors fighting other non-state actors militarily as well. This is either in a way via which states utilize various non-state actors as their proxies or interestingly the intra ideological and power struggles between all of them.

There is Hezbollah, a predominantly Shi'a group which served the purpose of being pro-Assad and is unwavering in their fight against Sunni militias of ISIS and Al-Nusra Front.²⁰ This is followed by Kurds which are also being utilized as a proxy by the US who try to underscore ISIS majorly.²¹ On the main turf, al-Qaeda splinter groups also do not get along among themselves and the Syrian crisis saw how ISIS and Al-Nusra, which is just another name for al-Qaeda, have major power struggles among themselves which have taken somewhat of a small level military shape. Then the Free Syrian Army (FSA) also has major power struggles with not only the ISIS but also Hezbollah and other factions. This is a power struggle wherein the ISIS and the FSA are at the opposite ends. For the FSA, ISIS is the only other side of Assad's regime. Finally, there is a lot of hue about how ISIS has become somewhat internally weak leading to a two way split. This means that perhaps there is going to be a second

ISIS in Syria and Iraq which will automatically mean that there might follow an armed opposition between the two factions.

Chinese Military Incursion

Though China had a mild involvement in the Syrian crisis, as of 2016 this began to change. Exactly what motivated this move is unsure but the strategic and security plan of the crisis and the region has changed drastically. China now plans to have an open military incursion in the Syrian crisis.²² This it aims to do by aligning itself with the Russian-led bloc which means that China supports the Assad government.

It does so because of many reasons; firstly, it wants to out-pace the US in the region, both economically and politically and now militarily. Moreover, China also sees in the region an economic haven whereby it can expand its fiscal and trading might and sees in Assad a proponent which might support it. Lastly, it is for the sake of economic stability that it perhaps has moved in the military game, considering what it can achieve with its arms market and oil gains by aligning with Iran and Russia.

Emerging Order in Middle East

There are six fluctuations which contribute to an emerging regional order in Middle East. In fact these fluctuations make up the new order for the region. A further in-depth breakdown will give an insight into the new regional order which are in the succeeding paragraphs.

Anchorage for Foreign Involvement

There is no doubt that the emerging regional order is one marked with a heavy influx of foreign involvement. Initially, there was only one foreign power which had involved itself in the regional power-politics. In fact, the US had managed to be a visible power with certain capabilities to vouch for. The new regional order seems to embrace multi-polarity in terms of foreign power meddling. Not only has Russia begun to militarily weigh in but now China is also profoundly involved.

This makes the region a key one in terms of power determination and political leverages for the external actors. Because each actor which gets involved comes in with their own sets of interests, policies, agenda and alliances. These then either go through a clash or combine together as was seen with Turkey and

Russia. Even though the regional power politics is itself rigorous, but with each regional power being powerful and dependent on foreign actors, the state of affairs becomes largely unpleasant.

Arena of Russian Clout

The most atypical situation which has occurred and contributed to the shifts in the regional order of Middle East is the Russian presence in the Syrian crisis. This has given Russia a sort of validated supremacy to guide certain dynamics of the region as well. Moreover, it has turned the usual US dominated crisis-prone region somewhat of an arena marred by Russian clout. In terms of Syria, the region is no longer an asymmetrical zone of external powers.

First, Russia is being somewhat of a goliath as it has successfully managed to create politico-military alliances with Turkey and Iran, which are two powers having a lot of influence in the region. It perfectly glided within all the loopholes by previous hegemony within the region. And if that is not enough, Russia has managed to keep close to Israel as well. This is indeed very strange for one external power to perfectly manage relations with certain odd states, which do not get along that well, at the same time in a region where alliances are highly precarious and vulnerable.

Second, the old regional order was one where it was understood quite well that the US interests prevail and then things take place. This had created asymmetry in the system because the regional states could either form alliances with the US or be left alone.²³ With Russian clout, regional states are given another option; even though it is surprisingly a crude one.

Neo-Ottomanism versus Persian Supremacy

The entire region is complex because of the fact that it was multi-layered and inter-connected to multiple power centers without any dominant one. The KSA and Iran had been located at the top of the hierarchy and Turkey had always been found streamlining. Yet with the change of pace and the transformations within the security regime, the new regional order sees two major powers in the shape of Turkey and Iran on the surface. Especially, in terms of Syrian crisis; the two states have a fair amount of leverage.

Even though the two states seem to be working together along with Russia yet the surface is not as uniform as it seems. The two states may have put

aside their differences momentarily for the Syrian Peace Deal; there is no doubt that the inherent dissimilarities between their ideologies is manifest in the idea of a certain rivalry which has somewhat pushed the Arabs to one side.

Iran is one of the powerful states in Middle East and it has two main points wherein it can play at the concept of supremacy in the region; being the sole Persian state with remarkable amount of power and secondly, the idea of being the chief Shi'ite state. Both points have their certain relevance for Iran especially in terms of Middle East.

The Turkish factor is somewhat different and more complicated. Not only has Turkish policy started tilting more towards the Middle East but it has been done so as to construct a security structure much like that of the Ottoman Empire. There is no doubt that this is because of the idea that Middle East for Turkey is not only a region wherein it can hold brokering power over the West but also one where it can become somewhat of a big power because of its social, cultural and even religious attributes.

Power-play of Non-State Actors

The emerging regional order actually sees that there is not only a rise of non-state actors but also an elevation of their role in terms of power and strategy. This goes beyond their otherwise role as proxies but stops short of any non-state actor gaining actual legitimacy. At least few variances emerge out of the new regional order in Middle East, which deals directly with non-state actors.

Firstly, because of the fact that the non-state actors are ever-increasing in the region and that they have not only military strength to account for but also a robust structure of economy, especially ISIS, it seems that the non-state actors now have a delayed stay in the region. And second, they do dictate certain terms of conflicts ranging from the Syrian crisis to the Libyan one and the Yemeni conundrum.

Impacts on Middle Eastern Dynamics

There are altogether five dimensions of the various impacts on the region of the changing regional and security order;

Firstly, there is going to be a general set-back to Arab power and ideals in the region because of Turkey and Iran gaining more ground of the regional semantics. This does not mean that the most important state of Arabs, the KSA is

completely going to be swept under the rug. It only means that the KSA has much been sidelined and in order for it to regain its position, it might need to reorganize itself.

Secondly, in the transformed security regime of Middle East, which has enabled a change in the regional order, another contour which can be seen on the surface is that Israel will be propagated to take part in the Syrian crisis. It was already seen in 2017 that Israel hit Syria²⁴ and with time it will hit more.

Thirdly, the conflict dynamics will perhaps further branch out and jostle up the security of the region. Already Egypt is going through turmoil and if the ISIS spreads in the region then there will be trouble. Fourthly, there is perhaps going to be an increased notion of state-sovereignty and nationalism among each Middle Eastern state as a result of the changing regional order and the transformed security regime. The idea is very obscure because this newly gained insight of state-sovereignty and nationalism is going to be infused with Islamization. This Islamization is not going to be of the radical sort but is of a kind which serves to counter the radical Islam.

Another factor is that because of the region having turned into a giant zone of active non-state actors, which are vehemently at odds with each other and keep being pushed back, there might come a point where all the armed groups join forces. Instead of fighting each other, they might re-group and fight their common enemies. This then might be a point where the current regional order will swing for a transformation.

Finally, since more and more states are now involved in the crisis and with the proliferation of the scheme of hostile state of affairs, there will be a holistic increase in the already critical immigrant and refugee issue. This of course means that there is perhaps going to be no end in sight and the humanitarian crisis will linger on.

Conclusion

Middle East is a fragile and volatile region of acute importance. Most of the dynamics which takes place here go on to contribute largely to the various international power politics. And, because of the Syrian crisis, this has become largely manifold. All in all, the region has now a new security regime and with this there is a new regional order. Of course, Russia, Iran and Turkey emerge as

core states with visible setbacks to the US and the KSA, and each of these things have now multiple repercussions and implications for the region.

It can easily be said that there is no way that the region is ever going to be stagnant even though currently there is a stalemate within the Syrian conflict. Yet, because of the multiple powers involved along with the armed groups, it will only become somewhat more dangerous and vulnerable to both inside and outside forces. The prospects of peace in the crisis are muddled and the region has turned into a diplomatic zone. Middle East as a region always had geostrategic importance which at one time even converted to geo-economic importance. Of course, even today it holds immense value for China and Russia in terms of geo-economic and geostrategic value respectively. But it must also be brought into light that the atmosphere and the regional order as well as the security regime in Middle East dictate that the region be known as having certain geopolitical value for not only the internal but also external states. These things have already shaped the regional order into a rather convoluted paradox.

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GEOPOLITICS OF SYRIAN CRISIS AND FUTURE OF ALAWITE HEARTLAND

Dr. A. Z. Hilali*

Abstract

Since the Arab Spring, chaos seems to have further engulfed in the volatile Middle Eastern region. The ongoing unrest in Syria is alarming for state-based nationalism and it may end for the Sykes-Picot Agreement, which had divided the Ottoman Empire after the World War I and had created the modern Middle East. The war in Syria, Iraq and Yemen has become the root cause of destabilization in the Middle Eastern region. Further, the Syrian crisis has now become an important part of the global politics and it seems that without radical internal political changes in Syria, the situation will further complicate the Middle Eastern politics.

Keywords: Syrian Crisis, Civil War, Unrest, Destabilization, Sectarianism, Violence.

Geopolitics of Syria

Syria has specific geographic location and is situated on the East coast of the Mediterranean Sea in South Western Asia and in the North of the Arabian Peninsula in the Middle East¹. It may not be rich in oil, but its key location would likely to make it a very convenient transit country for main Arab land and the Mediterranean region². Strategically, its border is linked with Turkey in the North, Lebanon and Israel in the Southwest, Iraq in the East and Southeast, and Jordan in the South, which endows it potential geographical importance and equally have historical value in the region. The coastal Syria has a narrow plain, stretches South from the Turkish border to Lebanon, in back of which a range of coastal mountains is, and still farther inland a steppe area. The area includes about 185,180 square kilometers of deserts, plains, and mountains. It is divided into a coastal zone with a narrow, double mountain belt enclosing a depression in the West and a much larger eastern plateau. In the East is the Syrian Desert and in the South, is the Jebel Druze Range. The highest point in Syria is Mount Hermon, which is around 9,232 feet on the Lebanese border. Strategically, Syria is located at the crossroads of regional and global power interests as defined by Bernard Lewis, that the region is the “cross-roads” of civilizations.³ The location of region is becoming more volatile because of a number of important border passes and regions between Syria and neighboring countries.

* Dr. A Z Hilali is Professor at Department of Political Science, University of Peshawar.

Thus, strategic region of Yabroud, (North of Damascus), Golan Heights, Abu Badih, Latakia, Belen Pass (Known as the Syrian Gates), Burj al-Qasab (Latakia hinterland), Jabal Turken, and Jabal al-Akrad (Mountain of the Kurds) are the important areas in the country. These mountain areas are corridors of invasion and commerce between Syria, Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. Historically, Syria was the part of Roman Empire and later it came under the suzerainty of Hebrews, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Persians, Macedonia and the Arabian. In the first half of the 7th Century, Syria came under the Islamic Caliphate and later Umayyad and Abbasids Caliphates extended the frontier of Arab empire. Mongols invaded under Timor and later during 1831-40, Syria was ruled by Egyptians and from 1840, the European powers (British, Austrians, and French) intervened and controlled the area for their strategic interests. Furthermore, the League of Nations accepted the French Mandate for Syria and Lebanon in 1922 and established constitutional suzerainty over the area. In 1930, France recognized Syria as an independent republic and in 1936, the Franco-Syrian treaty was signed for the autonomy of Syria, which happened because of the 'Popular Front' movement. However, Syria got independence on 17th April 1946, when last French soldier left the country and the colonial mandate ended.

Formation of Ba'ath Party

The Syrian Ba'ath Party or Socialist Renaissance Party was founded in 1943 by Michel Aflaq, a school teacher, whose brand of radical Arab nationalism won supporters across the region. Aflaq advocated the formation of a single Arab socialist nation and supported non-alignment and opposition to Western imperialism and colonialism. The party started work in Syria and rapidly achieved political power in 1963, when the party became centric and undergone radical domestic changes as a result of Alawites military officers' leading role to strengthen Ba'athist rule. Thus, the military coup led by Hafez Al-Assad restored the Ba'ath Party to power in Syria, and ultimately real political power fell into the hands of military. By this way, Alawites religious minority became more conscious and politically dominated in the country. That was the time, when the Syrian government introduced the political party reforms and did not permit any other group for existence outside the National Progressive Front (NPF).⁴ Moreover, Assad deliberately pushed the minority officers from home region of Latakia into senior ranks of the Ba'ath Party and under the planned method Sunni military officers were kept suppressed in the army.⁵ The regime of Alawites was bent upon getting government employment added with Assad's nepotism.

Thus, their representation went over within the state institutions. The Alawites made a strategy of setting up torture cells in the army and in the Ba'ath Party to suppressed opponents, when the struggle of the rebel leader, Sulayman Murshid failed. In Matti Moosa's opinion, it was certain that officers were acting as Nusayris rather Ba'athists with the purpose of using armed forces and the Ba'ath Party for grasping power in Syria. M. Sadoski is of the view that sectarian powers do not play important role in the Ba'ath Party, and even confessional

In 1973, Hafez Al-Assad regime amended the Syrian constitution and was given the Ba'ath Party unique status as the "leader of the state and society."

bonds are only one among many avenues by which patronage is extended.”⁶ The mere fact is that once Alawites came into power, they systematically controlled the key positions in every section of the government and civil-military administration, and Alasdair Drysdale calls this situation “reductionist” to focus on ethnicity and minority empowerment or dominance within the Ba'ath Party and establishment.⁷ Thus, in 1973, Hafez Al-Assad’s regime amended the Syrian constitution and was given the Ba'ath Party unique status as the “leader of the state and society,” ushering it into all areas of public and private sectors. General masses and youth (from schools and colleges) were indoctrinated with the party's ideology and also extended influence to trade unions and the military committee watched the activities of military personnel.

Religious and Ethnic Composition

Syria is officially a secular country. It is multiethnic, multicultural and multi-religious with 22.1 million of population. The country is socially heterogeneous and a home of diverse communities. The detail is as under:

Religious and Ethnic Composition

Sunni Muslims	75%
Shia Muslims	14%
• Alawites: 11%	
• Imamis: 2%	
• Ismailis 1%	
Druzes Muslims	3%
Christians	7.8%
Jews	0.2%
Total	100%

This religious diversity is always problematic for Syrian nation-building and state-building and continues as a source of tension between Sunni and Alawites (Shia Muslims) in many parts of the country. The map of religious and ethnic composition of Syria and Iran is as under:



The multiplicity of the country has given an opportunity to jeopardize its regional standing and international image. On the other hand, Syria has become a battleground in a proxy sectarian war between Shia and Sunni Muslim sects with foreign players offering financial and logistical support to one group or other as part of a wider tussle for influence in the volatile region. In fact, Iran behind Shia and Saudi Arabia behind Sunnis are fighting proxy war in Syria thus the gulf between the two sects of Islam is being widened to the extent of startling sectarian violence. This violent sectarianism is spreading in other countries of the region, leading to the legacy of change in the Arab World. In the era of decolonization (1945), many countries in the Middle East including Syria, prevented the minorities from identifying itself with the core identity. The French mandate replaced the existing order and empowered minorities and weakened the culture of Sunni elites, while Alawites begged the French to grant them a separate state, though demand was refused, but were given with advantages in the region.

Brief History of Alawites Community

One million Alawites live in Syria, out of around 1.3 million of the population. Tracing the origin of Alawites, it is considered that they are the

followers of Hazrat Ali. They believe in the divinity of Hazrat Ali. They are also known to the world as Nusayris or Ansaris.

The difference between Alawites and other Muslims sect is that they believe in the divinity of Hazrat Ali. Tracing the history of Alawites, it is found that they separated from Shia Islam in the ninth century in Iraq. The Alawi doctrines appear to derive from Phoenician paganism, Mazdakism and Manicheanism. They also celebrate the festivals of Christianity and Zoroastrian like Christmas, New Year's Epiphany, Easter, Pentecost and Palm Sunday. Regarding prayers, they do not consider this as religious obligation, because in their opinion the religious truth can be preserved with their Shaykhs and a few Alawites also gave the doctrine of mystery. Moreover, they believe in the cross-denominational marriages for the growth of their community population. Therefore, they are closely integrated with other sects in community relationship. (References Needed)

Syria under Hafez Al-Assad

President Hafez Al-Assad belonged to Alawites faction, a minority Islamic sect and joined the Ba'ath Party in 1946 when he was a student. He started his career as Syrian Air Force pilot-officer in 1952 and during 1959–61, Hafez Al-Assad and his other military colleagues formed the Military Committee to resurrect the fortunes of the Ba'ath Party. He assumed power in 1963 as a result of bloodless coup and became the Commander of the Syrian Air Force. In February 1966, he toppled the civilian leadership (Nur al-Din al-Atasi) of the party and sent into exile, and became the Minister of Defense and pursued more radical foreign and domestic policies. Hafez Al-Assad formed the Military Committee on sectarian level and majority members of the committee were Alawites and there was not a single member from majority Sunni faction.⁸ He formally assumed the post of Party President and then his government gave importance to Alawite religion and community, which emerged as powerful identity in the country.⁹

Under Hafez Al-Assad regime, the Ba'ath Party grew steadily in Syria and organized strong military group to protect supporters and community. Hafez Al-Assad restructured the Ba'ath Party and its membership grew from few hundred to millions and the party became popular on mass level with increasing frequency. The party emerged as to control virtually all political, social, and cultural activities in the country and its vast and complex hierarchy was

structured like a German Nazi's pyramid, with party-controlled mass organizations for youth, women, workers, and other groups at the bottom. According to Aljazeera, "President Hafez Al-Assad supported predominantly Alawite network of military officials and many non-Alawites opponents suppressed by harsh methods."¹⁰ By 1969, the Ba'ath Party was divided between two factions, i.e., a civilian wing, led by Jadid, and a military wing, led by the Air Chief, Hafez Al-Assad. The final coup was carried out by Assad himself and brought the Alawite minority to power in November 1970 and became Prime Minister, and later on elected as the President (1971) and brought stability to the country and established a powerful presence in the region.

The incident of 1979 was irreversible when many massacre appeared in the Aleppo Military Academy and Alawite officer candidates killed by the Muslim Brotherhood including the assassination of Alawite Sheikh Yusuf Sarem happened and that incident parted two communities forever.¹¹ Later, in 1982, the Muslim Brotherhood mounted a rebellion in Hamah, Alawite military officers in the Ba'ath Party forcefully crushed domestic opposition by suppressive means and killing between 25,000 and 40,000 citizens.¹² Despite various human rights violation and continued denial of constitutional rights, Syrians continuously protested against the government until Hafez Al-Assad died in 2000 after ruling for 30 years. In spite of government crackdown, the Muslim Brotherhood remained influential in the diasporas-based opposition, which increased Alawite fears. Syria again came under the grip of domestic violence in March 2011, when opposition coalition called protest against the government. The democratic movement crumpled by the Alawite dominated army, who ruthlessly suppressed opposition at a cost of some 20,000 lives.¹³ According to an Asia Watch report, "during Hafez Al-Assad regime violence and repression was common and more than 30,000 people had been killed and about 29,000 tortured."¹⁴ The worst scenario, which had appeared during Assad's regime, was the arrest of under fifteen school children in the city of Deraa, as the catalyst for the uprisings in the country. It was reported that the children "be mischievous", and had graphitized "down with the regime" on their school wall. The security services arrested the children, mistreated and perhaps tortured some of them.¹⁵ Nonetheless, Hafez al-Assad era was popularly known as authoritative, which involved in massive kidnappings, locked several of the key subordinates behind bars, house arrests, torture and many murdered. Furthermore, under the Hafez Al-Assad, the country entered into a period of political instability, unrest, and experimentation of domestic political order and failed to create sectarian harmony and social

coherence. According to Patrick Seale, “Assad ruled the country through the “Gang of Alawites” brutally and viciously.¹⁶ His personality cult declined and described as ridiculous, unpleasant, and hostile.

State of Emergency 1963

In 1963, due to coup d'état, constitution was suspended and emergency was imposed and the country was being run under the special Constitutional Order. The Military Committee had taken control of the country and arrested many politicians. In his proclamation of emergency, Hafez Al-Assad identifying himself as President and argued that the rising poverty, violence and extremism in the country were basis for his imposing emergency law. The law imposed during the so-called emergency reduced public freedom and their civil rights such as gatherings in public, censorship on media, free movement, and permission to arrest anyone of creating threat to the security. The government protected the Ba'ath Party using emergency powers as instrument. The security forces were given the powers to harass and even some times they could kill opponents. In this regard, the state judicial system worked as “Kangaroo Court” and helped Assad for repression.¹⁷ Thus, Assad used unrestricted power through the emergency laws and systematically crushed Syrian liberal opposition in its first five years; the regime arrested approximately 130,000, many of whom were tortured.¹⁸ Therefore, Assad's regime brutally murdered and tortured thousands during his repressive rule and promoted hardline policies during 1960s to 1990s, who worked to culminate Sunni faction people in which more than 15,000 died.¹⁹ Nevertheless, after the death of Assad's autocratic rule (2000), his son Bashar al-Assad²⁰ brought an end to 48-year of emergency and abolished state security courts and afforded citizens the right to peaceful protest.²¹ However, the country's situation remained gloomy because popular movements toppled dictatorial regimes in some Middle Eastern countries, but it perceived that Syrian people have to go long way. Furthermore, the international community will remain divided on Syrian situation and implicitly will back Bashar al-Assad's regime.

Syrian Spring 2011

The year of 2010 was the watershed for the Arab world, when the political upheaval started mostly in the North African Muslim countries (Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, and Libya), known as the Arab Spring and rebellions had brought down unpopular regimes across the Arab world. The waves entered

Syria on 26 January 2011, when the people of Deraa (near the Jordanian border) peacefully protested to end corruption and demanded democratic reforms in the country.²² The turmoil in Syria was not because of economic issue or the uncertain situation widely spread in the country rather it was the corruption of the autocratic rule, reached to the level of common man ultimately resulting into regional and global issues being at stake. It is very much right that the crisis had created new geostrategic vistas for balancing the economic and political interests because domestic stalwarts had lost influence and legitimacy and this has created opportunities for the authoritarian rulers either to fight for status quo or to surrender for democratic norms. All depends on the will of internal democratic forces that they have to continue their struggle for socio-political change, which are certainly dissatisfied with Alawites ruling elites and are indicative of a profound popular appeal for a different sort of political order.

Role of Global and Regional Actors

Political developments in the Syrian case are uncertain and unsettled, and will remain confuse because of the regional and global actors. The mass movement is effective, but has no operative external backing to euphorically bringing down Bashar al-Assad's regime and equally there is no hope for revolutionary sociopolitical change in the country. But, at the same time, the reality is that Arab blood is warm and in Syria, ethnic and sectarian rivalry is on the rise, therefore, the movement will continue. The intervention of the US and NATO on humanitarian grounds will be damaging for the movement. The struggle between the conservative Sunnis and Shias has placed Syria on the path of disintegration. For Saudi Arab, the United Arab Emirate (UAE), Kuwait and other moderate states, who have deep association with the Arab world, would never like Iranian influence over the region. But, in the Syrian context, it appears that "Arab awakening" has been hijacked by the geopolitical game.

US and the European Union (EU) Reaction

There is neither oil in Syria nor does it produce rather it is involved in the regional disputes of the Middle East. Its geographical location is such that it is adjacent to supplier countries. It has served for long hosting of pipeline connection with Mediterranean. Syria is an important country in the region. It is allied with Iran, a country having geopolitical imperatives. It poses threat to Israel and Saudi Arabia and security of the Persian Gulf oil supply line, therefore, the US cannot remain detached from it. It cannot remain out of the disturbance

in Syria. There is no choice left with the US leaders except to intervene against the hardline countries especially those posing threat to Israel's national security. The US administration wanted negotiations for the settlement before the ruling regime quittance of the office and the formation of the transitional administration. For the time being, the US provided legitimate representative to the opposition alliance on one hand and on the other hand put economic sanctions that were under the Syrian Accountability Act that does not allow some of the US products to Syria.²³

Moreover, it has also perceived that Sunnis fighting against the Bashar al-Assad regime are backed by Saudi Arabia and other affiliated groups.²⁴ Presently, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) or Daesh militants have entered in the Syrian civil war, as much as they established a presence in Iraq during the sectarian civil war, which began after US-led invasion in 2003.²⁵ According to Seymour Hersh, "the Saudi government, with Washington's approval, would provide funds and logistical aid to weaken the government of Bashar al-Assad, of Syria, "the bolstering of Sunni extremist groups" hostile to the US and "sympathetic to al-Qaeda," with a view to pressure him to be more conciliatory and open to negotiations with Israel.²⁶ However, in the present situation, the US and the EU have one point agenda in the Middle East to isolate Iran from the region and to prevent backing to Bashar al-Assad (Alawites) regime. The West perceived that the fall of Damascus as a strategic ally of Tehran would be a blow to Iran in its showdown against Europe, the US and Israel.²⁷ On the other hand, Iran would like to continue its strategic alliance with Syria to maintain its Shia "axis of resistance" (Iraq-Syria-Lebanon with the Hezbollah) to counter the isolation imposed by the EU and US sanctions through the United Nations.²⁸ Syria was caught up in the cobweb of geopolitics in which western powers, Israel, Iran, Lebanon and other world powers were involved. The US for making the region safe for Israel tries to remodel the whole region along the line and the struggle for ousting Bashar al-Assad from power.²⁹

Russia and China Support to Bashar al-Assad Regime

Another important angle of Syrian imbroglio is the involvement of Russia and China. This is yet a dilemma for the US, because Syria is the main strategic asset of Russia. It's important naval base at Tartus, on the Syrian Mediterranean coast, is the outcome of the long-established ties with the leadership, which started from Hafez al-Assad. The Syria was in position to bargain with the West with the intention to gain geopolitical advantage from the

Russia is determined to give diplomatic support to Bashar al-Assad regime even at the cost of becoming isolated in the Arab league and the world.

West, while emerging militancy's favour would also be taken. On the other side, China has its own economic and political interests in the region. Syria has displayed committed support on the issues related to Taiwan, Tibet, and Xinjiang and human rights. Beijing believes that Syrian people must be respected for their demand of reforms and the protection of their security. Therefore, it is very important to bring an end to the violence and killing of people.³⁰ However, Russia is determined to give diplomatic support to Bashar al-Assad's regime even at the cost of becoming isolated in the Arab League and the world. At present, Syria buys arms worth of 4 billion dollars from Russia annually. A major shipment of arms from Russia includes MiG-29 fighter jets and S-300 air defense missile systems. According to Jeffery Mankoff, the main reason of Russian help to Syria is because both countries are facing extremism. Extremism is in progress especially in Muslim North Caucasus Republics i.e. Abkhazia, Chechnya, Dagestan and Tatarstan, which the Russian Empire (Tsar) occupied in the latter half of the 16th century and 19th century. Therefore, the worrisome situation for Russia is if Bashar al-Assad's regime is overthrown then the Pandora box of Islamic insurgency would open and it would result into instability and the most vulnerable is Chechnya. Moscow has considerable and strategic reasons to support Damascus that is to contain the Western influence over there. That is the message Kremlin is sending to the Western countries.

Israel's Views about Syrian Regime

For decades, Israel viewed Syria as its most bitter Arab adversary because of its 'nationalist ideology,' which is fiercely anti-Israel and border disputes left the two countries perpetually on the brink of unending conflict. Conversely, the outbreak of Muslim militancy in the Middle East is alarming for the security establishment of Israel and preferred that the Bashar's regime to remain in power rather than change with an unknown successor, this "the devil we know" approach is no longer valid.³¹ Israel's policy makers perceived that change of regime will benefit to its "Resistance Axis" (Iran and Hezbollah) and to Sunni militants. Additionally, Israel's leaders have largely reached a consensus that Assad's departure from power will preferably benefit to militancy in the region but desire to replace by moderate elements.³² It hopes for a secular

regime, which will emerge with the support of the West, but move can backfire due to Tel Aviv toxic reputation in the region.

Syria between Turkey and Iran

Since the inception, Turkey and Syria have territorial, ideological, and political oriented uneasy relations and most of the time confrontation appeared due to Kurds problem. Turkey accused Damascus for their support to the Kurdish rebels, providing them with training camps first in Lebanon and later in Syria itself, not least by hosting the leader of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) leader Abdullah Ocalan in Damascus.³³ Moreover, during the Cold War, Turkey was a friend of the West, while Syria was in the former Soviet camp and still has cordial relations. Turkey has close political and military ties with Israel with whom Ankara signed a military accord in 1996 and brought a genuine threat of military intervention in Syria.³⁴ Turkey is one of the countries who is also demanding condemnation for a harsh crackdown on pro-democracy activists in Syria and supporting to impose sanctions on Syria and to demand that President Bashar al-Assad should step down. On the other side, Iran has cordial ties with Syria and both have common religious affinity, centered on common Shia roots, between the ruling Syrian Alawite minority and the Iranian leadership.³⁵ Syria has given open access to Iran to the waters of the Mediterranean Sea and also allows Iran to gain a maritime route from the Gulf, via the Suez Canal, to the Northern waters of the Mediterranean sea.³⁶ Moreover, Syria also shares a long border with Turkey, which is Iran's historical geopolitical competitor and both needs pressure over Ankara to neutralize Saudi Arabia and the West and to limit Ankara. Nonetheless, the conflict can be viewed as a broader struggle between mainly Russia and Western countries, which attempt to advance their national interests. Nevertheless, Syria is a long way away from stability after the unending violence between the ruling Bashar al-Assad's regime and majority Sunni population. The crisis has entered into the worst-case scenario, where radicalization is occurring rapidly and anonymously because of the continued violence and suffering.³⁷ Moreover, humanitarian crisis in Syria has worsened and involvement of regional and super powers has aggravated the existing situation. The Syrian crisis is changing its character due to the presence of radical militants such as Daesh, al-Qaeda and the ISIS in Syria and the global actors would not be happy with empowering opposition with the fears to backfire them.

Conclusion

Syrian uprising has progressively entered into an armed rebellion and civil war and an underlying competition for influence has attracted international actors and regional powers. The current situation is no longer a struggle against a dictatorship, neither a simply civil war between two ethnic and sectarian camps, but the country has become the hub of a proxy war for regional and global actors. Meanwhile, Bashar al-Assad's regime considered emotionally unstable destined to maintain his iron grip on the country and unrelenting willingness to use state terror against regime opponents, which is opposed by the international community. More importantly, thousands of Daesh, ISIS and al-Qaeda militant groups have taken roots, because some regional countries have been indirectly involved and aiding the rebels for the fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime. Nonetheless, the US and Western nations have adopted Machiavellian posture and are not willing to intervene in the ways that Muslim militants should not take control. On the other hand, Russia and China both dislike the destabilizations of the regime and oppose overt intervention in Syria. Moreover, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and other regional players desperately do not want to stay under Tehran's orbit in the region. Turkey is the hostage of Kurdish matter and has fears that Syria can create instability for the regional countries. Nevertheless, the world must response to the humanitarian disaster and widespread human rights violations which perceived to be not halting without coercive diplomacy.

NOTES

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PAK-AFGHAN BORDERLAND INTERACTION: ALONE TOGETHER

Dr. Mansoor Akbar Kundi*

Abstract

Balochistan at forefront covers 1468 kilometers long border with Afghanistan across which the two leading ethnic groups: Baloch and Pathan dwell and interact. Balochistan neighbors four provinces of Afghanistan: Helmand, Kandahar, Nimroz and Zabul. The borderland interactions are driven by socio-cultural, economic, commercial (legal/illegal) and narcotic factors. The interaction includes day to day petty activities by tribesmen to support bread and butter for families in non-irrigated far-flung areas of both countries. The border is still a soft one with being interdependent and integrated. The tribes across are dependent and needful on one another's support.

Keywords: Borderland, Interaction, Socio-cultural, Interdependent, Ethnicity, Nation State.

Introduction

Borders are of different kinds. They emerged with rise of civilizations with a variety of reasons, either as a superficial contact or intimate relations, to unite or divide with their existence as barriers to movement can simultaneously create reasons to cross them.¹ Borders stand irrespective of geographical, ethnic and zonal considerations and differ in their ways of life. Nevertheless, due to cross-border interaction and across relationship, borderlands are special and unique areas. With the fall of empires into nation-states, borders and across interactions expanded: to refugee, to work, to trade, to migrate or then to travel.

Balochistan being the largest province of Pakistan, parts Afghanistan with a 1640 km long border. Serving as a regular international traffic road link for trade and transaction to Pakistani borders town (largely to Chaman), it can be considered as an inter-reliant and coexistent border² sharing cross-border interface between the two sides. Interaction depends on geographical, sociocultural, political and economic aspects from both sides. This paper is a humble effort to explain the borderland interaction between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The main theme of this paper is that Pak-Afghan borderland is

* Dr. Mansoor Akbar Kundi has penned 10 books and 35 research articles. He is well familiar with Turkish politics and culture.

mutually dependent having adjunctive boundaries along with uniformity in sociocultural, ethnic and economic perspective. This paper, which is of qualitative nature, highlights the major indices of borderland transaction i.e. sociocultural, politico-economic, smuggling, human trafficking under the theoretical framework of leading literature on borders and their inhabitants. It also touches upon the factors which, since 9/11 and the ongoing war on terrorism over the years, have changed the soft nature of the border.

Kinds of Borders

Borders are broadly divided into four kinds:³

- Coexistent
- Interdependent
- Integrated, and
- Alienated border

A coexistent border can be defined as the one with regular interaction across with both countries enjoying friendly or working relations. Both countries perceive that the cross-border interaction beneficial to their national interests. Iran and Turkey happened to be a coexistent border between Central Asian Republics. A soft border can be referred as the loose, coexistent border which people can cross with or without visa and other formal requirements. Crossway of the Durand Line, Pak-Afghan Border sets an example of soft border. When strict rules and regulations grow for the verification process of passports/identity cards, the nature of soft border changes into non-soft but can still be under coexistent category. The strained relations between the two states and military threats can change the nature of the border from a coexistent to an alienated border.

The interdependent border is experienced by regular tourists' flow, trade and mutual border transaction. Tourists with visa documents or with valid passport from any of the country can move and permitted to towns for a specified time period. The US-Mexico border is an example where people having US visa or US passport can cross the border and have access to the immediate town. Turkey-Bulgaria, and Turkey-Greece fall in this category of borders. There is not much difference between two borders: mutually dependent and coexistent.

The integrated border can be described as a border, where more facilitated and regularized interactions occur with visa waiver, better economic

mobility and tourist transaction between two countries. Many European countries in the European Union system, some of them even before, share combined borders under the Schengen visa arrangements. Regional alliances for trade, political issues and sociocultural framework lead to integrated borders. Regional cooperation for business activities, social interaction and many political affairs can be performed among joint borders. The principles of globalized society demand more interdependent and adjunctive borders.

An alienated border is marked with lack of trade and mobility of masses across. It is deemed that road and rail links and entry points can be properly ensured for security on both sides with armed forces. Borderlands with Israel and Middle East countries are considered as alienated borders. The Pak-India border in Kashmir is of similar kind. People residing across borders are aloof and separated and such borders restrict international tourism. Oscar J. Martinez mentioned it as "the least desirable" which is largely due to border dispute or strained tension between the two neighbors due to "warfare, political disputes, intense nationalism, ideological animosity, religious enmity, cultural dissimilarity and ethnic rivalry".⁴ Such alienated borders generate isolation, frustration and ignorance among masses inhabiting it, which can eventually provoke terrorism and militancy.

The Pak-Afghan border can be defined as a soft one. It is coexistent in the sense that it is open for formal and informal transaction throughout the year with friendly relations between the two countries. It can be called interdependent because it regulates tourism, trade and border transaction in mutual coherence. Tourists with valid visa from any of the country are permitted to cross it. Tourism was and is a meaningful source of income for the locals from the transit tourists.

Balochistan: History and Demography

Balochistan is the largest province (area-wise) by constituting 347,000 sq. km or 44% of the total area of Pakistan. In terms of population, it is the smallest but with the highest growth rate. The population of the province in 2016 is tentatively estimated around 17 million compared to only four million in 1981; almost quadrupled. The demographic density is 15 persons per sq. km. The 83 percent of its population is spread in non-urban areas. The Revolution of Afghanistan in 1978, which led to a prolonged Mujahedeen resistance, civil war and events following the 9/11, resulted in the huge influx of Afghan refugees -

now a permanent abode.⁵ It is evident that the majority of Afghan immigrants purchased assets and pursued national ID entitlement to become permanent residents of the province. The refugees constitute the largest chunk of the overall population (Pashtun, Baloch, Brauhi-settlers and Hazara). The number of Hazara and Pashtun have dramatically exceeded after 1981 due to massive migration. The immigrants include Uzbek and Tajik, predominantly of Shia sect.⁶

Interaction across the Border

Borders are created by men and circumstances being the ultimate result of the “Divide and Rule” policy of the imperialist powers between the 17th to 20th centuries. The Durand Line or Pak-Afghan Border is one of them. This Line was drawn as a result of the agreement made on 17th November 1893 between the British Indian Government and the ruler of Afghanistan, Abdur Rehman Khan. King Abdur Rehman being a strong and sovereign ruler would never have allowed cession of his area, had he not been under pressure for pursuit of British help due to internal conspiracies. Sir Mortimer Durand, the then Secretary of State for India, divided the work of boundary demarcation into different boundaries commissions. The sizeable portion of the boundary between Balochistan and Afghanistan was assigned to Capt McMohan, a trusted civil servant of Mr. Durand. That is the reason, it has also been referred as “McMohan Line.” McMohan headed the Boundary Commission formed for the demarcation of a part of the Durand Line between 1893 to 1895 along with Gul Mohammad Khan, the appointee of King Abdur Rehman. After 1947, the Line emerged as a permanent border between the two countries with Afghanistan having its reservation of claiming it as a disputed border. President Karzai called its Eastern border (Western for Pakistan) as the “Line of hate”.⁷

The border on Pakistan side travels from Domandi near the Gomal Pass/River in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to Chaman in “irregular and intended” Southwest direction.⁸ From Chaman it turns towards South and ends up at Rabat near Malik KohSiah. It is a border triangle, where the borders of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran meet. McMohan worked on the larger part of the demarcation between Chagai and Malik KohSiah, known as McMohan Line - part of the Durand Line. The total length of the Durand Line is 2560 kilometers. The length between Balochistan and Afghanistan is 1468 km. It touches the Goldsmid Line or Pak-Iran border near Malik KohSiah, which stretches from KohSiah to Arabia Sea with the total length of 909 km.⁹

Ethno-lingual & Demographic Division of Borderland

The 1268-km borderland from Domandi to Malik KohSiah is predominantly inhabited by the two ethnic groups: Pashtun and Baloch. They fall largely in seven border districts of Dalbandin, Chagai, Noski, Killa Abdullah, Pishin, Killa Saifullah, and Zhob. The chunk of the area of Quetta and Sherani districts touches borders.

On ethnic grounds, the line can be divided into two zones. First zone is 670 kilometers long starting from Domandi to Sarlat near Chagai and dominated by Pushto speaking population. The remaining 598 kilometers area, starting from Chagai to Malik Koh Siah, is predominantly occupied by Baloch population with Balochi as a largely spoken language.

According to Ferraro, the ability to develop and use a communication medium to set it as a symbolic aspect is a trait of humans. As stated by him, language is a medium through which cultural heritage is passed into generations.¹⁰ Samuel P. Huntington argues that the prominent aspects of a culture are language, civilization and its religion.¹¹ Similarly, languages play an important role in the social and cultural assimilation of border people. Brauhi is also spoken on the Pakistani side but the use of Brauhi on the Afghan side is nominal. The use of Dari (a version of Persian language, which is common lingua franca) is more often in Baloch borderland than Pashtun.

The leading Pashtun borderers are Achakzai and Kakar, divided into a number of sub-tribes or independent small tribes. They are Suliemankhel, Mandokhel, Noorzai, Syed, Kakozei, Jalazai, Mardanzai, Jalazai, and Dawa tribes. Among Baloch tribes are Musazai, Notezai, Mamdani, Yar Mohammad Zai, Mohammad Hasni, Sherzai, and Sasoli. Pashtuns are in numerical superiority. The exact population ratio of the borderland is not existing; however, Pashtuns are in numerical superiority. It is largely due to the fact that the border cities and towns, where Pashtun population lives, are more densely populated than Baloch areas. Pashtuns constitute the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan. The number of Pashtun tribesmen increased after the 1978-Afghan Saur Revolution and the massive immigration following it. An armed conflict between the military forces of one state with another, has always compelled human beings to flee their homes in order to avoid immediate danger.¹² Michael Bortin is right when he says that every year "thousands of people are forced to leave their homeland. Some flee from persecution, others more as a result of war, violence, environmental

disasters or harsh economic condition. Determining who should qualify for refugee status and thereby enjoy international protection is a complicated and controversial issue.¹³ Nevertheless, after Afghan war all those who fled Afghanistan for asylum were given refugee status. The huge influx of refugees resulted in demographic changes for Pakistan. Three factors were primarily accountable for the housing of Afghan refugees in Balochistan. First, the geographical location of the provinces along the Durand Line adjacent to Pakistan. Second, the close affinity and cultural similarities of Afghan refugees and inhabitants of the two provinces, largely of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as they spoke similar language and enjoyed many cultural similarities. Third, the ongoing Jihad or counterrevolutionary factor where Western support for the continuation of armed resistance to the Soviet backed PDPA regime was to be operative from the two provinces. The immediate major impact of the influx was the sudden change in the demography of the province. According to an estimate, more than 3.0 million Afghan refugees migrated to Pakistan and Iran during the prolonged years of the Afghan war.¹⁴

They are economically and agriculturally more developed than the Baloch areas with Chaman-Spin bolduk, as the only regular entry point for transit trade. The irregular entry points in Pashtun belt from Afghanistan are though shingle but are comparatively more accessible/passable and less distant to Pakistani sides than the ones in Baloch areas. Also, the cities across the border in Afghanistan parallel to Baloch belt are less developed and accessible to markets with larger distances. According to the latest census, Baloch in Afghanistan constitute around 720,000 of the overall Afghan population. The ratio of those living on border is around 7%, higher than the Pashtun population.¹⁵

Socio-Cultural Ties

Social interactions are the acts, actions, or practices of two or more people mutually oriented towards each other's selves, that is, any behavior that tries to affect or take account of each other's subjective experiences or intentions. This means that the parties to social interaction must be aware of each other having each other's self in mind. Social interaction is defined by Jonathan H. Turner as the situation where behavior of one actor is consciously reorganized by, and influence the behavior of another actor, and vice versa.¹⁶ The categories of border crossers, mainly divided into seven classes including migrants,

refugees, visitors, trader tourists, travelers, customers and traffickers, are broadly summed up in three categories: accidental, repeated, and regulated.

In case of Pak-Afghan border, the social interaction is largely repeated and regular; no matter there is accidental and regulated interaction too. They include all categories of border crossers, no matter the nature of them have been changing from time to time. The repeated and regular interaction is largely due to cultural similarities and economic interaction. The cultural similarities lead to social interaction amongst tribesmen. Eminent scholars of culture, Edward Taylor and Hatch describe that culture is a multifaceted whole encompassing knowledge sharing, belief, skill, ethics, rules, traditions along with many competencies, and conduct and practices by masses in a specific society. In a leading sociologist's definition, "culture is a "mental map which guides us in our relations to our surroundings and to other people." To him, there are two kinds of culture: material and non-material.¹⁷ Further defined by Dr. Baqai that man-made items comprise tools, furniture, automobiles, buildings, canals, cultivated farms, roads, bridges etc.¹⁸ and non-material items include language for communication, ideas, customs and beliefs. The latter themselves are included therein along with the practices followed by people. The cultural similarities between the two borders are of both material and non-material.

The repeated and regular interaction across border is due to the fact that the Pak-Afghan border had been a soft one. The regular entry point, where one can enter through visa, is at Chaman and others are irregular entry points (particularly near divided villages). Chaman was the only entry point guarded officially. There were many irregular entry points, which in the past were unmanned or partially monitored. But, during the last many years, particularly after 9/11, which ultimately resulted in the deployment of huge American and ISAF troops, the irregular entry points have been heavily monitored. There has been deployment of Frontier Corps (FC) on the Pakistani side, which has made the entry points under more surveillance. The major cross-border interaction was through irregular entry points. There are a large number of towns and villages, where the houses are at walking distances or even penetrate both sides of the border. No visa or permission was required, and the Rahdari system was not much in use.

Unlike the Pak-Iran Baloch borderland, the Rahdari system across Pak-Afghan border had little demand and was not very effective. The system existed

in papers with the eligibility of the borderers for it but was not applied at large. The system of Rahdari was familiarized in 1947 after Pakistan came into existence but it has never been a requirement for those traveling into Afghanistan from Pakistan. In fact, the Rahdari system suits people, who do not possess passport and opt to travel for short period of time but due to the softness of border, it has never been a demand. Afghanistan had traditionally been a tribal society, where the federal government or internal security system was lenient and limited to fewer major cities. Unlike the Baloch borderland, the system of dual nationality does not exist in case of Pak-Afghan border. Rahdari is issued by the District Administration.

Private loan-taking is a source of interaction amongst borderers. It has traditionally been practiced, particularly amongst Pashtun borderers; although it is practiced among Baloch as well. There are many kinds of private loan-dealing; three are more common: cash, seeds and livestock-loans. In the case of cash loan, the borrower has to pay a fixed amount of money (surplus to the original money), which the lender has to decide at the time of lending money. In case of seed-loans, the borrower has to pay a fixed quantity of crop to the lender along with the value of seeds borrowed. The repayment of livestock-loans requires virtually the same method as of seed-loans.

Intermarriages are common among border people. The system of intermarriages has been in practice for the centuries and is supported by two leading factors. First, the tribal/family and ethnic bonds which can be served and strengthened by finding a matrimonial match across borders. It is more common in case of arranged marriages within close family members living on both side. Second, to find new opportunities of interaction by making new relationship. It is very common in the border people. The Vani or Vulver (bride-price) is practiced in variety of forms.¹⁹ The practice of dowry is existing where bride's side is demanded little or more.

The Afghan borderland population, Baloch and Pashtun, are mostly Sunni. Pashtuns are, however, less flexible in practicing sacred principles than Baloch. In Pashtun area, Islam, like Irish Catholicism, is traditionally known for conservatism.

Economic Interaction

Borderlands promote economic cooperation, thus, providing many openings for both legal and illicit enterprise.²⁰ Similar to the culture of Arab, Beduins depended upon camel for milk, transport/ travel, trade and smuggling. It is a factor essential for their survival.²¹ Since centuries, they have been engaged in cross border interaction as the major source and incentives for livelihood. The Pashtun population is comparatively well off as the land they possess is agriculturally more fertile than Baloch. The Baloch borderland is least irrigated and comprises desert areas. It is easily affected by drought if there is insufficient rain.

The necessity of trade facilitation between the two countries has been discussed and safeguarded in the important Treaty of Gandamak signed in 1879 between the Amir of Afghanistan, Yakub Khan and the British government. The article 7 of the treaty makes both sides incumbent upon to use their endeavors to ensure the protection and facilitation of the transit of goods.²² The principles of the treaty were followed by the Durand Line Agreement in 1893 that the border would be a soft with cross border interaction of the tribesmen facilitated.

Pakistan and Afghanistan, the latter being a landlocked country, have a mutual transit trade agreement known as the Afghanistan Transit Trade Agreement (ATTA) signed on 2nd March 1965. According to the agreement, renamed as Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Agreement (APTA), Pakistan and Afghanistan would not levy customs duty, taxes, dues or charges of any kind whether national, provincial or municipal on goods in transit regardless of their destination.

According to the agreement, Afghanistan can import and export through (then only Karachi Port) two of the ports of Pakistan, i.e., Bin Qasim and Karachi, and transport into Afghanistan and vice versa through two transit routes of Peshawar-Torkham and Chaman-Spin Boldak. According to the trade agreement, the goods destined for Afghanistan are offloaded on the Pakistani soil along the border. They are examined by the concerned Afghan authorities, known as "Wakil Tijar" and "Jawazilm Kahar" and are allowed inside Afghanistan. Similarly, from Afghanistan, they examined the goods on Pakistani soil and then allowed to concerned destinations. According to the agreement, the items allowed are those which are mentioned in the list agreed upon by the two countries. The six items: cigarillos and cigarettes of tobacco; cooking oil;

tyres and tubes; television and parts; auto parts; and telephone sets are not allowed. The list does not contain any item which is contrary to Islamic spirit and principles i.e. liquor, pornography etc.²³

The major import from Afghanistan into Pakistan, legally and illegally, is of fresh and dried fruit, scrap, auto parts, motor tyres, and vehicles. From Pakistan, it is construction material, food items like flour and rice, fresh vegetables, and cattle. Pashtun tribesmen are more beneficiary of the Trade Agreement as the entry point is in their area and major smuggling dumps inside Afghanistan are closer to them than the ones in Baloch area.

Like many international dependent borders, the smuggling of goods is a major part of economic interaction on the borderland. Hasting Donnan and Thomas Wilson argue that “one can hardly open a book about borders without finding at least passing reference to smuggling and the clandestine movement of people and goods from one side of the national boundary to the other.” As per their belief, practices like smuggling has been existing in past to destabilize the sharing states while strengthening harmony among co-ethnic minority groups.²⁴

Smuggling is facilitated by a number of divided villages, whose population over the years has grown, as well as adjacent villages. The divided villages are those which are bifurcated by the Pak-Afghan boundary. There are twelve major divided villages the Frontier Corps has marked: Lelejal, Mullah Mutam Khan Ziarat, Azam Khan, Shamuzi, Sera Tsahan, Kakow Kalay, Kurdu, Jogh, Spinki Tash, Bashshi Kalay, Sale Karez and Sradarga.²⁵ The houses in the villages have big mud-wall compounds, the imported/smuggled items from Afghanistan are dumped/parked and at convenient hours are slipped into Pakistan. They include vehicles to be smuggled into Pakistan and sold at 30% to 60% profit, depending on the condition and brand of the vehicle.

Smuggled/Non-Duty Paid Cars

Entry of duty-free vehicles (cars, double-cabs, jeeps) to Afghanistan and its smuggling across the border into Pakistan is common. The cars poured into Pakistan without duty are subject to seizure by the law enforcement agencies, particularly the Customs Intelligence but the seizure is minimal in far-flung areas. The import of cars is a multi-billion dollars’ business run by a mafia, which is being backed by many influential businessmen on both sides of the border. The cars, imported in Afghanistan, come from Japan, the UAE, North Cyprus, the

USA, and Germany. These cars include new as well as old models. The research shows that import of good condition used cars is frequent. According to the Customs Department, Provincial Excise and Taxation Office, and car dealers' sources, there are two major methods of cars smuggling into Pakistan. Afghan dealers and their agents travel to those countries, which have new and old car markets. Pakistani dealers are reported to have booked the cars in their names with destination in Afghanistan. They book new and old vehicles and import them into Afghanistan through two Iranian ports i.e. Bandar Abbas and Chabahar. Japan and the UAE are the leading countries to have big junkyards for used cars. According to the one dealer who travels to Japan for buying junked cars told me that in Japan, space and parking lot is a real problem. People can afford buying cars but due to non-availability of space and huge parking tickets, they dump their cars in junkyards or sell these cars on nominal price. Dealers buy them in bulk and book them for the UAE with minor entry fee. In the UAE, these cars are repaired and rebooked for Chabahar port in Iran, closer to Afghanistan. These cars are then transported to Islam Killa, near Iran-Afghanistan border and further driven into Afghanistan." He added that "thousands of vehicles are bulldozed to scrap in Japan each day; subsequently this scrap is auctioned. Thus, scrap is also billion-dollar business. These cars and spare parts are brought to Afghanistan and finally smuggled to Pakistan across the border." Pakistan is the only country in Afghanistan's neighborhood (compared to Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan), where the duty on imported cars is very high. "By smuggling a car into Pakistan is many times more profitable for dealers, and concessionary for those who even have to get them cleared by deals with the Customs departments."²⁶

Drug/Human Smuggling

Whenever, the forces of global economic integration shape boundaries of a nation-state, their illicit activities play an equal role in formation as *raison d'etre*.²⁷ The 1268 kilometers long border between Afghanistan and Balochistan (Pakistan) is a source of arms smuggling and drug trafficking. This phenomenon was unknown until the decade of Afghan war, which began in March 1980 as a resistance to Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. It involved huge Western military and financial support for resistant groups enroute Pakistan. The forcibly shift of heroin producing mechanism from Iran to Afghanistan after the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979, patronized and illicitly commercialized with sudden hike in the growth and production of poppy/opium inside Afghanistan. It made

the border-towns conduits of drug supply with drug mafia penetration. The three Afghan provinces from where drug is penetrated into Pakistan are Kandahar, Helmand and Nimroz. Helmand and Nimroz have drug supply routes into Pakistan but the worst hit is Helmand due to growing poppy cultivation and heroin manufacturing.²⁸ In Helmand, the closer city to Balochistan is Khanashin. There are a number of border-towns, where drug is produced. Dishu is one of them. The important one is, however, Brabcha, a divided village with rapid expansion of drug factories during last two decades.

The Taliban rule in Afghanistan brought the poppy and drug smuggling to its lowest ebb but since 9/11, the poppy cultivation and its conversion into heroin/opium is drastically increased as the drug money is one of the major sources of support for terrorist activities. There is a strong evidence that more than 90 percent of the unlawful opium production is found in Afghanistan, while more than half of this production is across Pak-Afghan border into Iran and Pakistan.²⁹ The drug smuggling across Pak-Afghan border into Pakistan is common. It is smuggled individually and collectively. Individually means in a vehicle or two. By collective it means that there are caravans from Afghanistan enroute Pakistan which comprising not less than 60 to 100 vehicles include technicians, informers, snipers, and resistant groups. They largely travel into Pakistani territory at night. They usually carry Thuraya (mobile satellite phones), highly sophisticated weapons, duty free petrol, Toyota pickups, and international currency.

The Frontier Corps is an effective force in border area to maintain law and order situation and perform anti-smuggling duties. It has traditionally been deployed along the border since the demarcation of the Durand Line in 1893 with gradual increase of the corps.

The cases of human trafficking on Pak-Afghan border are less frequent than the one on Pak-Iran border as entering Pakistan from Afghanistan is easier. There are two categories of border crossers. Those, who intend to enter Pakistan per se, are largely Afghans and they cross the border for livelihood. In the past, Bangladeshis also entered Pakistan through it. Those, who enter in pursuit of further slip into Europe enroute Iran. But, these are occasional cases of human trafficking and can lead to disastrous incident. One such incident occurred on 4th April 2009, when after delivering goods, a container entered Quetta from Afghanistan near Bagram airport used for NATO forces, with 110 Afghans as

illegal trespassers to Europe enroute Iran and Turkey. Due to suffocation and the failure of power generation, 52 people were found dead.³⁰

Conclusion

The Pak-Afghan border is one of the important demarcations of the “Divide and Rule” policy of the British Empire. It was drawn in the heyday of the British rule in India with the Amir of Afghanistan since 1893 and has been regarded as the source of cultural, trade, economic, social and even political interaction of the borderers of both sides. Being a coexistent and interdependent border with regular interaction, however, it has been losing its soft nature since 9/11. The major factors accountable for the change are growing terrorism and Taliban threat, the deployment of US and NATO troops under ISAF command and growing security concerns. Therefore, this border is manned by the FC on Pakistani side at important irregular entry points. Now-a-days, unlike the past, an Afghan or Pakistani national, crossing the regular entry point, needs proper documentation, which majority of the tribesmen are either short of or avoid it. They demand to ease the border-crossing procedures and bring its softness back as was before. However, irregular border interaction is not uncommon.

NOTES

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- ²³ For detail of the transit trade rules, see Najib A Choudhry, *The Custom Act 1969*, Lahore: T N Cooperation, 1969, p 545
- ²⁴ Op. cit., Hastings & Wilson, p. 100
- ²⁵ With the courtesy of the The Frontier Corps Headquarters in Quetta, Balochistan.
- ²⁶ Personal Interviews with vehicles' smugglers/dealers
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- ²⁸ Helmand is now just a criminal province, it is a Colombia situation. It is producing 60 to 70 per cent of Afghan opium. There are major international criminal groups processing and trafficking there."
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POST-ARAB SPRING SECURITY DYNAMICS IN THE PERSIAN GULF: AN ANALYSIS

Muhammad Umar Abbasi & Dr. Raja Muhammad Khan*

Abstract

The post Arab Spring developments have affected the security dynamics in the Persian Gulf region. US nuclear deal with Iran is another extra regional power action that has been defining the inter-state relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Therefore, it is argued that the global level factors are affecting the inter-state relations more as compared to the regional factors. The rise of non-state actors, particularly the Islamic State (IS) phenomenon with its challenge to the nation-state system has reinforced the significance of the states at the regional level. By focusing on the regional level analysis under Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT), it has been found that the security dynamics in the Persian Gulf region are being determined by the actions or in-actions of the extra regional powers.

Introduction

The Persian Gulf region occupies a unique geo-economic, geostrategic and geopolitical status in the world. Comprising Iran, Iraq and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, the region has about two thirds (65 percent) of the proven oil reserves in the world and more than one third (40 percent) of the global natural gas reserves.¹ Saudi Arabia has almost 25 percent of the world's crude oil reserves, followed by Iran, Iraq, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Therefore, these four coastal states of the Persian Gulf in combination possess over 55 percent of the proven world oil resources.² Lower costs of exploitation of hydrocarbon reserves along with their location near the transit routes with easy reach to the world markets serve as an added advantage for this region.³ Geo-strategically, the busiest transit routes of the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab-ul-Mandeeb make this area pertinent in the strategic calculations of the regional and extra regional powers. Moreover, being the epicentre of the terrorist and extremist groups, it remains central in the foreign policy calculations of the states.

Owing to the overall significance the states of the Persian Gulf have remained security conscious, particularly after the Second World War. The importance of the area has attained attention of the extra regional powers for

* Muhammad Umar Abbasi is lecturer at NDU Islamabad. Dr. Raja Muhammad Khan has vast experience of research and teaching and is regular contributor of research articles.

gaining control of this region. Hence, the security dynamics of the region are quite complex and intricate. For understanding the security apparatus during the cold war, many theoretical attempts have been made by the scholars of international politics. Two major contributions have been made by the proponents of the Neo-Realism and Social Constructivism. Realists have attempted to explain the security dimensions of the Persian Gulf through 'Balance of Power Theory' claiming that the insecurity in the area is the result of contending geopolitical rivalries among the major powers of the region i.e. Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. However, the Constructivists argue that the basis of enmity and conflict is identity-ridden, based upon socially constructed competing ideologies. They justify their argument by explaining the inter-state relations through sectarian and ethnic politics, particularly between Iran on the one hand and Iraq and Saudi Arabia on the other.

The end of the cold war and the disunity exposed among the Arab states of the Persian Gulf in the wake of the Gulf war (1991) made the earlier theoretical frameworks insufficient to comprehend the security complexities of the region. In this backdrop came the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT), which by focusing mainly on the regional level analysis combined both structural Realism and Social Constructivism for understanding the security dynamics of different regions of the world. Under RSCT, Middle East was considered as a regional security complex within which lies the Persian Gulf Sub-Complex. According to Barry Buzan, the standard form for an RSC is a pattern of rivalry, balance-of power, and alliance patterns among the main powers within the region. To this pattern can then be added the effects of penetrating external powers. Normally the pattern of conflict stems from factors indigenous to the region – such as, in the Middle East—and outside powers cannot usually define or reorganize the region.⁴

This study is based upon the RSCT, with few exceptions. Firstly, only the Persian Gulf sub-complex of the Middle East region is studied. Secondly, only regional level analysis is undertaken to explain the nature of the inter-state relationship among states, particularly between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Focusing only on the inter-state rivalry under the regional level analysis, this paper has studied three main variables i.e. Alliance dimensions, balance of power and the pattern of rivalry based upon amity/enmity relations. The main research enquiry is related to the empirical and theoretical findings associated with the changes that have taken place in the aftermath of the Arab Spring. It has been argued in this study that in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, the extra regional actions are

defining the security parameters as against the claim that the inter-state dynamics attracts the external intervention.

Empirically, security related changes in the above-mentioned variables have been explored and theoretically, the main assumptions of the RSCT are tested for assessing if they are still valid for understanding the developments initiated after the Arab uprisings. Following the introductory section of this paper, the next three sections are devoted to the investigations related to the changes taken place in alliance dimensions, balance of power and in the pattern of rivalry, respectively. Whereas the findings linked to the validity of the main assumption of the theory are discussed in the final section of the study.

Anarchy & Alliance Dimension

The very first feature of a regional security complex is its anarchic nature. Before Iranian revolution, both Iran and Saudi Arabia were status quo states, balancing out the greater threats of Nasserism and other such anti-status quo movements in the wider Middle East regional security complex. The real manifestation of anarchy in the Persian Gulf regional sub-complex was visible when an anti-status quo regime in Iran came to power via revolution.

The formation of the GCC was in fact a measure to check the potential import of Iranian regime's revolution. This security alliance was limited to the regime security concerns of the Gulf states and was being guaranteed by the U.S for its own energy related concerns. The fact that Iraq did not remain part of the GCC security alliance indicates the nature of anarchy in the region, where Iran, Iraq and the Gulf states were experiencing its implications i.e. security dilemma and self help system. This set up defined the tri-polar nature of rivalry of the Persian Gulf regional complex, in which Iraq was principally balancing the power of Iran. Both states were perceiving security dilemma vis-à-vis the power projection of each other. Iran, by utilizing the military and economic help from the USSR and Iraq by banking on the support of the US resorted to self-help system. The security of the Gulf States was ensured by the US, therefore, showing an overlay of the great power but only in the western part of the Gulf region.

The weakening of Iraq due to the physical intervention of the US during the Gulf war of 1991 coupled with the prolonged sanctions against it disturbed the balance of power in the region. However, the still integrated structure of the state of Iraq under Saddam Hussian maintained the power balance in the region.

But, his removal in 2003 triggered by the invasion of the U.S shattered the balance of power resulting in the intensification of the anarchic nature of the Persian Gulf Sub-Complex. For Saudi Arabia, the presence of Iraq under Saddam Hussian, even under severe economic sanctions, worked as a balancer against Iran. Sadaam had been checking the Iranian influence in the region and the Saudi regime considered him a deterrent vis-à-vis Iran. The space created by the fall of Saddam Hussian allowed Iran to fill the power vacuum. In Iraq, the new Shia led government of Iraq to fall into the influence of Iran.

The presence of the US forces did not allow Iraq to become a playing field for contending competitors of the region. However, the withdrawal of forces from Iraq along with the beginning of the Arab uprisings not only made Iraq, but also other states like Bahrain, and Yemen to become the playing field of power rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Later, the deterioration of stability in Syria gave another battle field for both countries to flex their muscles for regional hegemony.

The opening of many battle fronts exposed cleavage in the GCC security alliance when Qatar, sensing the dangers of instability triggered by the Arab revolts, began exerting its influence in the region keeping away from Saudi Arabia.

The Arab Spring have highlighted the long-standing rivalry between Qatar and Saudi Arabia, with Doha seeing Riyadh as a meddlesome and overbearing big brother, and Riyadh perceiving Doha as an upstart—one whose overly ambitious policies and claims imply that it is acting as an agent on behalf of some other regional or international power.⁵

Before the uprisings, Qatar's foreign policy was directed to play the role of mediator among conflicting parties for multiple objectives, like countering the influence of Iran in the Gulf region, expanding its regional influence vis-à-vis Saudi Arabia⁶ and establishing itself as an international ally of the West.⁷

Strategy of Saudi Arabia and Qatar vis-à-vis Iran has been the same, but tactics are different. Arab Spring changed Qatar's foreign policy from mediation to active partisanship. It showed aggressive foreign policy to adapt with changes so that revolutionary changes are kept at bay. The change in Qatar's foreign policy is being defined by changes at the domestic level. The societal level revolts in the Middle East changed the threat calculations of the Qatar's regime and it started to perceive potential of the revolutionaries of taking power in their

hands. Therefore, in anticipation the Qatar regime used its financial cushion and media skills to support these groups in order to make them allies.

In Syria, Qatar has not only armed the Free Syrian Army, it has also successfully helped the creation of National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces uniting the different groups of the Syrian opposition.⁸ Nevertheless, the policies of Qatar and Saudi Arabia have generally been consistent particularly, when the challenge of instability reaches their backyard, for instance the commonality of their strategies in Bahrain, Yemen, and Iran. They differ prominently when it comes to the Muslim Brotherhood, which the Saudis distrust and the Qataris embrace.⁹ Saudi regime felt threatened from the Muslim Brotherhood because in Saudi Arabia, Sahwa or Post-Sahwa group, which was held responsible for the Islamic awakening movement in early 1990s, had been ideologically associated with the Muslim Brotherhood.¹⁰ On the other hand, there was a considerable following of Muslim Brotherhood ideology in Qatar but it did not consider it as a threat to its existence. The Muslim Brotherhood educationists had not only built the educational system in Qatar but they had also educated its bureaucrats; therefore, it had many sympathizers in the Qatari establishment.¹¹

Qatar's support for the Muslim Brotherhood affiliated groups inside the Gulf region as a whole and Egypt and Syria in particular intensified its diplomatic row with Saudi, Emirati and Kuwaiti regimes in 2014 resulting in the withdrawal of ambassadors by the latter governments from Qatar. Although the intensity of the diplomatic crises has been lessened and currently there are full diplomatic engagements between the Gulf regimes, yet, the incident has exposed disunity among the GCC states, which is one of the significant Post-Arab Spring developments. This divergence of interests has significantly affected the GCC joint stand against Iran in the Persian Gulf politics.

Another instance of differences among the GCC states, in the aftermath of Arab Spring, is the proposal for the creation of GCC federation from Saudi Arabia. However, it was categorically rejected by all with the exception of Bahrain.

It seems that the only state in the Gulf depending entirely for its security concerns is Bahrain. Bahrain's population is majority Shiite with the number between 70-75 percent. The Al-Khalifa monarchy is Sunni and bolsters its position with Saudi support to counteract perceived Iranian influence among

its Shiite population.¹² Since its inception, Iran has irredentist claims on it. Unlike other Gulf States, Bahrain is not exceptionally rich in hydrocarbon energy resources. Furthermore, its geo-strategic vulnerability vis-à-vis Iran makes its security dependant on the GCC.

So far as other states of the GCC, they have their own diplomatic and tactical policies towards Iran. For instance, in the wake of the establishment of a pragmatic government in Iran under Hassan Rouhani, Kuwait's Emir visited Tehran for the first time in June 2014 and met with the supreme leader of Iran. This followed on with the reopening of UAE's diplomatic relations with Iran in November 2013.¹³ Recently, in response to the execution of Shiite cleric Sheikh Nimr, the incident of the attack and burning of Saudi Embassy occurred in Iran. In reaction, only Saudi Arabia and Bahrain have severed diplomatic ties with Iran, while the United Arab Emirates has only downgraded its diplomatic presence.¹⁴

Balance of Power Polarity

After the fall of Saddam Hussian till the beginning of Arab Spring, the regional security complex of the Persian Gulf was characterized by the typical bipolar rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

It is longstanding structural tensions [that] appear to characterize much of the relationship between these oil-rich powers, each possessing aspirations for Islamic leadership and differing visions of regional order, which have resulted in a rivalry that could potentially undermine the overall stability of the region.¹⁵

In the absence of Iraq as an integrated state, both Tehran and Riyadh aspired for regional hegemony. However, the space for their manoeuvring was limited to Iraq only. The chaos related to Sunnis resentment against Shia government intensified sectarianism and Saudi Arabia jumped into the arena for balancing Iran's power in Iraq with the help of Jihadists.

With the initiation of the Arab uprisings across the Middle East, different states experienced instability or civil war creating a huge vacuum to be filled by the contending rivals. Iraq, Bahrain, Yemen and Syria became the playing fields for both Iran and Saudi Arabia for flexing their muscles. In this context, the defeat of Saddam Hussain and the inability of the U.S to control Iraq favoured Iran.¹⁶

The Arab uprisings tilted balance of power towards Iran. The removal of Saddam indicates that the interstate rivalry has not pulled great powers intervention in the regional security complex. Instead the great powers intervention has changed the nature of security dynamics in the region.

In Bahrain, a political issue related to the domestic demands of constitutional monarchy and equal rights was securitized due to the transformed balance of power with Iraq going into chaos. The rise of Islamic State (IS) has reinforced the Iranian policy of supporting Assad. Despite economic losses, which the pragmatic president Rouhani has vowed to redress, the strategic significance of Syria does not allow to change his policy vis-à-vis Syria. Abandoning Syria would mean loss of the only Arab ally along with the loss of the strategic access to Hezbollah.¹⁷

The intensification of Saudi-Iran rivalry through heightened sectarianism is giving wide space to terrorists groups like IS to exploit the Sunni sentiments and use against shias. Considering an all-out confrontation with Iran counter-productive, Saudi regime like Iran, has resorted to asymmetric warfare by strengthening anti-Iran proxy groups in different regional theatres in Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon etc. However, in its immediate backyard in Bahrain and Yemen, it has directly fought the Iranian backed Shia elements. The strategy employed by both Iran and Saudi Arabia is a replica of cold war strategic dynamics, where the US and the USSR never came one to one against each other. However, they used their proxies when the other had physically intervened in conflicting theatres.

By default, the IS phenomena helped increase the Iran's influence in the region as Iraq, Hezbollah, Syrian regime, Hamas and the Shiite militias in Iraq got united against the IS under the leadership of Iran. The consequential scenario transformed the US strategy also. The advancement of the IS related terrorists' threat became the main occupation of Washington. Iran's regional clout and its strategic significance vis-a-vis the IS expansionism pushed the US towards a flexible policy vis-à-vis Iran and the Bashar's regime. The signing of the nuclear deal with Iran and dropping the demand of Bashar's ouster from the government indicates the US strategy of keeping Iranian led alliance viable for fighting against the IS territorial gains.

The consequential scenario has lessened the relative capabilities of Saudi Arabia. The Saudi regime, on the one hand is threatened by the potential gains of Iran due to the relaxations in the nuclear deal and on the other hand, it feels isolated by perceiving a tangible tilt of the US towards Iran. These perceptions of threat can explain the Saudi assertive and aggressive foreign policy behaviour in Yemen and also in the formulation of a counter-terrorism alliance of 34 Sunni Muslim countries.

Patterns of Amity and Enmity

The rivalry in the Persian Gulf region particularly between Iran and Saudi Arabia can be best understood by invoking social constructivists' perspective. The past engagements between communities or states serve as building blocks for the social construction of each other's perceptions. Perception has a major role to play in intentions and behaviour. Thus, it can be argued that perception is influenced by social constructs.¹⁸ For instance, the nature of relationship between India and Pakistan is determined by the historical interactions of the Hindus and the Muslims in the sub-continent. Indian and Pakistani perceptions about each other are socially constructed on the basis of their past engagements. Identity plays an instrumental role in the socially constructed perceptions of "others" in international system. It has been the acute sense of Muslim identity that shaped Pakistani behaviour vis-à-vis India.

Same theoretical assumption can be made for understanding the mutual perceptions of Iranian and Saudi regimes about each other. Since Iranian revolution, the identity of Saudi Arabia as the leader of the Muslim world has been challenged. The Saudi dynasty has always been worried over Iranian aims of exporting its ideological revolution in the Gulf States. This challenge to identity has been cemented into perception by Iranian intentions and activities of the past. Saudi leadership portrays Iran as a country, who wants to transport its revolutionary ideology and strengthen its potential leadership among Shia populations. It also wants to increase its influence in neighbouring states at the cost of Saudi Arabia.¹⁹ It is must for its existence as an ideological state. Iran's actions vis-à-vis Bahrain and the Saudi perceptions about it are cases in point.

Iran's irredentist claim over Bahrain was made under Raza Shah Pahlavi in 1957, when the parliament referred to the country as Iran's fourteenth province.²⁰ This sentiment was repeated again in 2009, when a senior Iranian governmental official said Bahrain had been Iran's fourteenth province until

1970.²¹ Bahrain was concerned about the perceived Iranian threat despite the fact that Shah had officially recognized its sovereignty even before the British withdrawal; as such, it turned to the United States and Saudi Arabia for support.²² After Bahrain's independence, a Shiite Islamist group backed by Iran attempted to overthrow the Khalifa family.²³

During the Arab uprisings in Bahrain, the perceptions among Saudi and Bahraini regimes about Iran prompted them to link the political protests with the irredentist claims of Iran over Bahrain. However, an independent commission that investigated the Bahraini uprising, delivered a report in November 2011 and found no solid proof of Iranian intervention.²⁴ The GCC monarchies moved quickly to use their wealth for handouts to increase regime legitimacy, something that, without Saudi support, Bahrain would be unable to do.²⁵

Yemen's case, during the Arab Spring, is yet another prominent example where perceptions have shaped GCC states' behaviour vis-à-vis Iran. Iranian regime has been perceived as providing political and media support for the Houthis tribe causing tensions with Saudi Arabia and Yemen, both of whom are afraid of destabilization.²⁶

The Saudi perceptions about Iranian threat have been reinforced, when the US signed nuclear deal with Iran. In the background of this deal, which apparently addressed the nuclear threat of Iran, there has been a perception in the Kingdom that the Obama administration has been abandoning its traditional allies.²⁷ Washington's acquiescence to Iran, which left Iran a nuclear threshold state, unfettered to continue its military ballistic missile program and advance a hostile regional agenda is perceived in Riyadh as a tilt of president Obama towards Iran. His statement for reforms in Saudi Arabia or his opinion that a strategic balance is needed between Sunnis and Shiites mainly reinforces this perception. Saudi Arabia is filling the vacuum left by the American retrenchment with an aggressive, pro-active foreign policy in Yemen and in the oil market. Just as Iran claims the leadership of Shiites, the Kingdom does that of Sunnis, as manifested by establishing a 34 member Sunni Islamic Military Alliance.²⁸

Similarly, Iranian perception about Saudi Arabia is shaped by the latter's dealings with its Shia minority. Shia in Saudi Arabia and also in Bahrain experience significant discrimination, which threatens the Shia identity of Iran.²⁹ Moreover, Saudi Arabia's policy of keeping oil prices down is perceived by Iran as

a measure taken to restrict Iranian development.³⁰ Both states, Iran and Saudi Arabia are wary of each other's specific interpretation of Islam, which they consider as a threat to their ideological existence. These threat perceptions are constructed in a way that leaders of both sides use religious narratives in their statements. For instance, when Shiite cleric Sheikh Nimr was arrested in July 2012, he was charged by the Saudi authorities with "inciting sectarian strife and supporting rioting" as well as "waging war on God". In reaction, Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khomeini warned Saudi Arabia that it would face "divine revenge" for what he claimed for the killing of an "oppressed scholar".³¹

Conclusion

The findings in this research reveal significant changes in the alliance pattern, polarity and the nature of amity/enmity relationship in the regional security complex of the Persian Gulf. Since the US withdrawal from Iraq and particularly after the beginning of the upheavals in the Arab world, the level of anarchy in the Persian Gulf has increased with no stable security structure in existence. The Arab monarchies of the region have perceived growing insecurity in the aftermath of societal based revolutions and specifically after the US tilt towards Iran. At present the prospects for stable security system seems fragile given the shift in the US strategies particularly.³²

The weakening of Iraq, with the disengagement strategy of President Obama, gave a wide space to be occupied by Iran. The consequential scenario has changed the alliance pattern in the Persian Gulf as well as in the wider Middle Eastern region. Since Arab uprisings, five years down the road, Iran has been well set with Iraq, Syria and Hezbollah as its strategic allies. Alliance pattern has tilted in favour of Iran. Iraq, being ruled by Shia led government, is under its political influence. Iran's strategic support to Syria has made Asad regime intact and Hezbollah, being supported by Iranian regime, is virtually controlling the state of Lebanon.

On the other hand, the Gulf monarchies, which had been banking upon the US for their security against the threat of Iran are left alone, depending upon their own muscles for ensuring security. Even within them, on the platform of GCC, a prominent cleavage has been noticed with Qatar playing independent and assertive role in the aftermath of the Arab spring. Saudi Arabia's ideas of federation of GCC states by including even Jordan and Morocco has not been materialized.

So far as balance of power in the Persian Gulf is concerned, it has also been shifted, especially with the rise of so many battle fields available to the rival contenders, Saudi Arabia and Iran. Moreover, the use of proxies for enhancing power by the opposing states has strengthened the significance of non-state actors. The perpetual dependence of the states on the non-state actors is empowering them to the level of almost independence.

The ground realities appeared in the form of the rise of IS, coupled with the shift in balance of power in favour of Iran has also compelled the US administration to modify its policy vis-à-vis Iran and the Asad regime. In spite of the reservations shown by the Gulf allies, the Obama administration went for the deal with Iran. Moreover, unlike its allies the US has dropped the demand of removal of Asad regime as a pre-condition for establishing stability in Syria. Washington administration is mindful of the threat of the IS. It also understands the significance of the Iranian backed Asad regime in physically containing the expansion of the IS. For the US administration, a sanction free Iran and strong Asad forces may be in a better position to confront the onslaught of the IS.

The amity/enmity patterns in the Persian Gulf region is still being dictated by identity based social constructions. Being the main state of the region, both Iran and Saudi Arabia owe their existence to a particular religious ideology. The regimes of both states perceive each other through the lens of identity by placing each other in the category of the 'other'. In the aftermath of the Arab spring, however, their ideological ridden identity has not only been challenged by each other but also by the alternative ideologies of Jihadist salafism of the IS and the political salafism of the Muslim Brotherhood. Therefore, the sectarian based politics has gained extraordinary momentum in the inter-state relations of the region. Both Saudi Arabia and Iran have significantly been projecting their respective sectarian identities and are involved in the alliance making on same fault lines. "Sectarianism and ideology shape relations, but do not define them."³³ The ultimate rationale behind the use of specific sub-religious ideologies is to enhance their power capabilities with respect to each other.

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FROM DE-HYPHENATION TO REBALANCE: PARADIGMATIC SHIFT IN AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY IN ASIA PACIFIC

Sajid Masood Sadiq*

Abstract

American's policy of 'De-Hyphenation in South Asia' was replaced by 'Rebalance Asia Pacific' in 2012. America's heavy diplomatic, economic and military engagements in Asia Pacific, as dictated by the latter, led to an impression that it was aimed at countering China in Asia Pacific as a likely challenger, revisionist, and a Peer Competitor in particular and all over the world in general. A critical analysis of the real nature of Chinese rise and American decline and its impacts on the existing world order; the differences between Westphalian and Sino-Sphere visions and their conflicting dynamics with regard to 'Rebalance'; the real motives behind the shift in America's Foreign Policy in Asia Pacific are major concerns of this research paper.

Keywords: Balance of Power, Hegemony, Strategy, Peer Competitor, Revisionist and Transition of Power

Introduction

At the end of 20th century, under the policy of De-Hyphenation, Indo-US relations improved and resulted in the form of agreements like Civil Nuclear Deal and Strategic partnership, which relegated Pakistan's privileged status of Non-NATO Ally to the background. This policy got bipartisan approval of US Senate. Later, mixture of policies dubbed as De-hyphenation,¹ Defensive Insulation² and Cooperation and Prevention,³ influenced by Bruce Riddle, appeared with no specific names. These policies were aimed at capping and controlling of Pakistan's Nuclear Programme (PNP) through the use of hard and soft power.

Sino-US shared strategic history is tapestry of cooperation and differences as reflected by rift over Taiwan, direct clash in Korea, cooperation against USSR during Cold War despite their ideological differences, deeply intertwined economies, and the recent tension in their relations. In October 2011, Secretary Hillary outlined three aims, with six key lines of actions, of American Foreign Policy in Asia Pacific (AP).⁴

* Sajid Masood Sadiq is researcher and has area of interest of Foreign Policy of big powers.

President Barack Obama signed this strategic guidance in January 2012. This strategy known as 'Rebalance' called for three-dimensional engagement in the areas of economy, diplomacy and security with all the countries of AP at bilateral as well as at multilateral level.⁵

This research paper, divided into five sections, is an effort to gauge the necessity of measures taken by US in correspondence with this strategy to counter real or imaginary threats in military, economic and political areas posed by China and consequent change in the existing American Led Western World Order (ALWWO). Section one explains De-Hyphenation in South Asia, section two focuses on 'Rebalance to Asia Pacific' from various angles; section three addresses the question of Chinese rise and American decline; section four describes the differences between ALWWO and the Sino-sphere vision and the fifth section identifies the reality of the Chinese rise and American decline and their likely impacts on Pakistan.

IR Literature and Theoretical Framework

Current IR literature revolves around a number of issues, which can be grouped into three main categories: multi-perceptiveness and scholarly disagreements; a plethora of writings available on every subject, mushrooming with every passing minute especially the subjects like 'Rebalance to Asia Pacific' and the conflicting and contrasting conclusions by the writers. Going through the whole literature along with drawing objective conclusions is very difficult task. In this research Realist perspective will be employed for the analysis of the current situation which involves conflicting perspectives. Employing Realist perspective to the current situation would suggest that America is likely to go to considerable length to check the Chinese rise. American policies of De-Hyphenation, Rebalance, Cooperation and Prevention are in line with the realist perspective hence this framework provides the suitable lens for understanding their real motives.

De-Hyphenation and Indo-US Closeness What is De-Hyphenation?

Karen A. Feste states that US Foreign Policy (USFP) modes under Clinton, Bush and Obama were conflict avoidance, fight to win, and problem solving through a combination of covert and diplomatic tools respectively.⁶ Cohen views 'De-hyphenation' in South Asia as a calibrated policy, with its roots in Regan administration which was adjusted by Clinton on nuclearization of

South Asia, given name by Bush, implemented by Obama in his first term and modified by him in middle of 2012 by signing a 'classified national directive' during his second term. India accepted De- Hyphenation with pleasure whereas Pakistan had to tolerate it. As a result by mid-2012, Pak-US relations got strained and Indo-US relations started flourishing at a rapid pace.⁷

Why Adjustment in De-Hyphenation?

Bruce Riddle, Obama's advisor is of the view that for Indo-US closeness the foundation was laid by President Clinton and advanced by presidents Bush and Obama which has gained now the bipartisan consent of US Congress.⁸ Mary Buckley and Robert Singh claim that Bush's policy had Pakistan as 'natural target' of WOT.⁹ Markey states that if today America ignores Pakistan as 'a rusty old Volvo'¹⁰ like Eisenhower¹¹ or as Rice and Ashley preferred India over Pakistan in 2000¹² under policy of 'De-Hyphenation', it will be a catastrophic approach. He further claims that strategic compulsions of the US need both India and Pakistan¹³ as ignoring Pakistan will force it to act as 'spoiler'.¹⁴ He notes that Bush's policy, designed by Powell and Armitage, has failed and that Pakistani Government, seventy percent people¹⁵ and military are unhappy with USA.¹⁶

Assessment of Bruce Riddle about Pakistan indicates that Pakistan can be converted into a nuclear jihadist state, which, by supporting Hamas and other terrorist groups can also jeopardize Israel's peace and security. Therefore with respect to that America needs revisiting its South Asian Policy.¹⁷ Daniel S. Markey views utility of ISI and Pak-Army for China to seek intelligence in Afghanistan, get access to a land route to the Arabian Sea which connects Iran and Central Asia and about Indian western flank'.¹⁸ Cohen suggested to America to build the biggest block of democratic countries, linked with Indian economy with Pakistan as being a part of it.¹⁹

It clearly indicates that America is preparing for containing China's rise and Pakistan can be another target, being an old comrade of China. Therefore, De-hyphenation was replaced with more coercive strategies and policies to transform Pakistan's stature so that it would not become problematic while dealing with China. All actions suggested by the policies of Defensive Insulation and Cooperation and Prevention indicated that Pakistan was treated less like a friend and more like an enemy. This treatment continued till American shift of action towards Asia Pacific. Containment of China was also visible from the worries of American think tanks and policy planners.

Understanding Rebalance to Asia Pacific

At the end of the Cold War, Russia disappeared from the scene and the American engagement in AP was also reduced. In the last decade of 20th century, America started completing the left over task of Westphalian Vision (WV) in the form of Arab-Spring, aimed at transforming the Arab World, as envisioned by American Foreign Secretary Madeleine Albright. Nuclearization of South Asia and War on Terror (WOT) kept USA busy till 2010. In twenty-five years' time after the end of the Cold war, Chinese economy progressed with a very fast pace. Chinese initiated a military modernization plan and started exerting their influence in AP. Chinese economic success and other initiatives indicate that at the start of 20th century China was in a position to face the world with confidence and in the words of Nye 'started scaring USA'.²⁰ America's reappearance in AP and Chinese initiatives in the same timeframe suggest the likelihood of the cause and effect relationship between the two powers.

What is Rebalance in Actual Sense?

'Rebalance to Asia' was under discussion in American politburo at the start of 21st century for quite a while. However, it appeared for the first time in a Foreign Policy article titled 'America's Asia Pacific' written by Foreign Secretary Hillary Clinton. She stressed the need for maintaining US global leadership, securing interests, and advancing US values and gave six key lines of actions to achieve these goals.²¹ These actions included economic, diplomatic and security oriented engagement with all the countries of AP. The primary focus of all types of engagement was to broaden areas of cooperation, beneficial to the US, regional states and institutions; strengthen relations with American allies and partners to develop regional norms and rules compatible with the international security, economic, and political order already supported by the United States. President Barack Obama signed this guideline (grand strategy) in January 2012. This grand strategy got unopposed 'bipartisan' approval from US Senate.²²

US Explanations about Rebalance

This strategy was initially named as 'Asia's Pivot' but renamed later due to possible doubts surfacing because of its stress on military component. Hillary was very categorical in explaining the maintenance of US global leadership, protection of interests and spread of US liberal values as the objective of this grand strategy. Some other Americans like U.S. Secretary of Defence, Leon Panetta, claimed that it had nothing to do with Chinese rise and China should

not take it as counter measures against it; rather it was aimed at promoting regional stability and deepening Sino-US ties.²³

Three-Pronged Engagements and Actions

On the Diplomatic front, in the form of 'Forward Deployed Diplomacy', as expressed by Hillary, a surge in top-level visits of officials including president was apparent in 1st four years tenure of President Obama. The President, other top executives and officials from related fields were seen shuttling to and fro AP. Despite the snags of economic laws, Obama Administration succeeded in getting approval from the senate for Korea-United States Free Trade Agreement (KORUS), North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), and enhancement of economic trade with the countries of ASEAN. In the field of security, some of the measures taken were repositioning and enhancement of US forces, including increase in naval and air force strength, placement of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance assets, conducting of 18 major and 150 service exercises with the forces of 30 countries costing about \$ 100 million, getting integration of south East Asian countries in securitization of the South East Asia (SEA) and achieving an upsurge in the number of students attending the AP Centre for Security Studies in Hawaii.²⁴

Challenges in Implementation of Rebalance

A group of five experts on 'Asian Studies' cited three challenges in the way of implementing 'Rebalance': possible backlash from China, economic unaffordability of 'Rebalance' and commitment of US high officials including President for the execution of the grand strategy.²⁵ Phillip C. Saunders also notes six challenges apart from these three issues. These are managing of the domestic politics, obstructing regional free-trade agreements, issues in fulfilling U.S. military and diplomatic commitments, and cooling down Sino-US competition rhetoric at global and regional levels.²⁶

Chinese Perception about Rebalance

Chinese perception can be divided into two groups; one group views USA at a decline in relative terms and unaffordability of 'Rebalance' and prescribes China not to overreact while the other takes 'Rebalance' as alarming and aimed at targeting China. All the cadres of Chinese officials- academics, military officers and nationalists- share the view of the first group and are unanimous in advocating staunch position on the disputes of sovereignty. There

is yet another view which maintains that since USA itself has been an expansionist, it fears that China will follow the same path.²⁷

Chinese consensus reflects that US policy is aimed at isolating, containing, diminishing Chinese status and encouraging internal divisions and sabotaging China's leadership.²⁸ Yang Yi, director of strategic studies at the National Defence University, also claims similar objectives of US policy and states that Western theories are aimed at putting China at 'defendant position'.²⁹ A document 'number 9' was circulated as warning for elite politburo of China which notes that China is the main enemy of USA and threat to its hegemony.³⁰

Question of Chinese Rise and American decline Realist's Philosophy of Rise and Decline of States' Power

Realists like Morgenthau, Kenneth Waltz, Mearsheimer and Farid Zakaria have found four objectives of great powers: to have power and regional hegemony, maximization of wealth, to seek pre-eminence and nuclear superiority. The factors affecting the attainment and the loss of power include internal conditions of states, structure of the international system, historic conditions of the country and its ability to possess and project soft power. Strategies to shift the balance of power are War, Blackmail, bait and bleed with balancing and buck-passing being the principal strategies employed for Balance of Power (BOP).³¹ Hegemony is exercised in three forms: influence, coercion and force. Stagnation at national level, over engagement without adequate latent power, Inadequate BOP, and rise of other great power(s) may result in loss of hegemony, initially at regional and then at global level.

Views of IR Scholars on Current Situation

The question of Chinese Rise and American Decline divides scholars into two main groups. One group, which includes scholars like Doug Guthrie and YU Xintian, adopts a modest approach and takes Chinese rise and American decline as reality but avoids deducing radical deductions and zero-sum inferences and advocates cooperation between the two great powers. Second group, which includes scholars like Mearsheimer, Ashley, Barry Buzan and Farid Zakaria, the band of realists, takes the Chinese success in economy and other initiatives as a direct threat to the American hegemony, paints very gloomy and scary picture, offers web of alliances as a line of action to contain and control China and predicts cold war at minimum and hot war at maximum. Mearsheimer

states:

In particular, the power gap between China and the United States is shrinking and in all likelihood 'US strategic primacy' in this region will be no more...To put it bluntly: China cannot rise peacefully...Washington is likely to go to considerable length to prevent China from becoming too powerful...And there is little doubt that there is one (hegemon) on the horizon.³²

Sino-US Economic Asymmetry

Historically, China has been a great economic power that, about two centuries back, after industrial revolutions in Europe, was surpassed by many other nations including America. The situation after the reforms of President Deng Xiaoping in 1980s³³ started a reversal of this situation at the end of 20th and at the start of 21st century. These reforms had two features: state-controlled market and state-owned Industry. While USA was, in the words of Guthrie, showing 'fiscal irresponsibility',³⁴ Chinese were busy raising the mountains of wealth. When USA was buried under trade deficit (\$ 700 billion in 2008 and \$ 1.4 trillion in 2009),³⁵ China was busy in buying USA treasury bonds. In 1997 Chinese foreign reserves reached up to \$ 2.3 trillion which included US treasury bonds in billions as compared with \$ 83 billion US holdings.³⁶

The purchase of US treasury bonds by China is taken as Chinese 'trump card',³⁷ Sino-US economic stability card,³⁸ US inability to dictate its terms to China³⁹ and as China's softening up of American decline.⁴⁰ Today, China undoubtedly is 'economic super power'⁴¹ and Sino-US war over economy has begun. In 2009 an American TV host declared Obama's visit to China as a 'visit to US money'.⁴² Some of the American hawks were also found asking, 'Can China be fixed'?⁴³ Handle Jones sketches Sino-US economic standing in following words

Essentially, the United States is in the same position that Europe was in after World War II, watching another car, roar past it, on the economic highway.⁴⁴

Might of the Chinese hybrid state-owned companies can be seen by Lenovo's purchase of US IBM's laptop division; by Haier's spending \$ 40 million on building of a science park in North Carolina, and purchase of US Maytag; China National Offshore Oil Corporation's (CNOOC) purchase of US Union Oil Company of California (Unocal) and by the assets of Petro China alone which are valued today over \$ 1 trillion.⁴⁵ China's investments in billions in China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in Pakistan and \$ 60 billion aid and loan to African

nations speak of its economic muscles. These figures are without any military expenditure which are required by the US to maintain its forces.

Military

Before drawing the comparison between the ‘Tangled Titans’ on the military basis it is important to know that both countries have different approaches, concepts and strategies towards the application and projection of power. As compared to America, Chinese believe more in application of soft power instead of hard power;⁴⁶ therefore comparison on the basis of military oriented statistics may be misleading. There is no comparison between the two in military terms at global level; however the comparison in AP presents altogether a different picture. As far as the war machines are concerned, USA possesses 10:1 overall superiority ratio, which is without its allies’ strength in comparison with China.⁴⁷

Technological Front

In the wake of latest and sophisticated technology transferred or sold to China in Bush and Clinton eras⁴⁸ and proven theft of US secrets regarding nuclear and most sophisticated American military technology,⁴⁹ Chinese technology also appears to be not less than that of USA in any case. Today China’s Missile inventory has long Range China Surface-to-Surface (CSS-4), Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) capable of hitting New York and Washington and medium-range solid-fuelled road-mobile nuclear-armed DF-21, capable of carrying one million tons of Trinitrotoluene (TNT) which can target US bases in South Korea, Japan, and Okinawa and US Pacific fleet in the South China Sea. In 1998 an estimated sixty of these missiles on land were available.⁵⁰

Military Budgets

China’s official military budget has been increasing by double digits every year since 1989 to 2014, which, now, is 11 percent of global military expenditure whereas America’s was 39 percent. It is estimated that at current growth rates Chinese military budget may reach half of USA by 2020.⁵¹ US forces are committed around the globe and China has no such commitments.

Soft Power

President Hu Jintao diverted his attention towards the development of Chinese soft power in 2007. Organization Olympic Games in Beijing, developing

hundreds of Confucius Institutes, teaching Chinese language and very rich cultural history⁵² duly supported by strong Chinese economy and adopting soft approach towards the other nations are some of the steps taken by Chinese Government to project and enhance its soft power as a policy. This approach, as compared with that of US which is coercive and interventionist one towards the weaker countries, coupled with America's economic difficulties, may topple the US military and political superiority.

Military Situation at AP Front

Constantine C. Menges, an American scholar, author, professor, and Latin American specialist for White House, US National Security Council and a former CIA officer, has revealed shocking Chinese capability at AP level. While quoting a Chinese strategy and military plan by President Jiang Zemin to handle USA and Taiwan, which was to be handed over to President Clinton in a face to face meeting at the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in New Zealand in September 1999, he reveals shocking Chinese strength, confidence and strategic thinking. The Salient features of the plan include the Chinese readiness to fight all types of war with Americans and Taiwanese simultaneously, capability to defeat USA, capability to sustain major losses and to destroy completely the US air/naval forces and the bases in Japan, Okinawa, South Korea, and elsewhere in the region, capability for second and third nuclear strikes, ability to kill twenty million or more Americans, and finally, forcing USA to completely withdraw from East Asia region as was done in the case of Southern Vietnam.⁵³

There are a number of incidents which conform to the facts given in the above plan, for example, Chinese stubbornness in the incident of 'USS Kitty Hawk' in 2010, Chinese position told to US high-ranking American policymakers regarding Chinese core interest in South China Sea, Taiwan and Tibet, in July 2010 obstructing and forcing USA to shift US and South Korean naval exercise adjacent to the Chinese coastline to Japanese Sea, Lieutenant General Xiong Guangkai's ridiculing Americans by asking Americans if they would prefer Los Angeles over Taipei,⁵⁴ and in April 2000 placement of 2000 troops, more than one thousand jetfighters and three regiments of missile forces having more than eighty ballistic missiles.⁵⁵

Assessment about Chinese Rise and American Decline

Handle Jones views China as a pack of bamboo sticks, difficult to bend and impossible to break.⁵⁶ Barry Buzan admits that today no Asian power wants to serve as American outpost in front of China.⁵⁷ Michael D. Swaine along with others observes that US capabilities and influence in AP are diminishing.⁵⁸ Fareed Zakaria has written a book and titled it as 'Post American World'. Joseph Nye Jr. drawing a comparison of Sino-US indicators of rise and decline concludes that the American Century began in 1914 and has ended in 2014 because its foreign policy has failed, economy doesn't work well and democracy is broken. He narrates the story of a child-cry of wolf, wolf and ultimately wolf comes and no one believes him the wolf (China) has come.⁵⁹ Christopher Coker while quoting Murray and Morris states US situation as:

Social contract is crumbling; the dream is over...the United States has grown increasingly weary of foreign...entanglements... It would decline, if at all, because of 'the mediocrity of its desires', and its power would gradually ebb away only for 'want of ambition'...The world's first globocopy in 1815 Britain eventually cracked under the weight of its global responsibilities; the next, the US, may do the same.⁶⁰

Westphalian Order versus Sino-Sphere Vision Westphalian Vision

Development of Current ALWWO can be divided into three phases. Pre-Westphalian order was based on Latin Christendom, Augustinian political theology and rule-ordered Westphalia system. Initially the chain of Christian Churches⁵⁸, then Augustinian political theology and in fifteenth-century, after the religious reformation, Westphalian representative type government was established which was secular in nature and left the religion to the conscience.⁶¹ At the dawn of 19th century UK was super power, however, it was replaced by USA after the World War I & II. The thumb rule during 19th century was if any state would violate the will of a super power that would be punished.

Sino-Sphere Vision

Sino-Sphere vision was based on kowtowing (bowing) principle in which children kotow to parents, parents to grandparents (and the ancestors), ministers to the emperor, and the emperor to heaven itself.⁶² Logic behind this principle was self-rectification; putting the own house in order and organization of kingdom on the same principle will bring peace under all the heavens. This

system was agent centred and king was the agent, who would ask for the tributes and in return he would give silk which would be superior to what he got. This system had the capability for self-correction, strong centre will control the periphery and if the centre is weak, periphery would correct it.⁶³ The rules had secondary significance and were not part of the system's basic structure. Moreover, the Sino-sphere relied far more on soft power than hard power. It lasted till 1871 when it was overtaken by the Westphalian order.

Inherent Tensions between the Two Visions

Christopher Coker while quoting Andrew Phillips states that all international orders are 'normative' and have spiritual and physical components and the tension between the two worlds is accepted by all.⁶⁴ There is a basic difference of structure in the two visions, one being socialist (Sino-Sphere) in nature keeps spiritual and temporal components together whereas Westphalian (ALWVO) draws clear difference between the two. Socialist's organization being conservative in nature keeps the control on the subordinate institutions of the state and the society, as Chinese have state controlled markets, state owned industries and many restrictions on its citizens. Western vision seeks democracy, market based economy with minimal governmental control and liberal values.

Current Situation

After the disintegration of USSR, US mode changed into 'Hyper Power'⁶⁵ and USA tried to force the whole world to work according to one system which reminds us of Fukuyama's thesis of 'End of History'. With their re-emergence as a great economic power, Chinese are dissatisfied with the ALWVO and believe that on the basis of actual situation and capability, China should provide more 'public goods'⁶⁶ and should play more active role in the changing international scenario⁶⁷ and redraw the relations with USA on the lines of 'Win-Win Cooperation which would be a new model for Sino-US relations. Wealth is another competing arena, as Coker claims that the conflicting motivations between China and the United States are leading to a war over wealth.⁶⁸ Chinese view all US actions as prejudice attitude towards Chinese success. Kevin Rudd notes that

Uncomfortable truth is that our existing system of global governance, anchored in the United Nations (UN) and the Bretton Woods institutions is becoming increasingly dysfunctional.⁶⁹

Having antagonistic opinion about each other, America takes China as a

threat to its hegemony and China views USA as an obstruction to its rise as a great power and now both are locked in a titanic struggle over competing visions of a world order.⁷⁰

Although U.S. officials are bashful about describing China plainly as a geopolitical threat, there is little doubt that they recognize the possibility of a coming power transition.⁷¹

Conclusions and Impacts on Pakistan

The name of the strategy as 'Rebalance' itself raises questions like what is rebalance and to whom to rebalance? Three pronged engagements indicate the serious challenges faced by USA in AP. Shuttling of officials to and fro AP and involvement of top-level diplomats including president indicates the gravity of the situation. Creation of economic forums indicates an effort to raise the Chinese stakes by knitting the web of interdependence as a policy prescribed and advocated by liberals. Dominant military component of Rebalance indicates realist policy prescription to maintain BOP against the emerging power, endangering the hegemony. Three conclusions can be drawn from the objectives of 'Rebalance': both powers are certainly involved in competition over leadership and economic gains, Chinese rationale and complaints regarding encirclement and containment of Chinese rise appear to be relevant and finally China is posing multiple threats to USA and its hegemony in AP. This brings us closer to the idea of Mearsheimer that 'China cannot rise peacefully'.

On the basis of current Chinese military statistics China for sure is a peer competitor in military term at AP level and America has lost its hegemony in AP. Moreover, US security engagements in AP indicate that it is trying to balance Chinese Military dominance in AP through the web of alliances, creating security networks to check the Chinese rise and 'hedging' behind the other AP countries. On economic front, China has surpassed USA and is in a far better position than USA. With the economic might, Chinese soft power will further increase with the passage of time, Chinese altruism may appeal more to the weaker countries (client states) and in this case conflict between the two may prove true Huntington's thesis of 'Clash of Civilization'. With the increased economic and military strength and consequently increasing soft power coupled with the conclusions drawn from the discussions over 'Rebalance', it can be said that Chinese trajectory is towards the ascension and America is losing its pre-eminence day by day. The title of Fareed Zakria's book, '*The Post American World*' itself speaks of the current situation.

The world has never been governed by one single order. It will be a fallacy to imagine so and the thesis like Fukuyama's 'End of History' may be misleading and a sheer exaggeration of American power and only an exhibition of American supremacy over literature. Today, Chinese state-controlled capitalism and state-owned MNCs are giving far better results than the US unfettered MNCs and self-controlled capitalism. Even the Chinese socialist democracy is doing fine and American scholarly predictions regarding Chinese internal collapse are proving wrong and America is facing more domestic hardships than China. The Realist perspective states that this is the power which decides the top position, neither the form of government nor the norms and values.

In view of the US Rebalance, its objectives and US actions, current standing and trajectories and two different visions of the powers initiating and promoting these visions it can be concluded that since China is rising and wants to change the existing international system it will be able to do so and American efforts to check the Chinese rise will not succeed. The way Chinese rise is becoming a reality, American decline is also becoming a reality but only in relative terms not in absolute terms. USA is losing its 'Exceptionalism' and the myth of 'Manifest Destiny' is disappearing. It is also important to understand that USA will not disappear; rather rise of other nations will come to share the power with it. Thesis of power with others and power over others will be US future discourse.⁷²

It is difficult to predict whether China will use coercive measures to implement its vision over others or not and whether USA will go to maximum length to compete with China pushing this whole world once again into the trouble like cold war? If both choose to clash as per the realist's logic it may engulf the whole world. Future of the whole world today depends a great deal on the wisdom and ability of both the powers to cooperate. Whether they choose to cooperate or compete, the prosperity and destruction totally depends on the choice that both will make.

Kevin Rudd's comments on the current situation appear to be the most logical and in order in which he identifies that global balance of economy has already shifted towards Asia (China) which can be seen from the Chinese entry into Latin America, Europe and Africa in the form of billions of US dollars as aid and loan. Chinese economic strength once converted into political strength, will

ultimately reshape the international norms, rules and institutions but it will take a couple of decades or even more. Economic and military pivots will further deviate. As a matter of fact, all nations are not satisfied with the Bretton Woods institutions and the international system hinged on these. There is a need for USA to understand that the current order can be reshaped and modified. If USA and China choose to compete instead of cooperation, it will be a total catastrophe for the whole world.

Impacts on Pakistan

Increase in American attention in AP resulted into tangible decrease in America's engagement in the South Asian region. These changes appeared in Pakistan in the form of decrease in bomb blasts, drone attacks, space and territorial violation, and diplomatic coercions. General state of peace was improved by various operations of Pakistani Armed forces and timely advent of CPEC helped retrieval of broken economic back of Pakistan.

'Rebalance to Asia Pacific' and consequent shift in American attention to South Asia on one side has created opportunity and on the other side a concern also. Due to Indo-US strategic partnership and American efforts to strengthen India by providing military and economic incentives has widened the Indo-Pak gap on the basis of their capabilities. Pakistan may not be concerned about economic gap but difference in armed forces capability will surely create concerns. Even on this account, Pakistan need not bother much because in the presence of nuclear weapons, India is likely to think many a time before initiating any war like act. It may not be called band wagoning in the classical sense but capitalizing on the good old relations Pakistan can economically benefit from China and even from Russia by joining all the forums where China has influence.

Pakistan may not pray for America's decline but it must work to adjust itself and its policies as per the emerging realities due to Sino-US competition. By recalling its lessons, learnt from its past during cold war, in Sino-US asymmetry, Pakistan must not go for extremes in maintaining its relations with only one of the super powers at the cost of the other. Cold war or hot war whatever the case scenario may be, Pakistan should avoid extreme choices during conducting its relations with America, China, India, and even with Afghanistan. In a nutshell, Rebalance in Asia Pacific, CPEC in South Asia and the likely reshaping of World Order is likely to prove good for Pakistan.

Conclusion

China now has started to project its power at international level. America is surely on the decline and it is likely that its hegemony will be no more in Asia within a decade or so. Though America, being a realist power, is trying to create web of alliances around the globe but the other nations do recognize that American might is fading day by day. This realization also prevails among the leading scholars and analysts. China's rise may or may not help some nations but surely its will provide a moral support to the nations of the whole world to have another power in case of crisis situation. Muslim World as on the forefront of American war machines and coercive strategies and Pakistan would also be among the major beneficiaries.

NOTES

- ¹ De-hyphenation: It is a policy, which deals with America's relations with India and Pakistan and it decides which country is to be preferred over other as per the need of time. (Stephen P. Cohen's Book '*Shooting The India-Pakistan Conundrum For a Century*', page 177 and Bruce Riedel's book '*Avoiding Armageddon: America, India, and Pakistan to the brink and Back*', page x)
- ² Defensive Insulation: This policy is an advanced version of De-hyphenation offered by Daniel S. Markey (Member of US Council for Foreign Relations) with two components military cooperation and comprehensive cooperation. Daniel S. Markey's book '*No Exit from Pakistan America's Tortured Relationship with Islamabad*' page 276)
- ³ Cooperation and Prevention: This is also a foreign policy prescription suggested by Stephen P. Cohen (South Asian Expert), which by using hard and soft power change asks for to transform Pakistan's anti-US mindset, strengthening democratic government, cultivation of US-friendly leadership, targeting youth through education programmes and Internet, organizing US-hosted public events, paid media campaign to demonstrates long-term interests of America; and he also suggests creation of US Presence Posts in every province to gauge success of the targets set. (Stephen P. Cohen's book '*The idea of Pakistan*', page 308)
- ⁴ America's Pacific Century, The future of politics will be decided in Asia, not Afghanistan or Iraq, and the United States will be right at the center of the action, by Hillary Clinton, October 11, 2011. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2011/10/11/americas-pacific-century/>
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- ¹⁵ Daniel S. Markey, Page, 102
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- ²⁴ Philip G. Saunders, 'The Rebalance to Asia: U.S.-China Relations and Regional Security' *Strategic Forum National Defense University USA*, 2013, SF No, 281, page, 5-9.
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FUTURE PROSPECTS OF AFGHANISTAN PEACE TALKS THROUGH THE PRISM OF HISTORY

Abdul Basit and Ayesha Shahid*

Abstract

The resolution of a conflict for sustainable peace is akin to peaceful dialogue leading to the creation of win-win situation for all the stakeholders involved in a conflict. Holding of peace talks is an instrument for sustainable peace in the contemporary situation of Afghanistan. Four key players involved in Afghan conflict are the US, Afghanistan, Pakistan and China. Trust deficit between Pakistan and Afghanistan, coercive approach of the US towards various Taliban fractions is the major cause of hindering substantive progress towards the larger goal of peace in the region. Taliban, at the same time, demand a complete withdrawal of the foreign troops as a precondition for holding the peace talks that is unacceptable to other stakeholders. Pakistan's apprehensions about Indian presence in Afghanistan vis-à-vis its anti-Pakistan drives also render the efforts of peace talks as an ineffectual campaign. Hence, peace can only be achieved through win-win situation for all the stakeholders, paving the way for sustainable peace in the region that is analogous to affluence and prosperity. The paper essentially elaborates the various dynamics and implications of Afghan peace talks that have been held in the past with a focus to perceive the future prospects of peaceful settlement of Afghanistan. The paper examines the convergence and divergence of the interests of all the stakeholders involved in the peace process

Keywords: Afghanistan, Taliban, Peace Talks, Pakistan, Terrorism.

Introduction

In the contemporary world, many flashpoints around the globe are highlighted as the potential threat to the world peace. These conflicts are spread over large geographical canvass including Far East Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, Middle East, Africa and Europe. Conflict occurrence is not a new phenomenon; history has witnessed conflicts over different issues at different places and in time periods. Avoidance of worldly conflicts is next to impossible due to the nature of the conflicts based on the interests of various countries in their day-to-day affairs and their overlapping claims of territory or resources. By resorting to

* Abdul Basit is Ph.D scholar and currently working as Deputy Director at Federal Government Educational Institutions, Regional Office, Peshawar. Ayesha Shahid is Ph.D scholar in Department of Political Science, University of Peshawar.

viable solution of these conflicting issues, they can minimize the chances of any military clash resulting in fatalities and destruction.

This necessitates the need to adopt peaceful ways to resolve their differing issues. The nature of the Afghan conflict is deep rooted in the context of history and it is not a new development. Though, history of conflict in Afghanistan is decade old and several attempts have been made in order to bring permanent peace in the country and region, but no desirable success was achieved. Sequel to the ongoing peace-making process, fresh efforts in this regard are being made to bring peace to the country ragged by the years of the armed conflict ever since the US invasion of October 2001.¹

Background of Afghan Peace Talks

In recent times, well orchestrated, inclusive and sustained efforts have been made for restoring sustainable peace in Afghanistan that was a mere dream in the context of history. This process of normalization was initiated at Urumqi talks arranged by Pakistan and China, between the Afghan government and Tehreek-e-Taliban Afghanistan (TTA). For the past ten years, several efforts have been made time and again to engage TTA on peace negotiating table for the sake of tranquillity, but nothing could achieve the purpose. TTA was engaged in formal talks by the Afghan government on July 7, 2015 and later at the Heart of Asia Conference held in Islamabad on December 9, 2015. However, the peace process was disrupted by the news of the death of Mullah Omer, the supreme Taliban leader. In recent development, Quadrilateral coordination group that includes Pakistan, Afghanistan, China and the US, met in January, February, and March 2016 to re-initiate peace talks between TTA and the Afghan government. TTA came up with some preconditions to resume peace talks; firstly, they demanded drawdown of US and NATO forces from Afghanistan; secondly, to undo the sanctions levied by the United Nations (UN) on Taliban commanders and thirdly, release of Taliban prisoners from the Guantanamo Bay prison.

TTA released a statement asserting their refusal to participate in talks scheduled on March 5, 2016.² The reason behind this rebuttal was the security dilemma within Afghanistan. Sensing the dire need of political settlement in Afghanistan, the US tried to keep its options open and tried to engage the Taliban in dialogue and also tried to keep Pakistan out of the exercise supposedly the two sides could not agree on power sharing formula besides other things.

The killing of Taliban leader Mullah Akhtar Mansoor in Baluchistan as a result of US drone strike has further complicated the matter of peace talks.³

Over the years, Taliban have been successful in accomplishing their objectives on major portion of Afghanistan. Currently, there are safe havens of Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which athwart the bordering side and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) is also aspiring to establish itself in the contiguous areas. Furthermore, Indian intelligence agency Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and the National Directorate of Security (NDS) of Afghanistan are coordinating and doing organized teamwork to press Pakistan directly and indirectly, for the purpose of increasing Indian influence in the region. Resultantly, Afghanistan-Pakistan trust deficit is escalating despite the fact that both countries are willing to establish sustainable peace in the region. At bilateral level, both countries with the support of the US are trying to pave the way for peace talks to bring solid solution to this multidimensional and multifaceted problem. In the backdrop of US stipulated intentions for the success of peace talks in Afghanistan, killing of Mullah Akhtar Mansoor by the US raises many questions, which Mullah Mansoor was ready to come to negotiating table, but with some pre-conditions, which were not conceded by the US because the latter had some reservation over the demand of withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan as one of the primary pre-conditions.

Player-Specific Interests in the Talks

At present, there are four players in Afghan peace talks, i.e., Afghanistan government, Pakistan, the US and China. However, TTA is the most important player to whom all the above mentioned parties want to pacify and persuade it to come to negotiations. The interests of these players vary from cooperation to competition in terms of International Relations (IR) theories. Their interests mould their stances in the negotiating processes for peace in the region.

Tehreek-i-Taliban Afghanistan (TTA)

Taliban claim to have been engaged in Jihad (holy war) with an objective to re-establish a Sharia based government entrenched in a primitive interpretation of Islam. Having been engaged in a dialogue process for some time, Taliban remained indifferent to establish sustainable peace in Afghanistan rather inclined to establish their flawed dictum of imposing Sharia of their own choice. Mullah Akhtar Mansoor, the slain leader of TTA, was against the

unconditional peace talks, which became one of the prime reasons for his elimination.⁴ Mullah Haibatullah became Mullah Mansoor's successor and took the reign of Afghan-Taliban, who is also against the peace talks.⁵ Apparently, Taliban have put forward some pre-conditions for the peace talks that include withdrawal of the foreign forces, elimination of Taliban from international blacklist and release of imprisoned Taliban.⁶ However, in reality, there are compelling reasons that forbid Taliban to be the part of peace talks i.e. their resilience to withstand the US invasion for 15 years and intact operational capacity. In the circumstances, where Taliban are still in a position to hit the Afghan government and Western troops with ease, they consider it a folly to lose a war on the table, which they think are clearly winning in the battle field.

United States

The US interests in Afghanistan are quite multilayered and multidimensional. According to the US narrative, Afghanistan is destined to be a country having sustainable peace and internal security, because of the reason that lacking of the above mentioned factors provided vacuum and safe haven to the extremist elements like al-Qaeda in 1990s. Therefore, the US wants to thwart all chances of Afghanistan to become a safe haven for al-Qaeda and any other extremist, terrorist or militant group. After declaring the US war on terror, in particular, the US cannot afford any future government in Afghanistan to act as the collaborator, supporter or facilitator of the anti-US terrorist groups. Thus, it emphasizes peace talks in the country to fortify the present pro-US Afghan government. The ultimate objective of the US in the peace talks is to bring Taliban to the dialogue table and to convince them to play their due role in the regional peace process in general and in Afghanistan in particular. The main idea behind this is to devise a mechanism convincing Taliban to accept something less than complete control of Afghanistan commonly known as power sharing mechanism in terms of IR.⁷ The US has realized in past 15 years that governance and law and order situation in Afghanistan cannot be improved without an effective role of Taliban, who still have an extensive support and influence among the masses in the rural Afghanistan—predominantly among Pashtuns.⁸ The US has lately admitted, “the US was not eager to talk to Taliban in the past and was relying on the military power to search a solution of Afghan crisis” but now it wants to play the role of an observers and a guarantor for the actions of Afghan government to ensure its influence in this region. Now, with only a few thousand troops on the ground, the US is more interested in finding a workable

solution to the Afghan conundrum through diplomatic means and peace talks. Despite a few boots on the ground, the US seems to be on a weaker side as it has not been able to convince Taliban for talks. Therefore, the US, like Afghan government, is also relying on Pakistan's cooperation and facilitation to bring Taliban to the dialogue table.

The Afghan Government

The Afghan government is fighting for a war of survival and to hold on power in order to avoid the further worsening of the situation. Therefore, the Afghan government is busy in laying the foundation to convince Taliban to come to the negotiating table and present a power sharing mechanism to put an end to the long turbulence in the country.

Negotiating the terms for Taliban engagement is by no means contradictory to the cause that the Kabul government advocates.

However, Afghan government is emphasizing Taliban to surrender themselves before coming to the table. Opinion polls show equally positive indication inside Afghan society for a bargain and compliance to bring Taliban back into mainstream by giving something less than a leading position. Therefore, negotiating the terms for Taliban engagement is by no means contradictory to the cause that the Kabul government advocates. Conciliation between Afghanistan's strength of character focuses on the natural history of several power-sharing arrangements on probable amendment to the Afghan constitution, on social customs, and on the role of Sharia law.

Knowing the centralized nature of the Afghanistan government, it is assumed that the negotiation would be feasible rather, it would prompt some positive movement of change, by method for exchange, in sub-national governance. Nevertheless, this would demand the Taliban leadership as well as Kabul to make improvements in their past preferences for a unitary, Kabul-centric constitution.

The basic concerns are the drawdown of NATO forces, the enduring commitments and measures for combating terrorism, an assurance from the parties of Afghanistan for not allowing their area to be used against any other country (neutrality). In the same manner, Afghanistan can enjoy shared assurance of neutrality by the neighbouring countries for not allowing their territories to knock off the balance in Afghanistan (non-interference). It can also

get a guarantee of enduring the US security backing, presence of the United Nations peacekeeping forces, an obligation by the regional actors and Afghanistan for the cooperation and crackdown against drug trafficking, measures for power sharing among various factions of Afghanistan, the role of Sharia and Islam, and assurance by the international community to continue financial backing to Afghanistan.

The fundamental concerns are the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan and to develop Afghan government's capability to fight against terrorism on its own. Moreover, through peace talks, the Afghan government wants to take guarantees from neighbouring Pakistan for whole hearted cooperation for peace in Afghanistan by not allowing its territory to be used for any anti-Afghanistan activities. The government of Afghanistan also wants to ensure that great powers such as China and the US are completely committed to financially support the country in future.

Pakistan

Pakistan shares the longest and porous border with Afghanistan and infiltration from Afghan territory to Pakistan is effortless. Hence, Afghan terrain can be used as a base to operate in Pakistan quite easily. Pakistan, to preserve its national interest, wants to counter Indian efforts to gain strong foothold in Afghanistan. Pakistan, due to its traditional rivalry and historical experiences, considers India's pronounced presence in Afghanistan as a direct threat to its national security and interest. As a counter narrative, Pakistan's narrative of Indian threat from Afghanistan may be termed as threat yet the apprehension of Pakistan cannot be rightly ignored. The best solution to address the apprehensions of both countries and to produce a positive outcome for the strained Indo-Pakistan relations is through providing equal chances to both countries to work for peace and stability in Afghanistan. Another established significance of Afghanistan for Pakistan lies on economic grounds. Pakistan and Afghanistan are strategically located between the energy rich region of Middle East and Central Asia and the energy famished areas of India and China that actually triggers some solid potential drivers for economic development in both countries.

Lately, the unexplored energy resources in Central Asia have set off a race amongst the big powers for gas and oil pipelines in and around the region.

Furthermore, Pakistan is also an energy deficient country and needs energy for its own economic growth and development, Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India pipeline [TAPI], with all its obstacles and backdrops, can give an energy source that will add to Pakistan's capital energy stock for at least coming fifty years. The expected time frame for the completion of the pipeline is 2019. The largest economic project in the history of Pakistan, the China Pakistan Economic Corridor [CPEC] also has akin stakes in Afghanistan. The CPEC, which is a part of the China's One Belt, One Road development initiative guarantees to connect South Asia with Central Asia and beyond through road infrastructure in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Hence, the security situation in Afghanistan directly affects development of the economic situation in Pakistan.

Moreover, the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan is extremely porous and the security management of a porous border is really a prodigious task for both countries. The hardness and length of the area really makes it impossible to control the movement across the border, allowing easy access to militants through connected and isolated routes. This is basically the mutual problem of both countries; Afghanistan lacks operational capacity on its side of the border, making border areas vulnerable to the infiltration across the Pak-Afghan border, an issue which creates deficit of trust between the two neighbours. Without taking stern measures for border monitoring and management between the two countries, the cross border infiltration cannot be checked effectively, which will continue to affect the bilateral relations and ultimately the peace process of Afghanistan.

The construction of dam on the River Kabul is underway without addressing the reservations of downstream country i.e. Pakistan. There are likely chances that this project will further deteriorate relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Though, endeavours have been made to renegotiate the 1921 water agreement on dispersion of water between the two countries; the issue of water sharing between the two states has the potential to badly affect their bilateral ties.⁹

There are constant concerns of each side regarding odd behaviour of other country in the context of mutual relations. The trust deficit between the two countries is one of the main hampering factors of unsuccessful peace talks. Therefore, there is a need to guarantee the goodwill for each other by ignoring the history of bitterness to make peace talks a success.

China

During the Soviet-Afghan war, the relationship between China and Afghanistan was cut off, however, it was restored in 2001 after the fall of Taliban regime.¹⁰ When it comes to China, it has its own economic, regional, strategic and political interests in Afghanistan peace process. Afghanistan is a rich country as far as natural resources are concerned, therefore, many Chinese companies have secured tenders of many projects such as mining of copper, gold and gas etc. Moreover, the conflict in Afghanistan has a spill over effect in China, where the separatist movement has been launched by the Uyghur Muslims of Western Xinjiang province. Many Chinese separatists Muslims are accused of getting training of subversive activities in Afghanistan. Therefore, sustainable peace in Afghanistan will have a positive effect on peace and security situation in Western China.¹¹

The “One Belt One Road” policy of China to extend trade and development relations to the Eurasian region was unveiled in 2013. Under this policy, a network of roads and maritime routes would be extended towards the Eurasian countries.¹² Therefore, to effectively materialize the “One Belt One Road” plan, peace and stability in Afghanistan is of immense importance for China.

Moreover, Pakistan is a time tested friend and neighbour of China. Under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) plan, China aspires to reach to the Indian Ocean through Gawadar Port of Pakistan, which will reduce the cost and time for Chinese goods to reach African and European markets. Additionally, it will also help China to develop the Western Chinese areas such as Xinjiang that are vulnerable to terrorism. However, this dream can be efficiently materialized only if there is peace and stability in Pakistan and peace in Pakistan cannot be ensured without peace in Afghanistan. Over the past one and a half decades, Pakistan has been engulfed by the wave of terrorism and deteriorating law and order situation emanating from Afghanistan through FATA and Baluchistan.¹³ Thus, the success of peace talks acceptable to all the stakeholders will bring peace not only to Afghanistan but also to Pakistan, and will make it easier for China to fulfil its vision of development and trade with Eurasia and Africa through Gawadar.¹⁴

Iran

Iran was significant beneficiary of the US intrusion of Afghanistan, toppling Taliban government. It has greater influence over the Shia and non-Pashtun groups in Afghanistan. Iran has always tried to influence and control Afghanistan through financial resources to win goodwill/support in Afghanistan to get its strategic, economic and regional benefits. Afghanistan heavily relies on Iran for trade and economy as 40 percent trade of Afghanistan is currently being carried out through Chahbahar port so Afghanistan cannot afford any misunderstanding with Iran. As economic influence brings in political influence, Iran's influence on Shia and non-Pashtun groups in Afghanistan made it really important factor in Afghanistan. According to Iran's perspective, it also has stakes in Afghanistan, which demand peaceful and sustainable resolution of the turmoil. Iran has also engaged India to develop Chahbahar Port to provide the latter an opportunity to carry out transit trade with Afghanistan and Central Asian states, bypassing Pakistan for the same purpose.¹⁵

Russia

Russia is one of the major donors for Afghanistan, extending all out support and assistance in rebuilding of the war-torn country. Russia maintains vigorous position in the economic and political domain of Afghanistan. It has good ties with the Afghan government and is nearly blending with the US and other powers involved in the process. By eliminating terrorism, extremism, radicalism and separatism concurrent to Islamic revivalism and forestall permanent US military bases and installations in Afghanistan, the Russian interests draw in achievement of a planned politico-economic footing in the future Afghanistan.¹⁶ Russia is well aware of the spill over effect in case of extension of the current turmoil, to avert an untoward situation. It is in the best interest of Russia to support and facilitate the peace process of Afghanistan. Secondly, the aim to get to the warm waters can only be achieved through the peaceful situation in Afghanistan. So, to preserve its own interest, Russia is showing concern in facilitating the peace process in Afghanistan.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA)

The KSA was amongst the significant financiers of Afghan Jihad in 1980s. Be that as it may, the KSA has expected to embrace a low profile position following 9/11 attacks, except for giving financial backing to the Afghanistan

government. Saudi interests consolidate acquiring security and stability in Afghanistan through other allying states, especially Pakistan, checking Iranian influence and fortification of pro-Saudi Sunni groups in Afghanistan.¹⁷ In the perspective of Saudi-Iran rivalry, there is an undeclared competition of securing more space. In Afghan context as whosoever is going to do more in promoting peace, will get more influence in the region. For this purpose, Saudi Arabia can facilitate peace talks by using the influence over Taliban Commanders, who had been under Saudi influence in the past.

India

India intends to vigorously pursue its agenda of having greater influence in Afghanistan to counter Pakistan to gain its political interests. To achieve this aim, India is persistently investing in humanitarian assistance and development projects of Afghanistan. To diminish Afghanistan's reliance on Pakistan for exchange and transportation, India has made strategic investment for connecting Afghanistan to the Arabian Sea through the port of Chahbahar in Iran.¹⁸ Additionally, it is also providing military hardware and intelligence support to Afghanistan. Furthermore, India's interests are served by Afghanistan through support of RAW¹⁹ and NDS agents in shape of proxy war being waged all through FATA and Baluchistan.²⁰ Pak-Afghan differences on various issues drew the Afghans closer to India, like border security.²¹ India also wants to become a part of the Quadrilateral group, a desire upheld by Hamid Karzai, the former President of Afghanistan.²² Therefore, India has been playing an implicit role in sabotaging Pakistan's centric peace efforts in Afghanistan.

The role of India in Afghanistan is not confined to merely development and rebuilding endeavours rather to a certain degree, it looks to practice its presence in Afghanistan to advance lawlessness and instability in Pakistan, particularly in FATA, Karachi and Baluchistan. The issue of trust deficit from Pakistan's point of view can be addressed only if Pakistan sees concrete steps taken for curtailing Indian role in Afghanistan.

Implications

- The commencement of the result oriented peace talks is still a matter of anonymity, therefore, the announcement of truce may be exceptionally troublesome. There might be a possible outcome that relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan might be crumbling, because the perception

in Afghanistan and other stakeholders is that Pakistan can pressurize Taliban to sit on the negotiating table and find a solution to the problem through dialogue.²³ Besides, the relations between Pakistan and Taliban may get flawed. In addition, habitual mudslinging played by the US and the Afghan government will further tarnish Pakistan's image in the international community.

- After 9/11 incident when the US attacked Afghanistan, it gave an impression that it would accomplish its goals by hunting Taliban. It also promised to revamp and support the Afghan government. However, none of the aims were achieved. The power of Taliban has been rarely checked-ever since 2002-every year the spring offensive is launched against the US and the Afghan government. The situation did not change even with the news of death of the founding leader of the Taliban, Mullah Omar and the new leader of the Taliban, Mullah Mansoor launched Operation Omari in spring 2016. Moreover, the death of Mullah Mansoor did not affect the resolve of Taliban to fight the US and the Afghan government as the incumbent leader Mullah Haibatullah also refused to pursue the path of negotiation. He, instead, chose to intensify attacks on his adversaries in Afghanistan.²⁴ Warlordism, poverty, lawlessness, opium cultivation and rising insurgency are some of the issues, which shape the modern day Afghanistan. These issues are disturbing omen for both the outside world and the local people. The increased influence and power of Taliban can be seen in Baghlan and Parwan provinces, while the Haqqani Network-headed by Sirajuddin Haqqani also joined hands in Taliban operations under Haibatullah in the Eastern provinces of Paktia and Khost.²⁵ It is also contemplated that they have more operational bases in Tajik and Uzbek possessed areas of Afghanistan.
- Indeed, the provinces that fall under the control of Taliban are more peaceful, when compared with the others. Afghan people and the Afghan government have come to a conclusion that peace can be achieved only with the withdrawal of outside troops from Afghanistan and with fusion with Taliban by giving them their due share in the government.
- The Northern Alliance leaders and supporters have enough representation in the Afghan government. They have made tremendous gains in Kabul, which they do not at any cost want to lose in a long war

with Taliban. Accordingly, they will demonstrate courage and try to make plans to contact all available members of Taliban and other factions for peaceful settlement of the Afghan imbroglio.

- Moreover, Washington is considering various options as it does not have room for further experiments with respect to the Afghan problem. It needs to move towards a transitional methodology for Afghanistan that is acceptable for all the parties involved. Besides, sudden withdrawal of the US troops is not the outcome that will be welcomed by Pakistan and Afghanistan. The menace of Talibanization is spreading and if the US withdraws, without settling the Afghan issue once and for all, the whole region will be destabilized by the wave of extremism.
- However, as an observer, one cannot help suspecting that there is no possibility of rapprochement sooner than later as the US has taken an exceptionally inflexible position on Taliban and al-Qaeda. Such rigidity by the US at this stage only worsens the situation. As from the Taliban's point of view, they would not lose their gains of the battlefield over the negotiation table. The US should understand its weakening position in Afghanistan and allow the peace process to proceed in an unhindered manner. If the US wants to weaken Taliban before peace talks, it will require at least one more decade to do so. However, the killing of Mullah Mansoor shows that the US is oblivious of the fact that coercion will only push away Taliban from the peace process as is visible in the continuation and unabated nature of operation Omari even after the fall of Mansoor. Along these lines, unless the US accepts its weakening position, it cannot offer the possibility of a peaceful settlement of talks with Taliban and its associates.

Way Forward

- The Afghan government ought to put its cards on the table. It should stipulate what maximum it can provide or what it cannot provide to Taliban as the solution will fall between the two extremes. What is in their domain and what is definitely not? In this way, the Taliban would get some incentives. The four requests by Taliban can be considered as the pre-conditions that they talked about in Qatar. The Taliban detainees held at the Guantanamo bay and Afghanistan should be released to show goodwill for the peace process.

- The Afghan government should likewise introduce their preconditions and present it to Taliban. At that point, should Taliban be given their view of what they can do? Can they proclaim truce or release individuals held by them? Then, again, they can make Taliban concur for not attacking the public places. In short, Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) should be initiated among Taliban, the Afghan government and the US.
- Stable Afghanistan is in the interest of China, Russia, Iran and Pakistan, without stability in Afghanistan this region cannot be prosperous. The civil war in Afghanistan began as a civil war between Afghans and it will end as an agreement between Afghans. So, the neighbouring countries should stress to the ruling elite of Kabul that a grand Jirga consisting of all stakeholders of Afghanistan may be convened for the future settlement. This act will lead a permanent stability in Afghanistan.
- Afghanistan should quit its attitude of mudslinging and blaming Pakistan. Pakistan has been hosting three to four million Afghan refugees since last four decades. Afghanistan should come on the table of negotiation and address the divergences. Furthermore, Afghanistan should destroy the sanctuaries of terrorists present inside Afghanistan which are threat to the stability of both countries.
- To fulfill Pakistan's demands, Afghanistan should also handover the TTP members held by it or against whom operation can be launched that are in the reach of the Afghan government. Additionally, Pakistan has shared evidence of the presence of the masterminds of the attacks of the Army Public School (APS) Peshawar and the Bacha Khan University Charsaddah with Afghanistan. President Ashraf Ghani admitted that Mullah Fazlullah was living in Afghanistan, therefore, if Afghanistan played its card positively and eliminate or handover Fazlullah to Pakistan, it will likewise put pressure on Pakistan to act against the remainders of Haqqani network and TTA in Pakistan.
- Moreover, reciprocal trust building should be the foundation of Pakistan's Afghanistan policy. It should focus on the marginalization of Indian role and manipulation in Afghanistan through a combination of diplomatic and hard-line preferences. Financial stakes of Afghanistan should be raised by structuring mutually favourable institutions in trade, transit, connectedness, and development of infrastructure for general wellbeing, education, industries and constructing energy

corridors like China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Turkmenistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan–India (TAPI) pipeline project.

- Besides, Pakistan should support Afghanistan led solutions for convincing TTA for dialogue. It should also look forward to working directly with Afghanistan in addition to other stake holders to eradicate extremism and terrorism predominantly the emerging terrorist threat of ISIS.
- To reduce border disputes between the two countries, both should advance contemporary border structure mechanisms, only allowing legal cross border movement. Installation of biometrics system at crossing points, increasing numbers of border posts and launching suitable crossing points at alienated villages are significant to stop cross border infiltration of militants and allow individuals, who have all legal travel documents to travel across the border.
- Coordination by means of existing bilateral and multilateral forums of the countries involved in this process such as the US, Russia, Iran, China, India and Central Asian Republics (CARs) is a must for the success of the peace process. Those stakeholders, who are not the members of Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) such as Iran, Russia and other Central Asian states, should be given observer status in the QCG so that their reservations are addressed as well.
- Last but not the least, China should proactively come forward to contribute towards the peace of Afghanistan, because it is the second country after Pakistan, which suffers the most at the hand of lawlessness in Afghanistan. The economic interests of China and its vision of ‘One Belt One Road’ are going to be accomplished in its entirety only if Afghanistan becomes a peaceful country.

Conclusion

For the past fifteen years, relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan have been spiraling on a downward trend. The trust deficit appears to have been come to an unprecedented level. Impartiality cannot be an alternative with two closely connected neighbours. They both need to make a win-win situation for each other. The corner stone of relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan will be the creation of a conducive, trust building environment. The only outcome of stalled relations between the two neighbours is lawlessness and insecurity in the

region. While, good relations between them can ensure peace and security. It will also help both the countries to improve their economies through trade.

The US should refrain from irrational acts such as killing of the Taliban leaders, if it is truly interested in the success of the peace process. Being a superpower, it should give adequate time and incentives to all parties involved in the peace process. The option of limited peace is not viable; the US should show a policy of openness in Afghanistan by welcoming all internal and external stakeholders, who want to contribute towards the peace of the country. Moreover, it should not violate sovereignty of Pakistan through drone strikes. Such violations of Pakistani air space make it difficult for the country to take the US peace efforts in Afghanistan and Af-Pak region without a grain of salt.

NOTES

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EMERGING POST NUCLEAR DEAL SCENARIOS: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES IN MIDDLE EAST

Qurat-ul-Ain & Khurram Abbas*

Abstract

Will the cooperation between Iran and the US prevail for a longer period of time in Middle Eastern strategic issues? The answer may not be simply: 'Yes or No'. The answer may have various dimensions such as Syrian crisis, where both countries have a divergence of interests, Yemen's political turmoil, which again a point of divergence for the US and Iran. Role of Hezbollah and Iran's support to such kind of organizations in the region, which has been declared as a terrorist organization by the international community may not allow both countries to cooperate in the region. This study tries to focus on the nature of convergences and divergences between the two states over these regional issues in near future. Moreover, the study discusses the term 'new détente' in the Middle East.

Keywords: US, Iran, Regional Security, Nuclear Deal, Regional Peace.

Introduction

The nuclear negotiation process provided ample time to both sides for revisiting respective foreign policies of US and the Iran. Furthermore, the threat of Islamic State (IS) has provided both sides broader prospects for cooperation in the region. Since the comprehensive nuclear accord, the US and Iran may have come into an informal agreed period of détente. The top leadership of Iran including its Supreme Leader, President and Foreign Minister publicly adopted softer approach for several months towards Western countries. President Hassan Rouhani had supported nuclear talks over the nuclear issue and expressed its support for broader regional cooperation not only with the US but with Arab countries too.¹ The high level comfortable environment coupled with internal top level assertive decisions by Hassan Rouhani would have long term impact on not only nuclear deal but also on broader regional issues with the US. Moreover, this shows that there is likely to be a shift in the regional politics, but many scholars consider it a drastic effect on the balance of power in the Middle East.

* Qurat-ul-Ain is currently working as Research Associate in NDU Islamabad. Khurram Abbas is PhD scholar at National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), Islamabad. He is also working as Assistant Research Officer at Islamabad Policy Research Institute, Islamabad.

This shift can manifest negative impact over Arab countries, particularly Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates (UAE) who are involved in supporting the militant groups of Syria (Al-Nusra Front), Al-Qaeda in Yemen.² The sectarian divide has overshadowed the human rights, socio-economic development and security of states in the region. Therefore, every state perceives its relations either bilateral or multilateral through the lenses of sectarianism. This divide has provided a great deal of benefits to the US in particular and Israeli in general.

The consensus of Iran and the US over the replacement of Iraqi former Prime Minister Maliki shows a sign of informal détente between the two states.³ The sustainability of cooperation between the US and Iran seems difficult, however, if it sustains for some time than there are chances that this cooperation would further improve the security situation in the region. Iranians had pegged regional or broader cooperation with the US to the nuclear deal. Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and President Rouhani have categorically said that the regional cooperation with the US, particularly against Islamic State (IS) is only possible if there would be permanent nuclear agreement pen down.⁴ This shows that after the comprehensive nuclear deal the chances of cooperation on regional issues have become more brighten.

Iraq has remained the main victim of the US and Iran's power struggle in the Middle East. Since the US invasion in Iraq, various episodes of cooperation and competition trembled the Iraqi security, political and economic structure. The Shiite paramilitaries were established and trained in modern fighting techniques by the Quds force in Iraq⁵ over the last one decade which increasingly became an effective instrument of Iran in bargaining with the extra regional forces. During the seizure of Najaf city in 2005, Muqtada Al-Sadar⁶ had evacuated the city and Iran played its role as mediator in the conflict between the US security forces and local Shiite paramilitary and demonstrated its political and strategic influence on Iraqi politics. But once again here, one can see some sort of informal understanding. Iraqi Shiite militias had not targeted the US interest in the country for few months.⁷ In response, the US has provided full air support in every operation against the Islamic State (IS), which, though some scholars believe is the coincident while some believe that all these attacks were pre-planned and with the consent of Iraqi Shiite militias, particularly by the Al-Badar.⁸

Moreover, the US air force has stopped its operations against the forces who were loyal to Syrian president Bashar-Al-Asad which is again a sign of détente in the region between the two countries. The Syrian militias who are loyal to Syrian president were targeted by the US Air Force when they were fighting against the Al-Nusra front. They were targeted by the US in the name of fight against the extremists.⁹ Hence, they had lost various small battles against the Islamic State (IS) on various fronts due to the US intervention. But now the table has turned to other side, the US has not targeted these Shiite militias which some scholars believe have relations with Hezbollah.¹⁰ This support to Shiite militias who are fighting against those who want to change the regime in Syria is indirectly helping the Iranian interest, i.e., strengthening Bashar-Al-Asad's rule in Syria. Though, the US official stance against the Syrian government is clear, i.e., it wants to change the ruler's face in Syria but the actions of the US are quite different to its official stance as these actions are helping Syrian forces to further diminish the threat against the Syrian regime.

Why this Strategic Policy Shift Occured?

The western scholars claim that Obama administration was keen to have cordial relationship with Iran since 2009 but it was fault at Iran's side that dispelled a peaceful co-existence of two powers in the region. The political rhetoric of the then President Ahmadinejad and his blistering statements against the US and its top ally Israel in the region were considered the main constraint in normalization of relations between the US and Iran. However, the election of Hassan Rouhani had encouraged the Obama administration to once again extend its hand for normalization of relationship between the two countries.

The world has witnessed a strategic shift in the US policies towards Iran in 2011, when the drawdown of US forces was in process from Iraq. It was considered the failure of US policies in Middle East as after fighting an endless war for eight years from 2003-11; the US could not maintain the law and order in the country due to various types of insurgencies by ethnic and sectarian factions of society. The main hurdle in establishing peace in Iraq was considered to be the sectarian conflict which often the US alleged its origins to Iran.¹¹ Therefore, the US decided to change its policy towards Iran for better cooperation in Iraq, particularly to control the Shiite militias through Iranian religious leaders. Though, Obama had faced serious criticism from the US Congress but he repelled all allegations by presenting a comparatively better and stable government in Iraq. Even his critics accept that the idea of seeking help to solve

Iraq's political crisis had paved the way for better understanding of two countries, therefore, later the nuclear bargaining got immense speed towards its conclusion.

Syrian Crisis

Syrian crisis has two dimensions, i.e., positive as well as challenging for bilateral cooperation in the region for Iran and the US. Since the start of civil war in Syria, the US has supported various militias who were trying to overthrow President of Syria, Bashar Al-Assad.¹² The overwhelming support to these militias later caused a menace for the US itself as these militias turned towards the US as hostilities. However, the US policy towards Syria which changed dramatically after the disposal of Syrian chemical weapons led towards another informal acceptance of Iranian influence in Syria. Despite Saudi Arabia's consistent efforts, the US did not invade in Syria which served the greater interests of Iran in the region.¹³ Though, this action had affected the bilateral relations of Saudi Arabia and the US but the same policy helped Iran and the US to negotiate over nuclear controversy with more trust and hope.

If the US had invaded Syria, than the situation would have had drastic impacts on the region as well as on nuclear bargaining process between Iran and P5+1. Iran had signed mutual defence treaty in 2005 with Assad regime.¹⁴ This treaty assures Syrian government that in case of any aggression, the Islamic Republic will support Syrian government through direct and indirect military assistance. Moreover, Syrian security forces were also trained and equipped with Iranian made weapons since 2005. Though, Iran had signed that agreement in order to protect Syria from Israeli aggression but the civil war in Syria had changed whole dynamics.

Yet, some scholars believe that it was coincidence rather a long term strategy to cooperate on Syrian crisis. The critics believe that Obama administration was compelled to refrain from any kind of escalation after the United Kingdom (UK) parliament's decision to avoid war against Syria. The decision of diplomatic resolve of issue was more appropriate by the Obama administration. The secretary of state John Kerry, who first time positively responded to Syrian regime by saying that 'the US is agreed to not intervene in Syria if the Assad regime roll back its chemical weapons programme'.¹⁵ John Kerry, who was personally involved in dialogue process with Iran over nuclear

controversy had provided fair amount of leverage to its counterpart Javed Zarif and Iranian allies to solve this menace which responded positively by Iran.

Iranian top leadership relatively remained calm during the Syrian crisis. They did not use their usual political rhetoric coupled with their provoking statements which often Israel wants to use as an opportunity to invade in Iran. Moreover, President of Iran had provided humanitarian assistance, i.e., helping Syrian civilians with food items and medicines¹⁶ which compelled European community to refrain from any intervention in Syrian territory.

But sanity prevailed when the US decided after the greater diplomatic efforts by President of Iran Rouhani, in order to calm down the escalation.¹⁷ Iranian officials met regularly with western community, particularly with European counterparts¹⁸ and told them the consequences of US invasion in Syria which had sent a clear signal to the Obama administration that Iranian nuclear talks were much more important as compared to invasion in Syria. Therefore, the US had accepted Putin's plan, i.e., dismantling chemical weapons of Syria.¹⁹ Interestingly, Rouhani had used clerics or hardliners to solve this issue diplomatically. He advised Supreme Leader of Iran, who subsequently sent the Head of National Security and Foreign Policy of Majlis (Parliament of Iran), Ayatollah Alaeddin Boroujerdi who met with Syrian President and asked for peaceful resolve of the issue.²⁰ This kind of political resolve helped the US and Islamic Republic to further find such kind of convergent points for more cooperation despite the severe criticism by hardliners of both sides.

Moderates in Iran are more inclined towards talks with the US not only for acquisition of nuclear technology but for broader cooperation in the region. Rouhani had won the elections on the basis of this notion coupled with economic development in Iran, which is linked with cooperation with international community.

Yemen's Instability

Middle East has witnessed various insurgencies or revolutions in recent years. The Houthi insurgency has also threatened the US interests in the region. Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi,²¹ the former president of Yemen was very close to the US and Obama administration. He was protecting American interests in the region particularly by fighting with Al-Qaeda outfit. Moreover, he was friendlier towards Saudi regime. On the contrary, people were feeling resentment against

the US; hence, there was a wider gap between the Yemeni president and its public. Therefore, people supported the group known as 'Houthis' who were struggling to get rid of Al Mansoor.

The group Houthis is not a new group in Yemeni politics. It was originated in 1990 under the name of 'Shabab al-Momineen (the Youth Believers).²² It was a group of students who decided to provoke anti US sentiments among masses. Various scholars believe that these young students were inspired by the Iranian revolution and *Khomeinian* thoughts.²³ Later, they got public support particularly by Shiite Zaidis which helped them to consolidate power in western Yemen in early 2000s decade.²⁴ However, they were not as powerful and assertive as they are now in recent years. According to Houthis, the government had targeted their top leadership since 2004 to 2011. Hundreds of Houthis were either killed or perished by government security forces which kept Houthis contained in western parts of the country.²⁵

The struggle of Houthis is also different as compared to other fractions of Yemen. Houthis mostly remain non-violent until and unless they put along the wall by their opponent. Larger protests, streets and road blockade are their main weapons which they use through public's support. Since 2014, Houthis has used these non-violent means for various times in order to accumulate power. Interestingly, thousands of people gather in their rallies within very short span of time,²⁶ which some scholars believe is the major source of power. The US invasion in Iraq provided strong argument to Houthis which they manipulated publically and augmented strong support of public.²⁷ Hussain al-Houthi was the first leader who publically protested against the former president who was dearer to the US. Though, he was killed by the security forces but he had set tone for unprecedented replacement of regime in Yemen.

The government of Yemen had also unintentionally supported Houthis movement which toppled the regime.²⁸ Later, Arab spring had set momentum which supported Houthis interests and former president resigned from presidency in 2012 which left a vacuum in Yemeni political process. Abdul Hadi, who was elected as president of Yemen after a fragile peace deal between various fractions of Yemeni political forces could not sustain pressure from rebel forces for more than 2 years.²⁹ He remained unable to either vanish the opposition forces or to solve their problems which often associated with the sectarian rift,

lack of economic opportunities and most importantly the interference of the US which ignites the common citizens of the Yemen.³⁰

Yemeni politics is now no more a struggle of words; it has become a heaven for the stronger that could protect itself from intruders. Numerous groups are fighting with each other in order to consolidate their power in the capital Sanaa, Yemen.³¹ In this context, Houthis had started their offensive operation against security forces in September 2014 and astonishingly captured vast part of Yemen's territory.³² The sudden and successful operation of Houthis had raised various questions such as whether these Houthis were backed by Iran or not? How much they have capability? Whether they will only confine themselves to Yemen? How much the US and its ally Saudi Arabian interests are on stakes? These all questions had not only raised American concerns but also the Saudi regime is looking it as threat to its national security.

The Iranian role in the Houthi insurgency is very complicated. Arab states mostly Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Qatar have accused Iran for its support to Houthi Shiites.³³ These accusations have sparked a rift between Sunni Arabs and Shiite Arabs.³⁴ Therefore, the Houthis has denied these accusations³⁵ as the support from Iran would diminish their support by common Yemeni citizen. Interestingly, Iran has not denied such allegations and categorically said that its Quds forces are supporting Houthi armed members.³⁶ Quds forces are active in training and equipping weapons to the Houthis which increase their capabilities against their rivals, particularly the security forces for Yemen.³⁷ In this regard, the US has also alleged Iranian role, while the Middle Eastern security advisor of Obama administration has said that the sudden move from western parts of Yemen to capital Sanaa by Houthis could not possible without external support which linked with Iran.³⁸ However, the Houthis has increased the value of Iran in the region which the US had accepted during the nuclear bargaining process by saying that 'Iran can play much important role in the region as it is playing for many years'. Therefore, some scholars believe that Houthi insurgency in 2014 when Iran was engaged in negotiation process with the US led P5+1 was a move to assert Iranian value in the region and they used Yemen as bargaining chip for nuclear negotiations process.³⁹

Though, the US has lost its friend in Yemen as it had lost in Iran in 1979,⁴⁰ but still there are hopes of cooperation between Iran and the US in Yemen, particularly against Al-Qaeda. Houthis are fighting severe war against Al-

Qaeda and allegedly, Iranian forces are supporting them.⁴¹ In this case, the US would get benefit by witnessing of elimination of Al-Qaeda in the country. In this regard, US can support financially and militarily in order to get rid of Al-Qaeda menace as it is doing in Iraq against Islamic State (IS).⁴² Moreover, this point of convergence may open new doors of cooperation between Houthis and the US. However, Sunni Arab states, particularly Saudi Arabia would not welcome such kind of cooperation which would be a testing point of foreign policy of the US. However, if Houthis do not cooperate with the US as they have slogan of non-interference in Yemen might hurt American interests not only in Yemen but also in the region. Moreover, it would become a stronghold or a check post of Iran which can launch attack on Saudi Arabia in order to assert more pressure on Saudi regime.

Hezbollah

Since 1981, Iran has been time and again remained under severe criticism by western community due to its support for Hezbollah.⁴³ It has been remained a source of concern for the US allies in the region while it has proved as an asset for Iran on many occasions. Though, Syrian government has also supported Hezbollah, but the main assistance, training, intelligence sharing and political support remained by Iran. The supporting tactics to Hezbollah by Iran has been changed dramatically after 9/11 incident. Therefore, the cooperation between Hezbollah and Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) has become complicated process. The Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) claims that various Iranian businessmen support the terrorist organization financially.⁴⁴ Moreover, they claim that the members of Hezbollah organization get training from Iran when they go for pilgrimage in Iranian holy cities.⁴⁵ The weapons which are used against Israel mostly found Iranian made.⁴⁶ This covert support has always been denied by Iran and rejected Israeli allegations.⁴⁷

Iran can increase the intensity of conflicts as well as decrease the level of conflict in the region through this organization. However, in past it has used Hezbollah in order to detract the attention of the western community over Iran's nuclear activities. Moreover, it has used Hezbollah as a source of power in areas where Iran cannot launch missile attacks. The old tradition of enmity between Arabs and Persians limited Iran from any provoking incident against Arab states. Even Saudi Arabia has time and again highlighted this factor that a Persian state cannot rule on Arabs.⁴⁸ However, due to Arab origin of Hezbollah, Iran can use it against Arab countries particularly during any crisis where Arabs would support

Iranian rivals. Hence, any attack on Iran can open new fronts in Middle East, particularly from Hezbollah. Therefore, the US would not try to directly attack on Iran in near future. However, it may ask Iran for cooperation and de-escalation of conflict from Hezbollah to Israeli borders. The first episode of this example can be witnessed as amid negotiations process

US-Iran Convergence of Interests against ISIS

The Islamic State (IS) has provided unprecedented opportunity of cooperation between the US and Iran in Iraq. War against terrorism which often Iran associated as 'war against Islam', has eventually become Iran's war due to presence of 'radical Islamists' in its neighbouring country.

However, many scholars believe that if the cooperation between Iran and the US takes place officially, than this cooperation should not overwhelmingly strike Islamic State rather it needs to counter Islamic State through counter-narrative, compensating Iraqi Sunni citizens politically and economically. Otherwise, Islamic State's narrative, i.e., 'Rome (Europe) is supporting the infidels (Shiites)'⁴⁹ would be strengthened in Arabs' minds. Therefore, this cooperation should not cross the limits in countering Islamic State. However, the US should be keener towards balancing between Gulf States hence, the cooperation between Iran and the US would remain fragile.

US-Iran Cooperation and Israeli Factor

The most important and influential ally of the US in Middle East has unprecedented concerns over the US foreign policy towards Middle East which now various scholars are calling 'Re-balancing of Middle East policy'.⁵⁰ The US is supporting Israel since its inception. Israel remained largest aid recipient of the US. However, this relationship has taken new dimension since comprehensive nuclear deal has signed by Iran and P5+1. Israel had criticized the negotiations process between Iran and P5+1 and now extensively criticizing this nuclear deal. It has raised various concerns over the developments of negotiations process. Obama time and again has assured to Israel and the US public that the deal with Iran would not threaten Israel or the US security. In this context, he said that 'nuclear deal which is in double digits will be benefited to refrain Iran from nuclear weapons capability'.⁵¹ Moreover, he has denied the concerns of Netanyahu and appealed for better understanding of time and constraints which the US is facing in the region.⁵²

Hence, the cooperation between Iran and the US over regional security issues would face severe challenges due to Israeli proactive reaction not only in the region but within the US also. Jewish lobby may try its level best to counter the emerging cooperation between the two countries. The Netanyahu's speech in Congress is the first active effort of Israel and may be more to come. Therefore, any security incident in the region in general and against Israel in particular might affect the cooperation or informal *détente* between the two countries.

US-Iran Cooperation and Saudi Factor

Saudi Arabia and Iran were allies of US since the second world war. After Iranian revolution 1979 these relations became strained. It is fear of not only a different sect but a different race [Arab vs Persian] which compelled Saudi Arabia to bandwagon with the US. The cooperation was at its epic when both nations found their interests beyond the region particularly in Afghanistan. Saudi Arabia had tried to launch a war of narratives in Middle East and in some parts of South Asia which was supported by the US for more than two decades. At that particular time, it was in the interest of the US to support the narrative of 'Jihad' in order to contain former Soviet Union (USSR) in Middle East. Hence, the Saudi Arabia and Salafi ideology was the sole anti-communist community in Middle East who declared communism against the spirit of Islam.

Saudi Arabia had not supported the US nuclear negotiation process with Iran due to various factors. Firstly, the re-balancing Middle East would undermine the status of Saudi Arabia in the region. This status is pre-requisite for the monopoly over Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in order to fix the price and quantity of oil production. If Saudi monopoly affects due to any sort of cooperation between the US and Iran, it would be impossible that Saudi regime accept this cooperation. Moreover, it would not be in the interest of the US also, because the oil prices are often used as weapon against adversaries by the US.⁵³ Moreover, the cooperation between the US and Iran would undermine the US support in security affairs of Middle East, where Saudi Arabia and Iran are indulged with their respective proxies.⁵⁴ Both countries want to see each other economically weak and strategically susceptible. Hence, Saudi Arabia recently has offered Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) its cooperation against any attack over Iran.⁵⁵ The Saudi Arabian cooperation is more important which would encourage Israel to attack on Iranian nuclear facilities. Israel can use Saudi space for any attack against Iran which would hold Israel to be more accurate against Iranian nuclear facilities,

because, it may be perceived that after Saddam Hussain, new Iraqi government would not allow Israel to use its space for any potential attack against Iran.

The US will lose its main ally in the region.⁵⁶ The Saudi regime is a time tested friend of the US who always helped the later in protecting its interests through proxies and funding in numerous places and among various state and non-state actors. Saudi Arabia has more than once indicated that the Iranian nuclear programme can start nuclear arms race in the region.⁵⁷ This perspective is a kind of threat that if world will fail to prevent Iran from acquisition of nuclear weapons than Saudi Arabia and its Arab allies⁵⁸ would do their best to acquire the same weapons in order to balance the power in the region. Therefore, it would be difficult issue for the US to convince Saudi authorities over any possible deal between Iran and P5+1. Saudi Arabia as compared to last 36 years is now more vocal since one year in criticizing the US policies towards Iran. Saudi authorities had criticized interim deal between Iran and six major powers and now also criticizing nuclear agreement.⁵⁹ The foreign ministry of Saudi Arabia said that 'the objective of both sides is same as both want to contain Iran from nuclear arsenals acquisition but the approaches are different'.⁶⁰ Saudi Arabian criticism over ongoing negotiation process was not a sign of distrust over the US but over the Iranian authorities and their active engagement in Middle East, therefore, Saudi Arabia was conscious to back any permanent deal between the major power of the world and Iran. This opposition would affect the ongoing process as both nations cannot abandon their long term relationship on a single matter. The Saudi opposition to this deal and negotiation process over regional issues would limit the prospects of cooperation between the US and Iran on regional issues.

Conclusion

The cooperation of the US and Iran over regional issues as well as over bilateral relations is still bleak but the hostility would not be witnessed in years to come. The differences of interests between the countries in region particularly due to more active engagement of Israel and Saudi Arabia would not allow both countries to think about cordial relationship. But the escalation of conflicts, every option is on the table, nuclear facilities will be destroyed and the US is great 'Satan' will no longer be parts of news in world media. After more than 36 years of rift, the US and Iran have realized that the hostility between the two countries is not solving regional issues, rather this hostility is creating more instability in the region. Therefore, both countries need to revisit their policies.

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THE EMERGING, GEO STRATEGIC AND ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF CAR'S

Dr. Qaim Raza Jaffry*

Abstract

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 brought about the liberation of five Central Asian Republics (CARs), which have attracted widespread attention because of their geo-strategic location and rich natural resources. Historically, Central Asia has always been the focus of Great Powers due to its geographical extent, strategic location, ethnic diversity and resultant conflict potential. Russian and British Empires played their 'Great Game' on this vast chessboard throughout the nineteenth century, in which the Soviet Russia had an ultimate upper hand. The demise of the USSR, the emergence of CARs and discovery of huge quantity of energy resources in the region has resulted in a new 'Great Game' between competing regional and extra regional players. The US intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq is indicative of her future designs and interests in the region, and will have far reaching implications for the regional countries and is likely to evoke sharp reactions and response from them. Strategic location and influence of Central Asia on neighboring region, especially on the Indian Sub-continent, has always made it the focus of extra regional powers.

Keywords: Central Asia, Great Silk Road, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Asia

Introduction

The breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991 led to the emergence of five CARs viz Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Azerbaijan, although not co-located in Central Asia is counted amongst CARs because its independence was also brought about as a result of the demise of Soviet Union and like other CARs, Azerbaijan is a Muslim state and faces similar politico economic problems.

Historical legacy of Russia's Control over Central Asia, the overwhelming superiority of its power in the region and geographical proximity together create conditions whereby its role in the region cannot be undermined. Russia has vested interests in retaining prominent status in the region, moreover requirement of CARs for a security umbrella entail a significant Russian influence in the region in future as well. China which also borders the CARs has been one of the more successful countries in finding a foothold and ensuring its

* Dr Qaim Raza Jaffry is researcher and is faculty member in the department of Leadership and Management Studies in NDU.

access to CARs. China and CARs have cemented their ties for fight against ethnic separatism and religious extremism.¹

The Historical Legacy

The most common historical perception of Central Asia is of backwardness and barbarism. The destructive terror of the campaigns of Genghis Khan and Tamerlane has been etched on the collective consciousness of the neighboring sedentary civilizations. Historians, dramatists and poets from the Middle East, China and Europe have all presented these Central Asian nomadic explosions as the ultimate exercise in barbaric nihilism, destroying without trace centuries of civilization.

The re-appropriation of an indigenous Central Asian history is a natural post-colonial exercise, helping to forge the historical myths which act as the foundations of new nation-states. But it is not without its potential dangers. The history of the region is also plagued by divisions, ancient enmities and political disunity, of which the most explosive and fundamental are the competing claims of the sedentary and the nomadic populations.

The pre-Russian Central Asian past is not, therefore, a simple panacea for the future of the region. Likewise, the legacy of Russian and Soviet rule cannot be simply discarded, since many aspects of that legacy have become embedded in the basic structures of Central Asian society. Many of the reforms and changes implemented by the Russian and Soviet authorities were necessary and progressive if often brutally enforced. Russian and Soviet rule, for all its faults did introduce modernity, industrialization and rapid social change to Central Asia and there is no practical prospect of a return to a pristine pre-Russian past.²

Evolving Geo-Political Scenario in Central Asia

The changing profile of geo-political challenges and opportunities in Central Asia has put an impetus on the military presence and expansion on the part of the major powers and other with perceived stakes in the region. Notably, a not very dissimilar competitive pursuit for territories, critical resources and geographical advantages were responsible for the spread of imperialism in the period from the 17th to the 19th centuries. The emerging geo-political rivalry among the major powers of the world is more or less a revival of the same traditional geo-politics. The events preceding Soviet withdrawal from

Afghanistan and US military action against the Taliban regime created “a turning point in the historical shift from the cold war, the West against USSR, to the new global conflict; the industrialized North against radical political Islam.” Because of their common borders and geographic proximity to Afghanistan, the Central Asian republics emerged as the frontline in US war on terrorism and Islamic extremism. During the active military phase of US-led war against terrorism in Afghanistan, the Central Asian countries played a very active role. All except Turkmenistan had provided their air bases to US and its allied forces; and Turkmenistan gave access to US forces to its air-space for search and rescue operations and other humanitarian missions.³

Challenges in Nation-building

From the perspective of politics, the phenomenon of ethnicity, sectarianism and regionalism weighs heavily over the CARs. Their economic resources and strategic location tempts the great powers and even others to shape the geo-strategic character and outlook of the region. It is significant to note that in the later part of 1980s the Central Asian part of the former Soviet Union had seen the weakest of the anti-Russian popular mobilization. This behaviour is attributed to the pattern and nature of social organization which historically relied mainly on the regional and local allegiances of the populations. The concept and process of nation-building in Central Asia were caught up in the form of identity politics which appeared to be designed to define and produce nationalistically-defined contours of community and to reflect similarly defined interests and values.⁴

Politicization of Religion

Although the leaders of Central Asia, wary of the potency of religion, took effective steps to ensure some degree of state control over religion and religious institutions so as to prevent the politicization of Islam. However the greater cultural interaction with the Muslim world and arrival of funds from different countries, their interpretation of Islamic precepts and practices is changing the nature of Islam in Central Asia. The vacuum created by the lack of leadership from the official Islamic hierarchy has allowed fundamentalist groups to proliferate. As a result, the number of mosques and madrasas has increased substantially in the region. The spurt of terrorist activities and the fear of militancy had rocked almost all republics of Central Asia.⁵

Geo-Strategic Importance of CAR's

Independence after over 80 years of direct rule by Moscow has created a strategic power vacuum in the CARs that has unleashed rivalries among large neighbours and distant superpowers. A multitude of countries has shown commercial interest in the regions. They include Russia, China, US, EU, Japan, Israel, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, India. With the end of Cold War, geo strategic environments had undergone major twists and turns. The impact of these changes influenced the interstate relations of all the countries of the world in general and Central Asian region in particular. Eastern European countries broke away their alliance with Soviet Union which was itself dissolved once CARs gained independence in 1991. US has been recognized as the only superpower in post-cold war scenario. Historians, who warned once about America's decline, now gush about an age of unrivalled dominance.

After 9/11 incident CARs gained extreme importance both for USA and Russia, who are bestowing them with political, economic and security concessions. The current geopolitical chess game in Central Asia, referred to as "Great Anti-terrorist Game,"⁶ is different from earlier geopolitical development of the region in several ways. In the current 'Anti-Terrorist Game' along with Russia, US is also emerging as a dominant player due to its military presence in the region. The events of 9/11 have thus significantly altered the geo-strategic environment of the Central Asian Region. It is becoming evident that USA will emerge as a key player in the region.

Regional Conflicts

The inter-state and inter-ethnic conflicts are likely to intensify further. The Uzbek-Tajik conflicts over water, energy and surface transport have worsened the relations. Border incidents have become a regular feature as Uzbekistan builds up armoured tanks along the Sughed enclave. Tensions have heightened following the halting of gas supplies, closer to Amuzang-Khatlon railway section and sudden increase by 32 per cent tariffs on transit of freight by Uzbekistan for Tajikistan. Tajikistan's plan to build the Roghun hydroelectric dam on the Vakhsh River is strongly opposed by Uzbekistan. The Uzbek-Kyrgyz relations have also deteriorated over the years, especially since the June 2010 ethnic riots in Osh. The two have difference over land, enclaves, border and water. Uzbekistan is strongly opposed to Kyrgyzstan going ahead with the building of Kambar-Ata mega hydroelectric projects with the Russian support. Uzbek

President has warned about an imminent war if hydropower dams are built on the upstream of Amu Darya and Syr Darya. Energy crises are causing frictions; Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan have threatened to pull out from the Soviet-era built Central Asian electricity grid due to serious shortage of power. The Kyrgyz-Tajik tensions over resources are also building up in the Batken region. These issues are unlikely to be resolved in the short and mid term period.⁷

The Afghan Reconstruction and Central Asia

The Afghan stabilizing process may have unintended consequences for the regional states. For example, any effort to boost Afghan agriculture production will cut into Central Asian water resources; hydropower projects are likely to cause strain on downstream water supplies, which is already fuelling anxieties in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. Several connectivity projects have been envisaged to realize the idea. In 2010, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have signed the Cross-Border Transport Agreement (CBTA) under the aegis of the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation. The CBTA forms a significant part of the Northern Distribution Network (NDN) logistics corridors. Both Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan gas pipeline and central Asia South Asia (CASA-1000) hydroelectric power lines are encouraged by the US to make Afghanistan a linchpin of South Central Asia integration progress. But, there are rivalries erupting over who will anchor these projects. The US goal seemed only to secure its short-term security interests. Russia has also actively sought participation in both TAPI and CASA-1000 projects. Iran too is keenly pursuing hydropower projects in Tajikistan. Uzbekistan has its ambitious projects to control power supplies to Afghanistan and also Pakistan. China, on the other hand, is trying to implement its own project to revive the historic Silk Route and connect its Xinjiang province with Central Asia and beyond. The planned China-Kyrgyzstan- Uzbekistan railway line that will be completed in the next five years will change the geo-economic and political landscape of South and Central Asia.⁸

US in Central Asia

The continuation of the US military facilities in Central Asia is also likely to become a critical issue, and in fact, it may fuel regional and domestic discord. In the past, despite the SCO's firm opposition, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan had supported transit rights for the coalition efforts in Afghanistan. In fact, the US had several blueprints until recently for constructing several airbases in the region. The situation has changed since then. However, the United States is

trying to retain its Transit Centre at Manas after the complete withdrawal from Afghanistan.⁹

Post US withdrawal Scenario

The US complete withdrawal from Afghanistan will result in increased security threat for Central Asia and to Russia also. Islamic extremists, emboldened by their victory over the Western coalition, will try to expand their influence into Central Asia. Uzbekistan, particularly, could be seriously exposed to terrorist attacks. The poverty and ethnic conflicts in the Fergana valley will provide the extremists the right conditions. In the scenario of the Taliban's revival, the Central Asian states would neither have the means nor are they likely to take responsibility on their own, and if the Russians and Chinese have their say, they would not let the US and NATO to cross certain threshold. But the past trends have shown that regional states will seek cooperation with the West against the wishes of Moscow and Beijing and in the process extract maximum advantages for themselves in the after the complete drawdown.¹⁰

China's Influence

Notwithstanding the Custom Union (CU), China seeks an increasingly powerful and ambitious presence in Central Asia, projecting itself as a factor of stability. China's plans for large-scale energy and transport links would mean gradual integration of Central Asia into Chinese economic space. Beijing wants to enter the region's agriculture, mineral ore, gold, coal mines, hydropower, and manufacturing sectors. This is already happening in Kyrgyzstan. Chinese farmers are buying Tajik land.

Role of Iran

Iran is increasing its stake in Central Asia. Tehran is engaged in developing the Sangtuda-2 hydroelectric power plant in Tajikistan. To demonstrate its strength, Tehran forced Uzbekistan to revoke its decision to block Iranian freight meant for Sangtuda-2. Lately, Kyrgyzstan has cited the threat of Iranian Missile hitting the Manas military base as an excuse to evict the US military base from its territory. These are indications of Iranian growing influence in the region. Besides, Iranian role would remain vital for any Central Asia's connectivity projects in future.

Geo-Economic Environment

Globalization has widened disparities between developed and developing countries especially after the end of cold war. Multinational Corporations have operated to the detriment of the poorer nations. The Strategies pursued by IMF, World Bank and WTO promote an unjust neo-colonial order. However, globalization is a reality. The choice before governments is, “not how best to fight globalization, but how to manage it through creative policies at home and abroad”.¹¹ September 11 attacks brought about serious implications for the global, regional and national economies. On the global level, economies are already slowing down and even deteriorating in certain cases. The 9/11 incident have reasserted, the US global supremacy or perhaps the US imperialism, which is quite discernible in aggressive unilateral stances in its policy postures and taking economic decisions by passing the multi-lateral institutions.¹²

The presence of large oil and gas reserves in CARs have aroused a quagmire of competing interest between USA, Russia, China, Japan and many other countries of the region. In return for the cooperation extended by CARs, USA has extended economic assistance to the CARs for socio economic and socio political development. USA will be interested to renew its efforts to transport oil and gas resources of the region through Afghanistan and Pakistan bypassing Russia and Iran.¹³

The Custom Union (CU) is now expanded into Common Economic Space (CES) from January 2012 between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan and possibly Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan will join soon. The CU must be viewed in the context of countering challenges of economic expansion posed by China into Eurasia. The CU also means Russia's search for a stronger regional integration model like European Union and as a necessary process to evolve as an economic bloc on line of the European Union, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, and North American free Trade Agreement and the ASEAN. The long-term success of CU would remain a subject of intense debate, but Beijing is likely to seek new strategy to turn economic relations with Central Asian States in its favour. China may suffer commercially in the short-term, but it will seek greater economic space including manufacturing capacities through investments and concessionary loans within Eurasia. Moscow is unlikely to withstand the economic push by China in Central Asia in the longer run.

Policy Options for Pakistan

With Uzbekistan, Pakistan reached an agreement to strengthen cultural ties; steps for combating terrorism and reactivating the joint ministerial commission in order to widen the areas of economic cooperation. Pakistan also offered Uzbekistan its ports of Karachi and Gwader to boost trade with that landlocked country.

With Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan signed a series of agreements for strengthening communication links, encouraging the private sector in trade and relaxing the visa regime. Like Uzbekistan, Pakistan pledged to take joint steps with Kyrgyzstan to deal with the threat of terrorism and provide port facilities for trade purposes. Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan also agreed to establish a working group to look into the technical and financial matters for provision of electricity to Pakistan. The two countries agreed to have a visa-free regime for the holders of diplomatic and official passports, establish cooperation between the two ministries of education. Under the agreement, the Associated Press of Pakistan and the Kyrgyz Kabar news agency will link up.

Enormous activity has taken place in the promotion of Pakistani-Central Asian ties since December 1991, when the Soviet Central Asian republics became independent. There was a lot of euphoria in Pakistan when the Central Asia countries secured independence, with widespread expectations in some circles that the ruptured bonds of religion and culture with the region would be restored. However, most of these expectations were short-lived, as the new Central Asian states pursued a pragmatic course of action in the arena of external relations and decided to diversify their foreign policy options particularly with the Western countries, China, Japan and Korea than giving preference to the Muslim countries of the southern flank, namely Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran.

Pakistan extended speedy recognition to the newly independent Central Asian republics and a number of delegations (clergy, traders and cultural groups, to name some) went there to seek possibilities of better cooperation. At the same time, the expansion of Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) from three original members (Pakistan, Iran, Turkey) to incorporate seven more countries of West and Central Asia (Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Azerbaijan) further raised hopes and expectations for meaningful cooperation between Pakistan and the new Central Asian states.

The launching of the expanded form of the ECO in November 1992 in Islamabad placed Pakistan in a unique position as it became the only country of South Asia to be a member of the ECO (composed of mainly West and Central Asian countries) and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). So far, several agreements on the strengthening of bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and the Central Asian countries have been signed and dozens of high-profile visits have taken place from both sides. But despite the edge enjoyed by Pakistan on forging close relations with the Central Asian countries, compared to India, three important factors proved to be an impediment in the realization of the expected new era of friendship and cooperation with Central Asia.

First, soon after the independence of the Central Asian countries, the growth and rise of extremist and jihadi elements in Pakistan created a lot of suspicion and to some extent hostility about Pakistan in these countries. Reports of various Islamic extremist groups from Pakistan sneaking into Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan resulted in a backward trend in Pakistani-Central Asian ties.

When President Musharraf visited Tashkent on March 6, Uzbek President Islam Karimov said that the Uzbek people "know that people who carried out bloody acts in Uzbekistan are now hiding in Pakistan, and the efforts by President Musharraf's government show real bravery." It is true that after Sept. 11, 2001, Pakistan and various Central Asian countries, particularly Uzbekistan, coordinated their efforts to effectively deal with the menace of terrorism, but damage had already been done during the 1990s because of the activities of the various Islamic extremist groups having links in Pakistan to destabilize the secular regimes in Central Asia.

Second, Pakistan's road to Central Asia is still not smooth because of the fluid situation in Afghanistan, particularly in terms of the fragile political order, the activities of Taliban remnants against coalition and Afghan state forces and the role of warlords.

When the Central Asian republics secured independence from Moscow, there was a feeling in Pakistan for better trade, commercial and cultural relations with their northern neighbors. But hopes for better Pakistani-Central Asian ties were shattered because of civil war and violence in Afghanistan. As long as Afghanistan remained in a state of chaos, it was difficult for Pakistan to develop communication, trade and commercial linkages with the Central Asian countries.

Therefore, Pakistan is handicapped because of geography and the instable situation in Afghanistan as the lack of its direct access to any Central Asian country puts Islamabad in a difficult situation. The narrow Wakhan Corridor, which is part of Afghanistan, denies Pakistan direct geographical linkage with Tajikistan. Otherwise, had Pakistan been in control of that corridor, its geographical predicament in Central Asia wouldn't have existed. The question of gas and oil pipeline from Central Asia to Pakistan or electricity from Kyrgyzstan would have become a practical possibility had the situation in Afghanistan remained normal.

Third, regardless of the "image problem" which Pakistan has faced in Central Asia or the geographical factor, Pakistani-Central Asian ties would have been strengthened if the agreements, accords, treaties or memorandums of understanding (MoUs) signed between Pakistan and Central Asian states since 1992 would have been implemented. But bureaucratic hurdles in the implementation of most of the bilateral agreements with the Central Asian states resulted in stalemate and stagnation in Pakistani-Central Asian relations. Had this not been the case, the joint commission between Pakistan and Uzbekistan would have remained operational and not reactivated on the occasion of President Musharraf's visit to that Central Asian state.

Strengthening the bonds of friendship and cooperation between Pakistan and Central Asia will require practical measures to ease travel, trade and other restrictions. Merely relaxing visas for diplomats or other officials will not work unless other segments of society like traders, teachers, media people who represent the civil societies of Pakistan and Central Asia are allowed to travel without restrictions.

Most important, a better "image" of Pakistan needs to be created in the Central Asian countries so that the people and governments of that region do not feel suspicious or threatened with regard to their South Asian neighbour. For Pakistan, Central Asia may be a land of opportunities, but this type of thinking may remain wishful unless a better understanding between Pakistan and Central Asia is developed and meaningful interaction at the cultural, economic, educational and business level takes place. Similarly, Pakistan provides numerous opportunities to the landlocked Central Asian countries, thus paving the way for a mutually beneficial relationship between the two.¹⁴

Analysis

Pakistan's Geostrategic Location

Dr. Shahid Ahmed Hashmat writes in his article that the unique geographical situation of Pakistan at the threshold of China, Central, Western and South Asia makes it an important destination and transit route for future trade and economic activities. Given various security threats haunting the region and the presence of extra-regional powers complicating the milieu, Pakistan can play a very important role in meeting the energy requirements of south Asia and even the Far East, which will help bring more stability in the region.

Pakistan is the shortest and most direct route through which India and many other countries can access the central Asian markets for energy supply, trade and a range of economic interactions. Hence, Pakistan's strategic importance for central Asia both politically and economically is of great importance.

Strategic Collaboration

It is the convergence of mutual interests of stability and progress of the region, which influences the policies of CARS, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan towards each other. Construction of oil and gas pipeline from central Asia to Pakistan and export of energy resources to various other parts of the world will increase interdependence of all countries in the region. Therefore, bilateral and multilateral cooperation due to enhanced economic ties will reduce traditional frictions/rivalries leading to peaceful resolution of outstanding conflicts/disputes and consolidation of peace and tranquility. Pipeline project will bring with itself a huge development of infrastructure in terms of roads and rail links, which would bring economic opportunities in the region.¹⁵

"The unique feature of Indian economy over the past few decades has been a combination of high growth and stability. It has proved its strength and resilience through this period. India's economic diplomacy with the Central Asian and South Asian nations also show a continuing positive trend. High-level visits are exchanged on a regular basis. Today's India is not only a reliable business partner on a bilateral basis, but given its own economic potential and rich experience it is one of the most suitable countries in Asia to promote active economic cooperation between Central and South Asia. India's political and

economic diplomacy with Central Asian and South Asian nations are therefore strategically important from the perspective of inter-regional cooperation.¹⁶

General Recommendations

Formulation of Comprehensive Energy Policy

Pakistan should carefully evaluate her long-term energy requirements, at least for next 25 years and a comprehensive integrated policy to meet these requirements must be formulated. Such policy should be approved by the parliament and constitutional safeguards should be provided to avoid undesirable change by subsequent government.

Establishment of Ministry of Energy

The decision making in the field of energy involves many different ministries and departments suffering from lack of unified direction and purpose. Though, presently the ministry of petroleum and natural resources does exist but its function is quite different than the department of energy in the most developed countries. Having formulated national energy policy, the ministry of energy should provide necessary mechanism for implementation of the government, semi-government and autonomous departments working in this field, coordinating with equally active private energy sector.

Improvement of Internal Security Situation

In order to attract the much needed foreign investment, especially in the energy sector; Pakistan will have to seriously address the security issues to make the mega projects, such as Turkmenistan Afghanistan Pakistan & India (TAPI) gas pipeline, safe for investments and functioning.

Energy Security Force

Existing gas pipeline between Balochistan and Punjab/Sindh is being damaged/disrupted quite frequently by anti-state elements. Resultantly, para military forces are deployed to protect the pipelines, for security of static establishments.

Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan Pipeline Project

The Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan project must be revived as soon as possible. Having Long-term and widespread positive implications for

these two regions, the project has significant potential for enhancing stability and improving living standards in South and Central Asia.

Peace and Security in Afghanistan

Launching of TAP is largely dependent on improved security in Afghanistan, which is far from satisfactory level, at present. Many war lords still control the areas/provinces away from Afghan capital; hence they pose a continuous security risk for the pipeline project, if their demands are not accommodated.

Multifaceted Cooperation, Including Trade with CARs

Pakistan should improve its trade relations with CARs, by providing transit trade facilities to these Republics on very soft terms, since they are expected to be the potential user of Gwadar Port. For this purpose, rail link to these states must be extended, along with the development of Gwadar Port. Possibility of offering construction of required railway track to these states, on priority basis, must be studied by Pakistan, in consultation with international financial institutions or world consortiums. Though the project would require huge investment, however, its dividends on long-term will be immense for Pakistan and CARs.

Way Forward for CARs

The disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 and accession to independence of six CARs have aroused great interest for the outside world because of the emerging markets and presence of tremendous oil and gas reserves in these republics. Pakistan because of its geo-strategic location is advantageously placed for providing maritime trade routes to the land locked CARs.

Given the historical legacy of Russia's control over the region, Russian role in Central Asia cannot be undermined in years to come. Desired cooperation with CARs can therefore not be established while circumventing Russia. Historically, Pakistan and erstwhile Soviet Union have had marginal interaction and remained hostage to mutual distrust and divergent vagaries of super power confrontation. Shift in Pakistan's Afghan Policy in the aftermath of September 11 and dynamics of unipolar world have lent opportunities to Pakistan to develop friendly relations with Russia which can ultimately be exploited for establishing

cooperation with the CARs. China with whom Pakistan enjoys a strategic partnership need to be approached to pave ways for removal of misgivings between Russia and Pakistan. Friendly ties so developed with Russia and our existing ties with China can serve as a road to cooperation with CARs. Access to the platform of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) through China's support served a force multiplier for our endeavors to develop friendly ties with Russia and CARs and reap the benefits of economic potentials of the region. Simultaneously, necessary communication infrastructure in the shape of rail/road links and oil/gas pipelines are required to be developed to act as a real gateway for landlocked CARs.

Recommendations for the CARs

- There is dire need to develop transport links among the CARs. Efforts should be made to simplify and harmonize transit, customs and border management affairs which should be acceptable for all the states. CARs must try to join the World Trade Organization (WTO).
- CARs are rich in energy resources, hence they must establish a regional water energy consortium to organize and manage the existing huge regional water and energy resources with the more efficient way for their human development and regional stability.
- The governments of CARs can also work in a collective way to address the risk from any natural disaster resulting into catastrophic environment or any other unseen misery. This would bring all society closer.
- All the nations try to create a disaster plan for their better preparedness, the plan must focus upon the devastating effects of earthquakes and floods.
- A balanced approach must be developed to control the drug trafficking.
- An effective governments networks must be established in the areas of health, education and culture.
- Capacities of regional institutions must be enhanced and their experiences be shared for further collaboration among CARs.

Conclusion

Central Asian Republics are one of the most important strategic locations of the world. It is having borders with world's great powers. It has one

of the largest oil reserves in the world. Its economy is growing very fast. It contains many natural and mineral resources. Pakistan will get a lot of benefits if she has deep bilateral ties with these republics.

“The South Caspian is a mature exploration basin with over 150 years of development. However, large known oil and gas fields are in the Caspian offshore (Guneshli, Chirag, Kyapaz) awaiting development. Detailed seismic surveying of the deeper parts of the Caspian offshore may reveal new untested structures that contain commercial quantities of hydrocarbons. At the moment, most of the Turkmenistan Caspian shelf, with more than 40 untested structures, remains relatively undrilled. Turkmenistan is also disputing the Kyapaz field, which was discovered by Azerbaijan. A number of exploration blocks were offered for bidding in September 1997. Turkmenistan postulates undiscovered reserves on its Caspian shelf at 3 billion metric tons (22 billion bbl) of oil and 4.8 trillion cubic meters (168 tcf) of gas.

The northern Caspian and northwestern Kazakhstan are also areas with large amounts of proven reserves and high potential for new discoveries. Almost three quarters of all the Kazakhstan reserves are in two supergiant fields—the Tengiz (oil) and Karachaganak (gas). The recoverable reserves of Tengiz have been recently updated to 12 billion barrels of oil with an estimated 25 billion barrels of oil in place. Most of the fields in the northern part of the basin, such as Karachaganak, contain mostly gas with a small amount of oil.

The North Usturt and Amu-Darya basins have some potential in oil and gas exploration. Seismic surveys and extensive exploration programs are expected to reveal potential drilling targets. The Amu-Darya Basin contains mainly gas reserves with a minor amount of oil.

Kazakhstan is a leader among the Central Asian countries in the amount of proven reserves and the potential for new findings. It has 10 to 22 billion barrels of proven crude reserves and 53 to 83 trillion ft³ of gas. Kazakhstan's territory is the largest among the Central Asia countries and contains four different geological basins. Those basins remain largely unexplored even though current exploration activity is high.

Azerbaijan has the second largest reserves among the Central Asian countries. It is a mature oil and gas country and will remain an important

producer for decades. The new large discoveries, if made, would be confined to the deep water in the Caspian offshore.

Turkmenistan has large gas reserves (95 to 155 trillion ft³ of gas). A large territory of Turkmenistan remains unexplored. It is quite possible that important discoveries will be made onshore and offshore in the part of the South Caspian basin that belongs to Turkmenistan.

Uzbekistan does not have a significant amount of oil but contains large amounts of gas (70 to 105 trillion ft³). It also has a large territory that has not been well explored for oil and gas.

The total proven oil reserves of the Central Asian countries were estimated in this study as ranging from 15 to 31 billion barrels, and proven gas reserves estimates vary from 230 to 360 trillion ft³ of gas. Central Asian reserves represent approximately 2.7% of the world total proven oil reserves and 7% of the world gas reserves.

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ROLE OF MEDIA IN TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUE – A CASE STUDY OF PAKISTAN

Sanaullah Khan and Dr. Raja Muhammad Khan*

Abstract

Climate change is an unequivocal and scientifically proven reality. Numerous intertwined contributing factors and politics of climate change have made the phenomenon very complex. Most of the factors responsible for this irreversible process of climate change are also known to be anthropogenic in nature. Climate change is an issue of a monumental magnitude and the entire globe is facing a great challenge to its existence. Various stakeholders like governments, scientists, thinkers and policy makers have contending views on the issues related to climate change because they see these from different angles. Awareness and thorough knowledge about climate change is essentially required to tackle its ensuing problems. The paper argues that requisite awareness about climate change is lacking among government, state institutions and general public in Pakistan, which impedes adaptation and mitigation processes. Media can play a very significant role in raising awareness about the causes of climate change and preparing the people to rise for sustainable use of resources.

Keywords: Climate change, Media, Role of Media, Print Media, Electronic Media

Introduction

Climate change is a scientifically proven phenomenon of a monumental magnitude. It is global in nature and affects living and non-living entities on the entire planet earth. It has trans-border character as it does not respect political boundaries of countries and carries serious implications for developed and developing nations. Sufferings of nations having less resilience and coping capacity to adapt and to mitigate the impacts of climate change are however more as compared to innovative and developed nations. Governments, academics and policy makers see the issue of climate change through myriad of angles and have varying views. Since the problem is of apocalyptic nature, pessimists envision a doomsday scenario whereas optimists have great hope in human ingenuity to find out solutions of issues related to climate change. They are of the view that through sustainable use of resources, innovation and global cooperation. Media, through its enormous discursive power can affect public

* Sanaullah Khan is PhD scholar and Dr. Raja Muhammad Khan has vast experience of research and teaching. He is regular contributor of research articles.

opinion, build consensus and manufacture consent.¹ Media through social responsibility can steer the masses to “what to think about”.

The immense power of the fourth estate² can raise right questions to mobilize the population for a cause. The power of media in the prevalent information age is increasing exponentially. Media creates an ‘epistemic community’ as it informs the masses and raises questions on behalf of public being their audience. Thus international action to address climate change can be created through media.³ Media’s prowess to guide actions of governments and institutions has been established and acknowledged.

There is wider consensus that climate change is the greatest threat the world faces today. It is predicted that global phenomenon of climate change besides threat to human life will have very adverse impact on agriculture and the entire ecological system.⁴ It has become clear that most of the causes of climate change are anthropogenic in nature because people’s lifestyles, consumption choices and exploitation of resources are unsustainable. The devastating effects in the wake of climate change can be adapted and mitigated by people when they rally their support for a cause hence public awareness about climate change assumes greater importance.

Pakistan is one of the most affected countries of climate change. Due to its weak state institutions and less coping capacity, climate change poses greater security risk to the country. During the last two decades, Pakistan’s civil society and media have emerged as vibrant organs of the state yet there has been little effort to sensitize masses about future challenges in the wake of emerging non-traditional security threats like climate change. They could have begun to fill the void between public institutions and traditional social structures, informing the public and creating informal mechanism to respond to threats posed by climate change. The role of media in building consensus on monumental challenge of climate change can contribute significantly in tackling the issues. In order to address all these issues effectively, it is essential to raise awareness of the general population regarding climate change and also explore the ways and means that inculcate awareness. Thus, media can play a significant role in tackling the challenges of climate change in developing countries in general and Pakistan in particular.

The paper argues that vitally important awareness about climate change is lacking among government, state institutions and general public. Media can

play an important role in raising awareness about causes and remedies for this highly complex phenomenon. This argument is based on exploration of four questions; firstly, as to what extent Pakistan is vulnerable to climate change-induced disasters? Secondly, how awareness about climate change can contribute to address the problem of climate change? Thirdly, what is the level of awareness about climate change among masses and government institutions in Pakistan? Fourthly, what role media can play to highlight threats posed by climate change and build public opinion for sustainable use of resources and measures for adaptation and mitigation?

Significance of Media: A Theoretical Approach

A renowned media theorist Niklas Luhmann posits, 'Whatever we know about our society, or indeed about the world in which we live, we know through the mass media'⁵ Media is an omnipresent entity having a symbiotic relationship with society and State institutions. In the contemporary period, especially with coming of new media, mass media's power has increased further. Publication of 'Panama Papers' by an International Consortium of Journalists is an example of boundless power of media. All good or bad news reach to people through media; messages are mediated and politics is said to be 'media-zed'. Also media can construct discourses as the peoples' attention to certain themes is steered by media. Scientists knew about climate change about two centuries ago but because of commercial interests of giant companies, it did not become 'newsworthy'. However, again with the relentless efforts of certain Non-Governmental Organizations and eminent personalities like former US Vice President Al Gore, climate change was not only debated in media but also became a salient public discourse. A number of documentaries like *Inconvenient Truth*, *Years of Living Dangerously*, *Climate Change Politics and the Economy: Rhetoric vs. Reality* etc stirred peoples' conscious regarding an impending threat of apocalyptic nature. In the past, even climate change deniers also used media to solicit support for their point of view. Media was also used for contrarian argument; for instance documentary *The Great Global Warming Swindle* propelled counter narrative of climate change.

According to agenda-setting theory, journalists in particular influence public opinion and according to the salience they give to certain news items. Newspaper stories are selected and ordered in accordance with certain news values. Those stories which are deemed to be the most newsworthy are given front-page coverage and large headlines; less newsworthy stories are placed

further back in the newspaper and given less print space. Agenda-setting theory 'asserts that audiences acquire these saliences from the news media, incorporating similar sets of weights into their own agendas.'⁶ With the introduction and great popularity of new media, it has become relatively convenient to create discourses and build public opinion in favour of 'common good' issues like climate change.

George Gerbner in his cultivation theory posits that media are important sources of information and entertainment and viewers cannot escape its gradual encroachment into their lives. To overcome problems engendered by climate change effectively, mobilization of people is imperative. Media has great influence in creating discourses and building consent on issues of vital importance. The way media covers an issue will affect how effectively societies deal with the problem. As climate change takes hold, people will demand information about what is happening and what they and their governments can do about it. Wise and responsible media managers see that climate change presents an opportunity to grow and better serve these audiences.

Media has many important roles to play in a society i.e. informing, documenting, investigating, acting as watchdogs and campaigning on social issues. Media through an awareness campaign can save lives and affect policy formulation process. Even if media may not affect policies directly, it influences the environment in which policy is formulated. Through its reporting, media can prepare masses for climate change. Coverage of climate change through media builds a social relationship among scientific community, scholars, policy makers and general public. Going a step further, the media of developing countries can inform the international audience, get their attention and ultimately foster cooperation to cope up with the situation. Climate change is not just a story of science but it has many stories of human interest in itself.⁷

Discourse analysis indicates that Pakistan's media has been gripped by two themes during the few years i.e. war on terrorism and political instability. Climate change despite posing existential threat to Pakistan has not become an important theme in Pakistani media. People can assert pressure on the government to act to solve climate change-induced problems. Media can sensitize people about the challenges and need for effective measures. Experts on the subject contend that the challenges of anthropogenic climate change can be

resolved through fostering climate-friendly behaviour for which media can play a significant role.

Pakistan's Vulnerability to Climate Change

According to the Climate Risk Index 2015 prepared by German Watch between 1994 and 2013, more than half a million people have died worldwide besides material losses of \$ 2.17 trillion as a direct result of over 15,000 extreme weather events.⁸ Massive flooding events occurring during the last few years resulting into killing of thousands and displacing millions and material losses of worth billions of rupees in Pakistan are attributed to adverse effects of climate change. Likewise there were spells of extreme heat waves with unprecedented high temperature and every month of 2016 sets a record of being the hottest month since the industrial revolution⁹ signifies that climate change is anthropogenic in nature and poor nations are more susceptible to it.

Developing countries are more vulnerable to the threat of climate change and Pakistan is included among top countries most vulnerable to climate change.¹⁰ University of Notre Dame has a project named as 'ND-GAIN Country Index', which provides details about vulnerability of various countries to climate change and their state of readiness. According to its vulnerability index, Pakistan ranks 115 out of 180 countries (higher number indicates more vulnerability whereas lower number denotes less vulnerability). Despite higher level of vulnerability, Pakistan's state of readiness is very low as it ranks 142 out of 180 countries.¹¹

With every passing year, Pakistan will be facing grave situation due to extreme events induced by climate change. Rising population has to sustain on scarce resources; thus, climate change is like a time bomb ticking for the country. Temperature in the Northern Pakistan has already been estimated to have increased by 1.9 degrees centigrade in the past century resulting in the decline of the glacial cover.¹² For instance the glaciers in the Himalya-Karakoram mountain ranges are desiccating; during the period from 1989 to 2009, Siachin Glacier has lost 17 percent of its mass and its length has reduced by 5.9 kilometres.¹³ Scientific estimates claim that the region's glaciers will be reduced to one fifth of their current size by the year 2035.

Due to climate change, the occurrences and severity of extreme weather events will substantially increase. Torrential floods in the catchment areas would

increase siltation process in water storage dams, thereby reducing their storage capacity and impairing availability of water for agriculture. With the increase in temperature, already water-stressed agriculture especially in arid and semi-arid regions would lead to reduced agricultural productivity. The estimated loss of crop yield with 1 degree rise in temperature is 6 to 9 percent. Climate change-induced rise in the sea level will also increase saline water in Indus Delta, which will result in adversely affecting coastal agriculture and fish breeding grounds. In view of increased health risks and loss of subsistence in the climate affected regions, there is an increased trend of migration to urban areas.¹⁴ The adverse effects of climate change would seriously impact social development goals like alleviation of poverty and improving economy of the country. Some of the extreme events attributed to climate change are as under:

- **Floods:** Almost at every alternate year floods occur in Pakistan and cause colossal damage. A variety of climatic and non-climatic factors influence flooding processes. Apart from the antecedent basin conditions, flood magnitudes depend on precipitation intensity, timing, and spatial distribution. Temperature and wind affect snowmelt, which in turn affects flow of rivers. The projected effects of climate change include changes in atmospheric and oceanic circulation, and many subsystems of the global water cycle are likely to intensify, leading to altered patterns of precipitation and runoff. During her recent history, Pakistan faced the most devastating floods in 2010. It caused death of over 1700 people and displacement of an estimated 19 million people across Pakistan. Official estimates of the economic damage range from \$ 8.74 to \$ 10.85 billion. Over 18000 villages were affected resulting in direct damage to 1.6 million houses. With ensuing adverse effects, there will be sudden onslaught of flash floods in coming years. Various climate model simulations show complex patterns of precipitation change, with some regions receiving less and others receiving more precipitation than they do now.
- **Heat Wave:** Sudden and unprecedented heat waves especially in urban areas have become a common manifestation of climate change. A 13 days long heat wave in Karachi during 2015 took a heavy toll of 1271 lives besides affecting over 35000 people.¹⁵ It was termed as unusual phenomenon due to climate change for which neither the government nor the public was ready. Experts attribute this massive disaster too

many factors prominent among those is climate change. The former Director General of the Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency contended that the heat wave was a symptom of global climate change, which has been aggravated by deforestation, expansion of asphalt super highways, and rapid urbanisation. He maintained that “there has been a rise in the Earth's average temperature from 15.5° C to 16.2° C over the last 100 years, due to which we are experiencing such extreme weather conditions both in summers and winters.”¹⁶ Commenting on the lack of resilience among government he said that non-availability of sophisticated weather prediction technology besides inaccessibility of people to brave difficult situation contributed to the casualties as a result of the heat wave.¹⁷ Similar heat wave in an Indian city of Ahmedabad occurred but timely action of the government by adopting awareness plan saved people's lives. Increased public awareness about the dangers of heat waves through community outreach; an early warning system with 7 days forecast, giving advance notice to public about predicted heat waves; and capacity building of the government through training of medical staff and provision of related amenities contributed to resilience in the face of climate change-induced disaster.¹⁸

- **Food Security:** During World Food Summit held in 1996, it was contended that “Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.”¹⁹ As per Global Hunger Index of 2014, Pakistan stood at serious level of 19.3 which is just marginally below alarming level of 20.²⁰ Increase in temperature because of climate change triggers wide range of problems. Salient among these are; reduced crop yield, increase in evaporation, drastic change in rain pattern leading to droughts and desertification. Various studies show that poor nations would face more food insecurity because of climate change.²¹
- Being an agrarian economy, Pakistan consumes 90 percent of its available water in agriculture. Reduction in availability of water for agriculture, decreased crop production because increase in temperature would cause food insecurity, resource scarcity and conflict. Pakistan people's staple food i.e. wheat is grown in all parts of the country but its production is directly linked to availability of arable land and irrigation

water. In Pakistan, 75% of wheat is produced in Punjab, 16% in Sind, 6% in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 3% in Balochistan.²² The largest province in terms of area i.e. Balochistan produces the least quantity of food grain because of non-availability of irrigation water. These statistics clearly highlight that wheat production is directly proportional to the availability of water to irrigate the land. It can also be inferred that reduction in availability of water due to climate change would seriously impact country's food security. In view of such a scenario, Pakistan will not be able to achieve objective of "energy, water and food security"²³ due to adverse effects of climate change. Food security is of such a great significance that Michael Kugelman suggests that Pakistan should declare hunger as a national security issue.²⁴ Intrusion of the sea water because of rise in the sea level besides many other problems reduces availability of arable land and affects mangroves coverage, which is habitat of a large variety of fish, thereby affecting food security.

Awareness about Climate Change in Pakistan

There is a wide gap between awareness level of masses about climate change in developing and developed countries. In Japan, Europe and North America more than 90% people have knowledge of devastating effects of climate change comparing with that very few were aware of effects of climate changes in developing countries. Still 40% of adults worldwide are unaware about climate change and this ratio increases to 65% in developing countries.²⁵

Awareness and thorough knowledge regarding an issue is the fundamental step from where actions necessary for the solution of problem begin. Currently the awareness about disastrous effect of climate change and sustainable use of resources in Pakistan is dismally low. Communicating with the general public and engaging stakeholders in climate change related issues is very important to thwart the challenge effectively. Harold Lasswell opines that communication is a persuasive process. Thus as a strong communication tool, media can persuade audience for a cause. It calls for national level outreach campaign for enhancing peoples' awareness about the threats of climate change and measures for adaptation and mitigation. Therefore there is a need to first gauge the opinions and capabilities of key stakeholders and other potential partners through interactive surveys and raise awareness among masses as well as government agencies through mass media.²⁶ On certain occasions like World

Environment Day media persons while reporting from public places ask question from people to gauge their awareness about the environmental issues. People's response and perusal of media carrying news regarding the environmental problems indicate that climate change is still a low politics issue in the country. Education in various institutions can play an essential role in increasing the climate change adaptation and mitigation capacities of communities by enabling individuals to make informed decisions. It helps the people to understand the causes and consequences of climate change, prepares them to adapt to the impacts of climate change, and emancipates the people to adopt more sustainable lifestyles.

In 2008, in line with the prevalent global trends, Pakistan realized the hazards of climate change and constituted a task force to assess the problems related to climate change and formulate a policy. The task force, after deliberation process of 4 years came up with a policy frame work to tackle the future threats posed by climate change. But experts say policy formulation is one thing and its implementation another. Implementation of the policy could have been far more effective, if during the process of policy formulation the people should also been kept on board through public awareness campaign running/launched through mass media.

Ministry of Climate Change was established and later reduced to a division. Enmeshed in wide range of traditional and non-traditional threats, coupled with institutional incompetence, the Government of Pakistan could not give due importance to climate change. The problems related to climate change did not make important news items in the mass media of Pakistan. Nonetheless, media did highlight in October 2015 that despite being victim of dire consequences of climate change, Pakistan was falling short of her responsibilities regarding climate change.²⁷

No reckonable initiative with regards to implementation of climate change policy was taken despite the heat wave in Karachi, which killed more than 1200 citizens. Such inactivity is an indication that Pakistan has yet not realized the catastrophic issues of climate change neither the masses are ready to face the hazards of these changes nor the government is equipped.²⁸ Climate change adaptation would require \$ 6-14 billion annually till 2050.²⁹ Hence to tackle this issue Government resources are neither sufficient nor government departments are equipped to meet the challenges. Resources can be managed

from international sources that fund the projects, however respective government make practicable plans to solicit the funding. Government of Pakistan has not been forthcoming to convince international institutions to fund certain projects and turn this vulnerability into an opportunity.

Pakistan's Media and Climate Change

In a nation facing violence and an unprecedented energy shortage resulting into slow economic growth, the climate change tends to be relegated to lesser importance.³⁰ After having been liberalized in 2002, the television sector experienced a media boom. In the fierce competitive environment, commercial interests became paramount and quality of journalism gave way to sensationalism. Media's appetite for news was fulfilled by global war on terror stories. Being the battle field and frontline state, Pakistani media's attention was diverted to news regarding terrorism and related stories.

Pakistan's media sector is highly influenced by the ownership structure. There are four dominating media moguls, or large media groups in the country i.e. Jang, Express, Nawa-i-Waqt and Dawn. Due to their dominance in both print and broadcast industries all these media groups are very influential in politics and society. The media of Pakistan has seen a revolution during the last decade, particularly in the electronic media, where a large number of new TV and radio channels have been established.

Electronic Media

Presently, there are around 90 TV channels and 106 FM radio stations operating in the country. Today, there are 86 million viewers of TV in Pakistan, consisting of 38 million cable and satellite viewership and 48 million terrestrial viewership. In a large number of talk shows myriad political and security issues are debated but climate change does not get to due attention of media. However, merely on special days one odd segment is allocated to debate on climate. People between the ages of 26 to 45 years are the major consumers of news channels of televisions.³¹ With exception of one odd segment of talk show programme on environment, television channels do not focus on issues of public interest like environmental issues i.e. climate change, deforestation, pollution etc.

Among the electronic media, Pakistan Television is still the biggest television channel viewed on terrestrial domain. Likewise, radio channels especially FM radio can prove very effective medium for social change and

convincing people about sustainable use of resources. Climate Change must be included as theme by all private media channels. Government should devote a mandatory time on the state run television channel, where trained journalists and experts must hold programmes on climate change. Short documentaries on the theme of climate change will help a great deal. One such maiden Urdu documentary entitled *Pighalta Pakistan*³² (Melting Pakistan) prepared by Pakistan Muslim League (Q) is good initiative. This documentary has been shared to millions of viewers through social media. More such initiatives can create a 'critical mass' of people to engender an action for this issue of national security importance. Radio Pakistan aired a good short programme on environmental issues during first week of November 2016 which though insufficient is a good beginning. Such programmes being an effective communication need to be repeated for better outreach.

Print Media

There are approximately 945 newspapers in the country. The print media is published in 11 languages with Urdu and Sindhi as largest language groups. Urdu newspapers are dominant in rural areas, while the English media is mostly focused on urban consumers. Pakistan's English newspapers are mostly available in the urban areas and considered to be elite opinion makers. The readers of English newspapers are relatively more educated and the reporting pattern of English newspapers is also different than that of Urdu newspapers. General perception is that English papers are more balanced, objective and mature as compared to Urdu newspapers. It is because of standard of education and level of awareness of both the journalists and their audience. The print media devote a considerable chunk to economy, global news and other areas of human interest other than politics. The opinion pages of English newspapers are a mix blend of content mostly covering political commentary, war on terror, foreign policy, economy and form analytical view of government policies.³³

Despite having such a vibrant and large media, it has not raised the issue of climate change as it merits. Because of its enormity of the challenge it should have been in the media discourses and getting reasonably major chunk of reporting. Articles on climate change have started appearing in newspapers and journals but still the debate is not equal to the challenges. There are a few journalists like Rina Saeed Khan, who cover news and events related to climate change.

New Media

The new media includes internet and cellular phone. Popular applications among new media users are Twitter, Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram etc. Dissemination of information through social media is quick and wide ranging. Conventional media consumption habits required in-depth processing of information through a particular form of media. For example, consumers read, watched, or viewed a news report in its entirety, typically within the context of a news publication or programme. Today, information is easier to access, thus more likely to traverse several forms of media. An individual may read an article on a news website and then forward part of it to a friend. That person in turn describes it to a co-worker without having seen the original context.³⁴ In the age of internet story moves faster than anything else. Twitter, Facebook and now Whatsapp have achieved monumental effects in spread of news faster than ever. It is said that the new media is too speedy to outflank. The new media has established its efficacy in case of Arab Spring and continues to attain prominence.

The salient characteristic of new media is innovative use of Information Communication Technology. Albeit, availability of new media depends upon socio-economic conditions and cultural environment of people, yet technology is becoming accessible and affordable. Thus its potential to an agent of change has increased exponentially. Today, there are more than 35 million websites containing word 'climate change', 'global warming' and 'greenhouse effect'.³⁵ This huge resource is available for use through new media, which is interactive method of communication. In Pakistan, there are 132.6 million cellular subscribers out of which 28.6 million have 3G/4G access and 317.7 million broadband connections. Thus new media resources are abundant enough to be exploited to awareness raising and running climate change campaign. Possibility of creating synergy among media, civil society and government to address climate change issue exists.

The general public in Pakistan lacks knowledge about climate change and sustainable use of resources. The public needs to know about climate change in the realm of science, contributing factors and policy with regards to adaptation etc. Media can contribute significantly in this regard. Why it is not happening effectively in Pakistan is because agents of change in media i.e. journalists and media persons are not fully aware of this complex and intertwined issue. Media house owners find it quite unattractive to fund for

journalists' training in climate change. There is no formal mechanism of training of journalists before they practically join media houses and specialize in climate change beat.

Social Media is the quickest way of dissemination and sharing of information as today's world is gelled into one global village due to invention of new technology. The new media has brought a revolution in communities with regard to awareness. The conventional media is also directly linked with social media. A careful and expert crafting of messages and their utilization on social media can be very effective in awareness campaign about climate changes.

Conclusion

Climate change-induced challenges pose an existential threat to Pakistan, which needs a coherent and immediate response at state level to avoid major catastrophe. Climate Change is global phenomenon but Pakistan is among top countries, which are most vulnerable to climate changes. Pakistan has been adversely affected due to climate change in the past few years. The floods and rising temperature are a recurring phenomenon due to climate change; floods of 2010 and heat wave manifested bitter reality of climate change. Pakistan will be one of the most affected countries in next two decades due to climate change. Due to her existing fragility, weak institutions, and lack of awareness, Pakistan is unlikely to cope up with the challenges of climate change. Comparing with threat level, the state of Pakistan is neither ready nor sufficiently equipped to respond to the challenge.

Pakistan's media has emerged as most vibrant and independent media in the world. It has gained massive reach to viewers, readers and listeners across the country. Pakistani media has extreme persuasion effects on government functionaries and masses alike. Given the immense power, increasing consciousness about climate change among the masses is well within the purview of media.

Pakistan's media though independent and effective but has to travel a long way to fulfill its social responsibilities and use its power for the development of the country. Due to existing phenomenon of war on terror, social problems and political instability in the country, media is more focused on these instead of other issues of great importance. Pakistani Media is not sufficiently trained and equipped to conduct debate on the issues like climate change and its

effects on human life. It needs training and collaboration with the State institutions as well as with international community for capacity-building for journalists to fully gear up for the challenge. Journalists need to be more educated about climate change environment to have better understanding of the subject. Illuminating works of prominent journalists and scientists on climate change are available, which may be put to use for the benefit of the country.

Climate change brings with it dreadful consequences and with every passing day new records of high temperature, drought leading to human insecurity are being reported. It is being seen as an existential threat to Pakistan. Thorough awareness and holistic consciousness about climate change is necessary for any successful policy to tackle the issue. Like most of the developing countries, the people of Pakistan are not sensitized enough to cope with the problem. The actions of Pakistani government to address the problem of climate change and formulation of National Climate Change Policy is not being implemented effectively. Reasons for ineffective implementation of National Climate Change Policy are many but the chief among these is strong will on the part of the government, the state institutions and the people. Favourable public opinion is vital for reaching at pragmatic solutions of this common good problem. If the policy is to be implemented by people, who do not support the cause whole heartedly, the efforts are least likely to be efficacious.

In the contemporary era, public opinion has assumed greater importance; people have to be convinced about various policies, strategies and actions. Media has enormous power to make essentially important public opinion to steer masses towards making and implementing policies. The awareness level about climate change varies in developed and developing countries about climate change. Generally 40% of the world has been categorized as the one aware of this new phenomenon, which is the most threatening for the world community. The countries, which have adopted preventive measures through awareness about climate change have suffered less fatalities and loss to property.

NOTES

- ¹ The term has been borrowed from Noam Chomsky's book entitled *Manufacturing Consent*, in which he opines about media's role in building and moulding public opinion.
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REGIONALIZATION OF PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS IN SOUTH ASIA IMPLICATIONS FOR PAKISTAN

Tariq Mehmood*

Abstract

Regionalization is turning into the most famous pattern in the contemporary global relations. Regional associations are developing at a steady pace in the international political system. Traditionally, the accentuation of the territorial associations remained the monetary advancement, solidarity of part states for provincial security and determination of political question. However, in 1995 mediation by North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) powers for securing peace in Bosnia started another period of peacekeeping operations by regional organisation. Regionalisation of peace keeping operations in the context of South Asia is novel idea but keeping in view the perennial paradoxes in Indian behaviour it seems allusion.

Key Words: Peace keeping, South Asia, India,

Introduction

The prospects of powerful political influences, collective economic growth and collective security environment is considered the hallmark of the regionalization. Regionalization is becoming the most popular trend in the contemporary international relations. The concept of regionalization in the shape of European Union (EU) is attracting the attention of other regions for adopting such measures that can be productive for the development in all spheres. The trend of the regionalization has taken a momentum and regional organizations are emerging at a constant pace. Association of South Asian Nations (ASEAN), African Union (AU), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) are the contemporary regional organizations materializing the concept of regionalism. Conventionally, the emphasis of the regional organizations remained the economic development, unity of member states for regional security and resolution of political disputes. However, in 1995 intervention by North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces for securing

* Tariq Mehmood is pursuing PhD in Peace and Conflict Studies at Centre for International Peace and Stability (CIPS), NUST Islamabad.

peace in Bosnia commenced a new era of peacekeeping by the regional organization.

Africa became the first region to embrace the concept of regionalization in peace keeping missions to alleviate the worsening effects of the ongoing conflicts in the region.¹ African countries in spite of developing a peace keeping mechanism are facing the problems in the development of conceptual, structural, operational frame works for independent peace keeping missions. The basic question regarding core assumptions of peacekeeping missions and its legitimacy is still unanswered and this will take years to refine the concept and to make it fully operative practically on the ground particularly by the African countries.

In Africa on primary questions that who will pay the cost of peace keeping missions, timing of withdrawal and how to address a security vacuum left by exiting peacekeepers as it may again relapse into conflict are still unanswered. On the concept of regionalization of peacekeeping missions/ operations political scientists have developed thought provoking concepts which are operative. This is due to the fact that the permanent pursuit of peace keeping missions has an underpinning thrust on peace, security and development which results at a later stage in growth of bilateral or multilateral trade, economic and cultural regimentation and integration of a region. Most of the scholars in the field underline that areas and regionalization are presently vital to worldwide governmental issues.

Peter Katzenstein rejects the idea of globalization, and is of the view that world is marching towards world of regions² as against the perennial concepts of bipolarity and multi-polarity. Similarly, Amitav Acharya puts light on how the world politics is defining and pushing the concepts of regionalism. Barry Buzan³ and Ole Weaver are of the view that contemporary international order is in favour of strong regions.⁴ Rick Fawn who is distinguished political scientist, writes that regionalism concepts have been materialized on the globe and this regionalism has become instrumental in running all aspects of world affairs; from international trade to crisis management,⁵ and now there is a new desire among the nation states to unify into regional countries. In last two years a new trend has emerged in international politics which is paradoxical with the concept of regionalism. Britain which was one of the founding member of European Union (EU) has been in the process of separation. This exit has raised the questions

about the future of regionalism. Another new trend emerged in the shape of victory of President Donald Trump in which wave of nationalism emerged in the home ground of a super power. These both trends may influence future of regionalism.

Regionalism as a discipline has been introduced in the 21st century. It has transformed itself in the forms of ideology, economic, political and social organization. The empirical research and intellectual debates on regionalism assert that we must have an unblemished perception of regionalism. Professor Hettne is of the view that the processes of globalization and regionalization are built in, within the global structure.⁶ However, in his judgment the new regionalism is different from regional integrations which were product of cold war in 1950's and 1960's.⁷ He further, suggests regionalism is a return to the territorial and political multi-polarism.⁸

Raison d'être of Peace Keeping Missions

The magnitude of devastation of Second World War was colossal. The victorious nations realized that League of Nations was miserably failed to check the war and decided to make new international collective security organization to give measured response to check future wars. After long deliberations, the delegations from fifty nations gathered in San Francisco to draft a charter for a new international collective security organization with a determination "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war." After signing the Charter, UN was established on 24th October 1945. Since 1948, the UN has conducted 67 peacekeeping operations in its member countries. All these operations were conducted in war torn areas or in the countries where due to insurgencies, conflicts and violence, disturbance was order of the day. Peace keeping is enshrined in the UN Charter. Major philosophy of articles of UN charter revolves around a single point i.e. peace and to save humanity from scourge and miseries of war. The chapter VII of UN charter empowers Security Council to authorize military action if it deems necessary to safeguard international peace and security. If an aggressor attacks on a sovereignty of member state then the UN Security Council can authorise military action against the aggressor. Most of the time Security Council gave decisions which were in the interests of veto powers. Under Article 43 of chapter VII, member states are obligated "to make available to the Security Council, on its call and in accordance with a special agreement or agreements, armed forces, assistance, and facilities ... necessary for the purpose of maintaining international peace and security."

The trend of decisions of UN Security Council reveals that if an issue is in the interest of big powers, then resolutions passed from the platform of Security Council have most of the time been implemented, and where the issue relates to a state which has less value for big powers, even after passing a resolution, its implantation becomes a question. There are instances where US has taken military action without approval of UN Security Council. Further, many times, big powers have used the platform of UN Security Council for promotion of their own interests. During cold war era, due to divergences between super powers, most of the time issues referred to UN Security Council were vetoed.

The *raison d'être* of peace keeping missions is the maintenance of peace and security by deployment of peace keeping forces in a particular country/region. Over the period of time, peacekeeping has emerged an effective strategy to bring peace in a conflict ridden country. Peacekeeping operations have assumed the multi-dimensional facets like protection of civilian people, disarming the fighting groups or non state actors, their reintegration in the society, facilitating the political process, organization of elections, restoration of rule of law and to protect and promote human rights etc. The peace keeping missions have different forms⁹ which may include observer mission, traditional peace keeping, multi-dimensional peacekeeping e.g. strategies for capacity expansion and institutional transformation".¹⁰

Regionalism in the South Asian Context

In late 1970s President of Bangladesh Zia-ur-Rahman conceived the idea that regional countries should make trade bloc to promote trust, understanding and friendship. For this purpose he wrote letters to the leaders of Pakistan, India, Nepal, Maldives, Bhutan and Sri Lanka and explained the *raison d'être* and necessity of creation of an organization for the countries of South Asia. After shuttle diplomacy it was agreed by the member states that draft of working paper will be developed by Bangladesh to generate discussion among the countries of South Asia. For the first time foreign secretaries of South Asia met in Dhaka in 1980 and discussed the draft. Foreign Secretaries of South Asia again met in Sri Lanka in 1981 and marked five areas of cooperation. Foreign Secretaries of South Asia met again in New Delhi in 1983 and confirmed the areas of cooperation which were proposed and discussed in Colombo. Finally South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was established in Dhaka in December 1985

in the summit meeting of South Asian Head of States with its Secretariat in Kathmandu.

South Asia is a densely populated geographical region, essentially consisting of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. These countries have different political regimes, socio-economic realities and ethnic composition, religious and linguistic diversity the world could possibly offer. As a result, a regional integration scheme with several states, their clashing ideologies, values and interests, and national/domestic policies, because it difficult in its efforts to bring peace in the region. South Asia is unique in terms of factors that are both unifying and divisive. Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism and Christianity are shared by all the countries of the region. However, the overlapping of religious and linguistic groups across national boundaries becomes a trigger for conflicts. As a result, the geographical contiguity has outnumbered all possible reservations against the very idea of a South Asian form of regional cooperation and possible integration. The SAARC, representing more than one 6th of the mankind, has had an extremely unobtrusive start in advancing its institutional structures. South Asia has been a late-comer to the entire idea of regionalism. It turned into a veritable tortoise in contrast with other territorial groupings over the span of time because of the absence of energy and attitudinal changes with respect to India, and in this manner making one of the last district to wake up to the test of new regionalism.

In international arena, regionalism is the presence of both character and reason, combined with the development of establishments that express particular identity, shape and movement inside a geographical area. Regionalism is one of the three constituents of the global commercial frameworks alongside multilateralism and unilateralism.¹¹ WP Scott is of the view that regionalism is an approach to study the conduct that emphasizes the geographical region as unit of analysis; he further stresses the relationship between man and his immediate physical environment. Economic, social and cultural organizations are analyzed in terms of their inter-relationships and functions within the geographic region.¹² The scholars of international relations have difference of opinion on the definition of regionalism. A group of scholars view regionalism as result of topographical structures with social and cultural synchronization while others stress that religion, ethnicity and politics are the basis of regionalism. A known scholar Christellar stresses on social relationships and organizational principles.¹³ Marshall E. Dimock considers regionalism as a clustering of environmental,

economic, social and governmental factors to such an extent that a distinct consciousness of separate identity within the whole region may emerge.¹⁴

The Sub Continent region has been one of the best supports of the antiquated human development. It is the origin of Buddhism and Hinduism, and in addition an incredible focal point of Islam. The locale has engraved permanent effects upon the way of life of Asian terrain. In spite of it, the area is regularly alluded high-hazard strife zone because of Indian attitudinal issues. The religious and semantic based larger part and minority characters are real factors that have significant effect upon the intra region relations in the Sub Continent. These hazardous patterns are highlighted in Indo-Pak relations and it is the basic trait of their shared relations. Indo-Pak contrast delineate a few measurements going from regional debate to division of land and sea limits, waters-courses, illicit movement to restricted or huge scale wars and fears of dominion towards the fringe states. Sir Creek, Baglihar Dam, Siachen Glacier, and Wullar Barrage are danger recognition between the two military. This verifiable introduction of contrasts joins on a solitary ground of Kashmir question. Be that as it may, this is the central issue and any expectation for peace and collaboration in South Asia lies in the determination of this contention. The partiality, suspicion, and doubt are predominant qualities of their relations.

In the South Asian context, regionalism may be analyzed from different contexts i.e. positive and negative. From the positive perspective, regional countries have desire for progress but in negative terms, all the member countries of South Asia have problems with India which is the largest country in terms of population, area and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) larger than combined rest South Asian countries. It is mostly believed that deprivation is purposefully inflicted by big power India on small regional countries.¹⁵

Regionalization of Peace Keeping Missions/Operations in South Asia

In theory and practice, challenges of regionalization of peace keeping operations involve finding the suitable relationship between the Security Council and regional peacekeepers. In theory, it is possible to conduct peace operations by the South Asian countries after getting approval by the UN Security Council but in practice it is not possible particularly in the South Asian context keeping in view regional countries unsettled disputes. In South Asia different societies are growing steadily and they may have common destiny.¹⁶ Pakistan has Kashmir

dispute with India, Sri Lanka has Tamil Nado Problem with India, Bangladesh has Farrakka barrage problem including division of water of rivers which flow between transnational boundary particularly from Indian side into Bangladesh and Nepal has many of the unresolved conflicts with India.¹⁷

A theorist Michael Pugh's is of the view that the intelligent finish of regionalization is to undermine the UN's ethical specialist as the overseer of general standards and, urgently, qualifications by inferring that individuals ought to get just the level of peacekeeping their own particular locale can provide.¹⁸ Most US administrations were and are less interested in regional organizations. US focus is on assertive multilateralism, coalitions, and pivotal states.¹⁹ In this contextual imperative, regionalization can quickly become a platform for promotion of hegemony agenda.²⁰ In this contemporary world regional organizations are uneven, lack effective regional structures for maintaining peace.²¹ In prevailing international setting, there are five veto powers which enjoy UN legitimacy while in regionalization of peace keeping operations, UN backing will be absent. In this scenario regional decision-making structures are absent and it is not possible to develop decision making structures with consensus particularly in South Asia in the presence of India as a hegemonic power.

Implications for Pakistan

India and Pakistan have been suffering from different conflicts since 1947. However, different steps have been taken in order to resolve these issues by using different peace process. South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) can be pointed out as a good step towards it. Main goal behind the forum is to form a union of South Asian countries for regional stability, peace and regional integration. However, due to Indian hegemonic designs, the desired outcome of this organization has not been achieved. Instead of an organization of regional peace, it has become a tool in Indian hands to twist the arms of small regional countries. Few implications for Pakistan are as under:

- Pakistan since its inception has tried to solve its disputes with India at all levels including within global frameworks, mega-regionalism, regionalism and bilateralism but Indian psyche and continued dominant behaviour is the major persistent hurdle and this behaviour is deep rooted in the history. Pakistan's dispute with India has assumed global significance. In this atmosphere it will not be productive or useful for

Pakistan to develop a model for regionalization of Peace Keeping Missions/Operations in South Asia.

- If Pakistan peace keeping forces are used against a state or non-state actors in any country of South Asia even within a regional or UN framework, there are likely chances that any incident will be projected by India against Pakistani peace keeping missions. So Pakistan should wait until Indian behaviour becomes practical and pragmatic and it leaves its perennial paradoxical nature and solves the outstanding issue of Kashmir.
- Size, economy, military potential, level of development and foreign policy objectives of all South Asian countries are not similar. India has expansionist designs, further, it has conflicts with all the South Asian regional countries. With this Indian psyche, coupled with its expansionist designs, it seems imperative that efforts to develop a model for regionalization of peace keeping missions/operations in South Asia may not be feasible as it may have negative consequences for other members or weak states of South Asia.
- India cannot be trusted as an effective and positive factor in regionalization of peace keeping troops by using the platform of South Asia as the medium for regional cooperation. If we look at the chronological events which have happened in South Asia, India never ever has cooperated with regional states. It has always intervened into the internal affairs of its neighbours. Separation of East Pakistan from the West Pakistan is novel and unique example. In this context there is perception gap between India and its neighbours. Until and unless India took some concrete and visible steps, it is very difficult to work with the Indians in South Asian contexts.
- India for many years vainly attempted to prevail over the other South Asian nations to line-up against Pakistan. In a way, India has tried to isolate Pakistan even at the platform of SAARC. With this contextual imperative or background it is not possible that regionalization of peace keeping operations in South Asia will be effective or operative particularly in the presence of Indian continued obstructive tactics/geopolitical dynamics against Pakistan.
- The prevailing cultural and religious diversity in South Asia is an indication of both shortcoming and fragmentation. The policy debate is

overwhelmed by idealistic thinking about the benefits of regional peace keeping missions and more or less inexperienced assumptions about what we can achieve.

Analysis and Conclusions

If past is to learn then from South Asian history for regionalization of peacekeeping operations following appraisal is being made. Major points for consideration and for the purpose of analysis are as under:

- Indian leaders never stopped the manifestation of their hegemonic patterns in their actions. This is clear from past history. It has problem with all its neighbours. It has imposed three wars on Pakistan apart from Siachen occupation in 1987. India has fought war with China in 1962. It has problem with Nepal which is the only Hindu state in the world. Further, it has serious divergences and conflicts with Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, Maldives and Bhutan. The bent of mind or idiosyncrasy of its policy makers is hegemonic and this behaviour is always translated into its policies.
- India is the master in creating propaganda warfare and routinely turns to interests, economic threats and sanctions. It never scruples from using threat of military choice to overawe monetarily and militarily weak neighbours. Indian behaviour and its actions are responsible for nuclear race in South Asia.
- It is a piece of history that after the partition in 1947, India instead of helping Pakistan in settling down, had over-burdened Pakistan with horde of issues to jeopardize its development in that crucial period. We now realize that India had been conspiring since August 1947 to recover East Pakistan and make it a vital territory of unified India. At the time of partition in 1947 there was common consensus among the Indian leadership that Pakistan will not survive as an independent state.
- Indian military invaded and occupied Hyderabad, Junagadh and Manavadar whose Muslim rulers wanted to join Pakistan. Likewise it occupied Kashmir in October 1947 whose ruler was Hindu yet majority population was Muslim. This was clear violation of 3 June 1947 partition plan in which Lord Mountbatten laid the principles for princely states either to join India or Pakistan. The cardinal points for princely states were for joining either state were geographical proximity, ethno

religious composition and due regard to peoples aspiration was to be given. From all these principles Kashmir was part of Pakistan. India by violating the principles of 3rd June 1947 plan invaded and occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

- Soon after, Goa, Daman and Diu were also overtaken. As a whole, five hundred sixty five princely states were adjusted in Indian Union while rulers of *Junagadh*, *Munawar* and *Hyderabad* desired to join Pakistan but India invaded on these and occupied them forcefully.
- In the wake of making Bangladesh in 1971, India gave preferential treatment to Rakhi Bahini over Bangladesh military. Later on, India made Kadir Bahini to make inconvenience for General Zia-ur-Rahman and Gen Irshad Hussain administrations. In this way, Shanti Bahini was made to bolster Chakmas in Chittagong Hills.
- India provoked inconvenience in Sikkim in 1973 and in 1975 Kingdom of Sikkim was also annexed.
- **Bhutan:** The relations between India and Bhutan have traditionally been good and both countries have special relationship. However, India remained influential over the foreign policy of Bhutan along with her defence and trade policy. India is continuously providing aid thus making Bhutan the largest beneficiary of India's foreign aid. Keeping in view the India expansionist outlook its next target will be Bhutan. It was put under so much weight that it consented to go about as its vassal to hold its freedom. Bhutan is desirous to renegotiate with India 8 August 1949 parts of the treaty to enhance Bhutan's sovereignty as India controls/guides it's foreign and defence policy but India is resistive and denying.
- **Nepal:** Landlocked Nepal was threatened to toe its line by stopping food, pharmaceuticals, oil and water supplies and instigating riots. Whenever, Nepal looks for batter relations towards People's Republic of China and Pakistan, India has serious reservations. Nepal is land locked country and fully dependent on India for its import and exports. Under the international law a land locked country has the right to use the nearby port of neighbouring country but many times India has stopped the exports and imports of Nepal.
- **Burma:** It enjoyed good relations with Bangladesh yet India deteriorated their relations by instigating inconvenience in Arakan

Province driving 250,000 Arakenese to relocate to Bangladesh. The two neighbours are currently adversaries.

- **Maldives** is also terrified through false flag operations.
- **Sri Lanka:** Sri Lanka has serious reservation about Indian policies. In the decades of 1970s and 1980s Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) trained, encouraged and funded Liberation of Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) against the Sri Lankan government. India supplied to the insurgents, weapons and money. At present India has a serious reservation on Chinese investments in Sri Lanka particularly the developments of ports. India trained the Tamils to equip armed rebellion and take down Tamil State out of Sinhalese Island. Of the many groups prepared, Liberation of Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) was the deadliest. After a long war of thirty years, Sri Lanka paid a heavy price to control the insurgency of LTTE.
- **Disputes with all Neighbours:** India has border conflicts and other disputes with all South Asian neighbours. Further, it is doing hydropolitics with Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh, which she has deliberately held under her thumb. India by violating the Indus Water Treaty has constructed dams and hydropower projects in Jammu and Kashmir and is utilizing the Pakistan's share of water. One of the most used tactics by India is to put blame of her wrong doings on neighbours and project herself as victim of their actions.
- India is aspiring to be big power in Indian Ocean. It's naval built up and its collaboration with US, Japan, Australian and European navies is direct threat to its neighbouring countries. Further, its military and air built up and its ever increasing defence budgets are multiplying the fears of its neighbouring states. Prima facie all its military might will be used against its neighbours. India is pleading her case that all this military might is to counter China but expert of international relations are aware of the fact India is unable to give measured response to China in near or far future.
- Indian efforts to become a veto power in UN Security Council are detrimental to the interests and a real threat to its neighbours as it has conflicts with all its neighbours. Further, Indian influence in Afghanistan and its proxy war with Pakistan through aiding terrorists is manifestation of its nefarious designs.

- Regionalism is expression of group identity coupled with loyalty to the region. It supports the concept of development of one's own region without taking into consideration the interest of other region. Now the question arises that are there any historical trends to make South Asia a region? The answer is "No". In this context, development of a frame work for regional peace keeping missions seems very difficult.
- It is true that the fractious Indian behaviour is a major roadblock to regionalization of peace keeping operations among the South Asian nations. It needs to be appraised that game-changers can be expected or possible from India to act as a responsible shareholder in South Asian security and stability in its present strategic arrogance trance. So any effort in this direction will be waste of time and resources. Further, India is aspirant to assume a role of big power. For this purpose, it has become part of Trinity i.e. US, Japan and India and strategic quadrilateral i.e. US, China, Japan and India. India is desirous to assume the role of swing state especially to offset China in global politics. For this purpose, US and Japan are the major supporters of India and are creating a balance of power in Asian geopolitical dynamics against China through India.
- Up till now most peace keeping missions have been authorised by the UN Security Council in the legal framework of UN Charter. The region like South Asia which has unresolved disputes among themselves, it is not possible that the countries of South Asia will agree to any type of mechanism for peace keeping particularly in South Asia. There is trust deficit and divergences among its members. All types of available platforms which include UN, bilateral negotiations, track-I, track-II and track III diplomacy have failed to solve the outstanding issues like Kashmir with India.
- In spite of all implications, there can be a regionalization of peace keeping operations in South Asia if the region is defined beyond geography and China be included for this particular purpose. Inclusion of China in peace keeping missions in South Asia will be a measured response to Indian designs as well as its attitudes and intent. Until and unless India accepts the merits of the multilateralism concept and applies it to regionalization of peace keeping operations in South Asia this idea will remain delusion.

NOTES

- ¹ Laura Encalade, (2008). *The Regionalization of Peacekeeping: A Solution to African Violence?*, University of Tennessee – Knoxville.
- ² Peter J. Katzenstein, *A World of Regions: Asia and Europe in the American Imperium* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2005).
- ³ Amitav Acharya, “The Emerging Regional Architecture of World Politics,” *World Politics* 59, no. 4 (July 2007): 629-652.
- ⁴ Barry Buzan and Ole Weaver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 20.
- ⁵ Rick Fawn, “Regions and Their Study: Where from, What for and Where to?” *Review of International Studies* vol. 35 (2009): 5-35.
- ⁶ The New Regionalism: A Conceptual and Theoretical by Sëva Hossenfelder <http://www.thephora.net/forum/showthread.php?t=44851>.
- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ The definition does not include post-conflict ‘peace-building’ and stabilizing efforts, e.g. election monitoring, humanitarian aid, human rights monitoring etc. This definition is in line with DOYLE, Michael W., SAMBANIS, Nicholas, *International Peace building: A Theoretical and Quantitative Analysis* and heldt, Birger, Wallenstein, Peter, *Peacekeeping Operations: Global Patterns of Intervention and Success, 1948–2004*.
- ¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regionalism_\(international_relations\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regionalism_(international_relations)) also see W.J. Ethier, *The International Commercial System*, https://www.princeton.edu/~ies/IES_Essays/E210.pdf.
- ¹² Regionalism: Definitions, Characteristics and Types of Regionalism by Nitisha <http://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/society/indian-society/regionalism-definitions-characteristics-and-types-of-regionalism/47359/>
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ Overview and Introduction: What is Regionalism? web.sfc.keio.ac.jp/~kenj/rg-anatomy/ppt/1.ppt.
- ¹⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁷ The New Regionalism: A Conceptual and Theoretical by Sëva Hossenfelder Framework <http://www.thephora.net/forum/showthread.php?t=44851>.
- ¹⁸ Prof. NguyễnThêAnh Directeur d’Etudes, EPHE (Sciences historiques et philologiques) Director, Laboratoire “Péninsule Indochinoise” ‘Convergence and Divergence Between Southeast Asian Societies and States <http://iias.asia/iiasn/iiasn9/soueasia/converge.html> also see The limits of regionalization of Peace Keeping Missions/Operations in South Asia http://aix1.uottawa.ca/~rparis/INTA81_09_Williams.pdf.
- ¹⁹ Review article International peacekeeping: the challenges of state-building and regionalization *International Affairs* 81, PAUL D. WILLIAMS http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:http://aix1.uottawa.ca/~rparis/INTA81_09_Williams.pdf.
- ²⁰ Ibid.
- ²¹ Ibid.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIIB	Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank
ALWWO	American Led Western World Order
ANZUS	Australia, New Zealand, and US Security Treaty
AP	Asia Pacific
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
APS	Army Public School
APTA	Afghanistan Pakistan Transit Agreement
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ATTA	Afghanistan Transit Trade Agreement
BECA	Cooperation Agreement for Geo-spatial Cooperation
BOP	Balance of Power
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CARs	Central Asian Republics
CASA	Central Asia South Asia
CBTA	Cross-Border Transport Agreement
CES	Common Economic Space
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CISMOA	Communications Interoperability and Security Memorandum of Agreement
CNOOC	China National Offshore Oil Corporation
CPEC	China Pakistan Economic Corridor
CSD	Cold Start Doctrine
CSF	Coalition Support Fund
CSLA	Commercial Space Launch Agreement
CSS	China Surface-to-Surface
CU	Custom Union
DTTI	Defense Technology and Trade Initiative
ECO	Economic Cooperation Organization
EDCA	Enhanced Defence Cooperation Agreement
EU	European Union
FC	Frontier Corps
FTA	Free-Trade Agreement
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IBGs	Integrated Battle Groups
ICBM	Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile

IDF	Israeli Defence Forces
IN	Indian Navy
IOR	Indian Ocean Region
IORA	Indian Ocean Rim Association
IOZOP	Indian Ocean Zone of Peace
IPEC	India-Pacific Economic Corridor
IR	International Relations
IRGC	Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps
IS	Islamic State
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence Agency
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
J&K	Jammu and Kashmir
JWGACTC	Joint Working Group on Aircraft Carrier Technology Cooperation
KORUS	Korea-United States Free Trade Agreement
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
LCCI	Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry
LEMOA	Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement
LoC	Line of Control
IOK	Indian Occupied Kashmir
MIRV	Multiple Independently-Targetable Re-entry Vehicle
MNCs	Multi-National Corporations
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSR	Maritime Silk Road
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NAM	Non Aligned Movement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDN	Northern Distribution Network
NDS	National Directorate of Security
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NPF	National Progressive Front
NSG	Nuclear Suppliers Group
NSSP	Next Steps in Strategic Partnership
OBOR	One Belt One Road
OIC	Organization of Islamic Countries
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
PLAN	People's Liberation Army Navy
PNP	Pakistan's Nuclear Programme
QCG	Quadrilateral Coordination Group
RAW	Research and Analysis Wing
RMA	Revolution in Military Affairs
RSCT	Regional Security Complex Theory

SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SEA	South East Asia
SLOCs	Sea Lines of Communications
SREB	Silk Route Economic Belt
TAPI	Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India Pipeline
TNT	Trinitrotoluene
TPP	Trans-Pacific Partnership
TSA	Technical Safeguards Agreement
TTA	Tehreek-e-Taliban Afghanistan
TTP	Tehrek-i-Taliban Pakistan
UAE	United Arab Emirate
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCIP	UN Commission on India and Pakistan
UNGA	United Nation General Assembly
UNO	United Nations Organization
Unocal	Union Oil Company of California
UNSC	United Nation Security Council
US	United States
USFP	US Foreign Policy
USPACOM	US Pacific Command
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WOT	War on Terror
WV	Westphalian Vision

CORRIGENDUM

This is with reference to the Article titled "Illegal Appropriations in the Sea – Factors behind Excessive Maritime Claims by Coastal States" by Syed Mahmood Akhter Hussain Gardezi and Dr. Ishtiaq Ahmad Choudhry published in Margalla Papers 2015 Vol-XIX, pp. 87-106. It is to be informed that there has been an inadvertent mistake in the name of first author.

Hence the following correction may please be noted by all.

CORRECTION

First author name published as "Syed Muhammad Akhtar Hussain Gardezi" may please be read as "Syed Mahmood Akhter Hussain Gardezi"
