

Volume: XXIII, Issue-II, 2019

ISSN 1999-2297



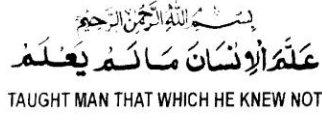
MARGALLA

P A P E R S

A Journal of International Affairs



Institute of Strategic Studies, Research and Analysis (ISSRA)
National Defence University Islamabad - Pakistan



Under the Editorial Sponsorship of
INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES, RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS (ISSRA)
Published by
NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY, ISLAMABAD

Margalla Papers is a biannual publication of National Defence University, the premier institution for security and strategic studies. The journal is a unique publication of the country, which primarily deals with the issues related to Contemporary World Politics, Globalization, Foreign Policy, Strategic and Economic Relationships, Regional Organizations, UN Peacekeeping Operations, International Law and Global Commons. The journal has its own standing among the students, researchers, experts, policy makers and intelligentsia. It has been enlisted by International Political Science Abstracts (IPSA), USA, Bibliography of Asian Studies (BAS), USA, and EBSCO Publishing Inc. Keeping the flag high, all the articles appearing in the journal are selected after a rigorous scrutiny and blind peer reviews at home and abroad. It is the testimony of quality of contents of the journal that the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan has upgraded to 'X' category.

Copyright © 2019 Institute for Strategic Studies, Research & Analysis (ISSRA), National Defence University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication to be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted or distributed in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without obtaining written permission of the copyright owner. Manuscripts and editorial communications may be directed to the editor.

Disclaimer: The statements, facts, opinion, analyses and recommendations proffered in the journal are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the policies of Institute for Strategic Studies, Research and Analysis, National Defence University, Islamabad or the Government of Pakistan.

ISSN: 1999-2297

Volume: XXIII, Issue-II, 2019

Institute for Strategic Studies, Research and Analysis (ISSRA)
National Defence University, Sector E-9, Islamabad, Pakistan.

Website: <http://www.ndu.edu.pk>

email: editormargallapapers@ndu.edu.pk

Volume: XXIII, Issue-II, 2019

ISSN 1999-2297



MARGALLA PAPERS

A Journal of International Affairs



Institute of Strategic Studies, Research and Analysis (ISSRA)
National Defence University Islamabad - Pakistan

MARGALLA PAPERS

Patron-in-Chief

Lieutenant General Muhammad Saeed, HI (M)

Patron

Major General Asif Ali, HI (M)

Editor

Lieutenant Colonel Dr. Muhammad Imran

Associate Editor

Ms. Khurshid Fatima

Advisory Board

Major General Ayman Bilal Safdar

Chief Instructor, National Security College, NDU, Islamabad

Dr. Lubna Abid Ali

Dean FCS, NDU, Islamabad

Dr. Nazir Hussain

Professor, School of Politics and International Relations, QAU Islamabad

Dr. Shaheen Akhtar

HoD (IR), FCS, NDU, Islamabad

Dr. Syed Hussain Shaheed Soherwordi

Associate Professor, Department of International Relations, University of Peshawar

Dr. Marvin G. Weinbaum

Director, Afghanistan and Pakistan Studies, Middle East Institute, Washington, D.C, USA

Prof. Arshin Adib-Moghaddam

Department of Politics and International Studies, University of London, UK

Prof Andrew Futter FHEA

Department of Politics & International Relations, University of Leicester, UK

Dr. Muhammad Ahsan

Deputy Vice Chancellor-Academic, International Open University, UK

Dr. Ragip Kutay KARACA

Faculty Member, Istanbul Gelisim University, Istanbul, Turkey

MARGALLA PAPERS

CONTENTS

Articles	Page No
Prioritizing the Defence against Biological Threats: Pakistan's Response and Preparedness	1
<i>Rubina Ali and Manzoor Khan Afridi</i>	
Rise of Right-Wing Indian Nationalism: Implications for South Asia	14
<i>Marium Fatima, Ghulam Ali Murtaza and Arshi Saleem Hashmi</i>	
From Geo-Economics to Geo-Politics: Emerging Maritime Power-Politics in the Indo-Pacific Ocean Region	28
<i>Maliha Zeba Khan</i>	
Emerging Network Centric Warfare Capabilities of Indian Military: Challenges for Pakistan's Security	41
<i>Muhammad Jawad Hashmi and Sultan Mubariz Khan</i>	
Nuclear Deterrence and Conflict Transformation: Assessing States Behaviour in South Asia	53
<i>Hassan Jalil Shah and Naseem Anwar Khan</i>	
Enhancing the Efficacy of Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime: Significance of Pakistan's NSG Membership	62
<i>Rubina Waseem and Abeer Iftikhar Tahirkheli</i>	
Determinants of the US Nuclear Imperialism: A Theoretical Analysis	71
<i>Nabeel Hussain and Shumaila Zahoor</i>	
Countering Strategic Coercion: A Case Study of Pakistan	85
<i>Shabana Fayyaz</i>	

Articles	Page No
<p>Pre-emption and Coercion – A Case Study of Syrian Disarmament Discourse <i>Waseem Iftikhar Janjua, Ahmed Saeed Minhas and Farhat Konain Shujahi</i></p>	97
<p>US Sinusoid Policies towards Pakistan: Influencing Pak-China Relations <i>Ibtisam Butt and Safdar Ali Shirazi</i></p>	109
<p>Critical Analysis of the US Mediating Role in India–Pakistan Conflict <i>Azeem Gul and Riaz Ahmad</i></p>	119
<p>US Failure in Afghanistan: Half-Baked Planning or Pakistan? <i>Muhammad Hashim Zafar Wadhen, Shafei Moiz Hali and Adnan Jamil</i></p>	127
<p>Operation Zarb-e-Azb: Retrospective View in the Context of US Response <i>Nasir Naveed</i></p>	139
<p>Tribal Identity Dynamics: A Case Study of US-Haqqanis Relationship <i>Rashid Ahmed, Anum Babur and Qaim Raza Jaffry</i></p>	148
<p>Role of Core State in a Regional Organization: A Case Study of Iran Vis-à-Vis Economic Cooperation Organization <i>Muhammad Ajmal Abbasi and Muhammad Khan</i></p>	159
<p>How Best to Untangle the Persian Puzzle? <i>Saqib Anjum</i></p>	173
<p>US-North Korea Rapprochement and its Impact on Regional Stability <i>Waseem Ishaque, Musarat Amin and Mudassir Mukhtar</i></p>	183
<p>Role of Social Networking Sites in Fostering Active Citizenship: A Study of Facebook Users in Pakistan <i>Aisha Anees Malik and Sajjad Haider</i></p>	195

Disclaimer

The contents of this 'Journal' are writers' personal views. The statements, facts and opinions by the authors in the Margalla Papers do not imply the official policy of the National Defence University and Editors or the Publishers.

PRIORITIZING THE DEFENCE AGAINST BIOLOGICAL THREATS: PAKISTAN'S RESPONSE AND PREPAREDNESS

Rubina Ali and Manzoor Khan Afridi*

Abstract

Biological threats pose significant risks to national and international security. A deliberate release of biological agents whether by terrorist groups or individual perpetrators constitutes an immediate threat to the life and health of the people. Many biological agents can spread infectious diseases or cause illness in humans. In the 21st century, infectious diseases are the second leading cause of death worldwide. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic highlights the unsettled problems in the arena of biosecurity and health security. Moreover, the rapid development of biotechnology leads to an increased threat of biological weapons. Therefore, this article articulates how a state can effectively protect the health and life of its citizens from these threats. The main objective of this paper is to encapsulate the perilous weaknesses in existing preparedness for countering biological risks. Similarly, it explores the policies and capabilities of Pakistan for tackling the growing biological threats. Finally, this paper explores the severe gaps in policy for countering biological risks, particularly in Pakistan.

Keywords: Biological Threat, Biological Warfare, Policy Measures, Counterstrategy, Public Health.

Introduction

Biological threats are a new dimension of security concern in the contemporary era. The danger of proliferation of biological weapons and biological terrorism is overgrowing because of the rapid development of biotechnology. Moreover, the misuse of biological weapons has increased worldwide, especially in the aftermath of anthrax attacks in the US. Biological weapons are considered to be Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and have a high potential devastating effect. These weapons can be used by terrorists as a means of threat, violence and coercion against humans, animals, or plants. The biological agents or biological weapons are not an invention of the high-tech age since these weapons have a long history. As emerging biological risks have catastrophic consequences for a state's health system, security and economic stability, therefore, humanitarian perspective has prevailed in the security discourse that attaches great importance to public health.

*Rubina Ali is a PhD Scholar at the Department of Politics and International Relations, International Islamic University Islamabad. Dr. Manzoor Khan Afridi is the Head of Politics and International Relations Department at International Islamic University Islamabad.

The use of biological weapons has a long history and goes back to the earlier period of humanity. Furthermore, biological agents' risk holds the possibility that terrorist groups may employ biological agents. There is also a fear of accidental outbreaks or natural occurrences of diseases from biological agents.¹ Biological agents are exceedingly infectious bacteria, viruses and pathogenic organisms. Indeed, pandemic infections with the cross-border or global outbreak of infectious diseases can threaten the entire world population. Biological weapons pose risk to both the attackers and the victims since these weapons are not able to differentiate between them. Deliberate dissemination of germs and the natural outbreaks cause high death rates among animals, plants, or people.² Terrorist groups can spread toxins, bacteria and viruses through different means, such as food contamination, sprays, water, or as aerosols in wet or dry formulations.³

There are currently around 200 viruses or bacteria that can be used as weapons. In the context of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) crisis, the international community has formally described the situation as a global health crisis. The SARS crisis has influenced the biosecurity policies of western countries. The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new type of viral pneumonia that belongs to a similar family of infections as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and SARS. So far, the allegations that COVID-19 is the outcome of the biological weapons have been limited. COVID-19 is swiftly spreading at the global level which gives momentum to the issue of biosecurity, health security and monitoring of biological risks.⁴ The cases of outbreaks of coronavirus occurred in Wuhan in December 2019 and January 2020.⁵

Shah Zeb argues that biological agents "diagnosis can be performed or handled in only reference laboratories, such as BSL-4."⁶ Since January 2018, BSL-4 laboratory, such as Wuhan National Biosafety Laboratory has been working for global scientific research for the detection of pathogens.⁷ Furthermore, China also fortifies its connections with countries in the arena of laboratory biosafety and the "One Health" concept.⁸ Yet, high-priority biological agents can be easily spread and significantly cause massive fatality.

The spread of biological risks has triggered one of the most significant security concerns. The emergence of zoonotic diseases like Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever, chikungunya, and Nipah virus is a substantial challenge in South Asian countries, especially, Nipah virus outbursts in India and Bangladesh had a high casualty rate, nearly 70%.⁹ South Asian countries are needed to transform their policies to strengthen public health systems so that new-fangled forces would strengthen their capacity to respond to any infectious or zoonotic diseases. For example, India has deficiencies in the public health system for countering biological threats.¹⁰ Therefore, disease surveillance and political and public awareness against a biological threat are essential policy tools that can restrain the biological threat in the South Asian countries. The incident of anthrax-laden letters and the most recent outbreak of coronavirus exposed numerous flaws in the current strategies of countering the biological risks.¹¹ The biological risks and events are increasing, particularly, after the end of the Cold War. Furthermore, states must address these threats by empowering the response by

preparation, threat reduction programs, and rising remediation plans.¹² Biological weapons in the past generally remain overshadowed because of chemical and nuclear weapons.

The readiness and control against the spread of biological weapons are puzzling and it is also difficult to identify proper literature for such a study. Most of the contemporary literature is based on scientific considerations and the history of biological weapons expansion. However, numerous authors have filled many of the gaps in the historical use of biological weapons. The number of books published on biological warfare and biological weapons, for example, Jeanne Guillemin's "Biological Weapon: From the Invention of State-Sponsored Programs to Contemporary Bioterrorism," or Judith Miller's "Germs". The notion of an international regime for the prohibition of biological weapons is not frequently mentioned in the literature. The threat of a pandemic infectious disease continues to hang over security and stability at the global level. Thus, biosecurity plays a significant role in avoiding the crisis like COVID-19. Broadly, the notion of biosecurity relates to countermeasures and the prevention of diseases. This paper, therefore, emphasizes the interconnection of international relations with the sphere of natural sciences and also discovers the policies and capabilities of Pakistan for countering the growing biological risks.

Biological Agents' Hazards

Biological agents have unique risks and offensive capability as fundamentally different from other weapons like nuclear or chemical weapons.¹³ Most potential biological agents are natural substances or living microorganisms (pathogens). In the contemporary era, sophisticated bacteriological techniques and availability of low-cost biological agents have originated as the highest threat to human lives. Consequently, biological agents' threat exceeds the chemical and nuclear weapons threats.¹⁴ The detection of biological agents requires hours, usually days or even weeks to cause fatalities as compared to chemical and nuclear weapons that initiate instant casualties. Hence, it is probable that they possibly are changed to enlarge their capability to ground sickness. Pathogens are invisible, replicate in the prey, and can mark fatal, contagious, and disfiguring symptoms. Toxin agents vary in effect from disabling to deadly and often need only very small counts to generate enormous harm.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) classify biological agents in accord with the risk they pose to the public. Category A agents pose the chief risk to public health. They can be easily spread and could result in high mortality rates.¹⁵ According to the classification of CDC, Category B biological agents pose a moderate risk to public health.¹⁶ These agents can be increased with some easiness and can cause a reasonable degree of sickness. Still, mortalities owing to these infections are typically low. Category C agents include emerging pathogens that could be modified and employed as a weapon because these are easily accessible. Category C agents have the potential to constitute an immense impact¹⁷ and this category includes Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever virus, avian influenza, yellow fever and SARS-associated coronavirus (SARS-CoV).¹⁸

Origin and Overview of Biological Threats

Biological threat is not a new occurrence as biological agents have been used as a means of weapons for centuries.¹⁹ Usage of these biological agents dates back to approximately 400 BC when the Scythian contaminated and infected arrows with decomposing human by-products to injure their enemies in battle. Consequently, biological agents' threats have their origins in ancient periods when the practical applications of using biologically active agents on the battlefield were recognized. Biological agents and toxins are living organisms, existing in nature and available in a variety of forms like viruses, bacteria, and rickettsia (bacteria that can live inside host cells).²⁰ These agents usually originate in a natural environment but there is a potential possibility that they might be transformed to increase their capacity to produce disease.

There is an extensive history of nations and peoples utilizing biological agents as weapons. In the 15th century during Pizarro's defeat to South America, Pizarro upgraded his probabilities of winning by donating clothing as gifts to the natives which were fully contaminated with the variola virus.²¹ In 1763, Pittsburgh Captain Ecuyer under the guise of friendship presented blankets and handkerchiefs to the Native Americans, who were infected with smallpox. During Indian and French wars, it was assumed that British armies distributed smallpox blankets to native American Indians, who were trustworthy to the French. In World War II, Germans used anthrax against US soldiers' horses. Rajneesh cult, in 1984, used Salmonella Typhimurium for poisoning the salad bars of approximately ten native restaurants.²² Hence, Rajneesh cult contamination of salad bars caused the most significant casualties; around 751 people became sick because of deliberate poisoning attacks.²³

Countering Biological Threats

The risks of the expulsion of biological agents threaten a nation or influence a government which is usually referred to as an intentional explosion of the biological outbreak and also referred to as "the poor man's nuclear bomb."²⁴ Historically, epidemics and pandemics of infectious diseases have caused more deaths than wars. Since deliberate anthrax outbreaks and occurrence of SARS, smallpox, Ebola, or COVID-19 made the states conscious that the public health system is not prepared to administer in a large-scale emergency.²⁵ Referring to the historical approach, it is fundamental to accurately establish the context in which health has become a security issue. A biological outbreak poses an exceptional challenge to therapeutic care and the public health system.²⁶ Unlike an outburst or chemical attack which causes instantaneous and visible tragedies, the public health impact of biological threats can disclose gradually over time.²⁷ Until an adequate number of people appear at emergency rooms and doctors' offices complaining of the same indications, there could be no symptom that an attack has happened.

A nation's capability to counter a biological outbreak depends significantly on the condition of preparedness of its therapeutic care system and public health infrastructure.²⁸ Biological agents' threat is a bigger danger to public health and security; as a result, biodefense being a policy tool is transforming and transmitting

resources to prepare for counter biological threats at all levels.²⁹ Biodefense policy includes measures to detect, prevent, recover, and respond from damage or destruction caused by biological toxins to animals, human health, or the food supply.³⁰ Biodefense policy provides a framework for threat surveillance, prevention, awareness, protection, and recovery.³¹ It performs different tasks for the investigation of the threat, particularly, providing attack warnings, planning, and medical countermeasures.³²

Biodefense is defined as the development of capabilities and knowledge to assess, detect, monitor, respond to and attribute biological threats. Furthermore, for countering the epidemic or biological risks, the US government has adopted the National Biodefense Strategy and Implementation Plan in 2018.³³ The US also focuses on the National Counterterrorism Strategy and the National Defense Strategy. Indeed, the US government is also employing the National Counter WMD Strategy. Moreover, she is making a Global Health Security Strategy and Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) of 2024 to counter all kinds of epidemics or potential biological risks. GHSA addresses gaps in public health decision-making, significant advancement, investigation of infectious diseases, and disease prevention.³⁴

Measures, such as threat investigation, attack warning, bio-surveillance, infrastructure protection, research cooperation, diagnostics and medical counter measures enhance guidance on preventing biological threats. These approaches aim to reduce the consequences of an attack, afford earlier detection and reduce vulnerability. Besides, biological weapons are a means of extraordinary psychological effectiveness. The possibility of an attack generates fears or panics the population that exerts pressure on political and military leaders and changed strategic thinking. The biological weapons have an enormous potential for damage per weight and volume and relatively easy to secretly produce, transport and use, aware that they may become instruments of state or non-state terrorism, intimidation or retaliation policy. A successful bioterrorist attack or natural outburst of biological agents is the greatest challenge for public health. The health system and the regulatory authorities are burdened to the brim of their capacity and in extreme cases, could threaten in the form of panic, mass escape, looting and finally, the collapse of public order. Generally, the primary cluster of countering biological threats consists of four essential policy tools. These policy tools are to be connected with threat surveillance, prevention, awareness, protection, and recovery.³⁵ The dynamic policy tools against biological threats are Threat Awareness, Prevention and Protection, Surveillance and Detection, and Response and Recovery.

Threat Awareness

Intelligence communities produce an upheaval that creates new opportunities for integrating efforts to recognize new scientific tendencies. Consequently, intelligence communities are engaged in establishing new research and investigating understanding of the risk created by biological agents.³⁶ Thus, the involvement of agencies is an important policy tool to work together to increase the capability of law enforcement, public health, agricultural, diplomatic, defense and carrying infrastructures to identify and tackle such threats and to control rising biological threats.³⁷

Prevention and Protection

Biodefense policy, in the 21st century, is an effective approach and preventing measures for countering biological threats.³⁸ A biodefense policy to counter the Weapons of Mass Destruction places a unique emphasis on the necessity for proactive steps to tackle threats. Deterrence needs the persistence and development of current multilateral agreements to limit the access of lethal biological agents, knowledge, groups, or individuals pursuing to produce, grow, and use these agents.³⁹ Additionally, the involvement of intelligence agencies holds a remarkable position in the public health sector for curbing the biological threats timely.

Surveillance and Detection

Early caution and detection of biological agent's outbreaks permit appropriate response to moderate their outcome is a fundamental factor of biodefense policy.⁴⁰ Deterrence is a policy that is the historical foundation of defense and uncovering covert attacks through defensive and protective measures. On the other hand, biological attacks are hidden or concealed that may allow the performer to remain unidentified.⁴¹

Response and Recovery

A nation requires continuous research for preventing, analyzing and treating a variety of infectious diseases medically, psychologically, and economically.⁴² In response to a disaster, measures are taken to repair or improve the circumstances of a community. The biological weapons are, therefore, contingent on pre-attack preparedness and planning, medical countermeasures, measurement to treat fatalities, risk infrastructures, substantial control measures and refinement of capacities.⁴³ Fundamental capacities for reaction and improvement against biological attacks are based on developments and reasonable threat assessments.⁴⁴

Gaps and Deficiencies in the Current Global Policy

Severe weaknesses in current preparedness competencies offer an overview of existing policy edges to address these critical deficiencies and expand the implementation challenges that lie in the future. The following are a series of essential gaps that need to be addressed to ensure that the population is adequately protected from biological outbreaks.

- **Developing Communication Policy:** The incidents of anthrax-attack revealed enormously tricky-troubles for public health departments, whereas, communication and harmonization being mainly hard. These attacks demand rapid harmonization between local, state, and federal public health societies on technical concerns that developed quickly – the barrier of communication associated with the various complex scientific issues that necessitated new collaborations to tackle problems. Mainly, health care professionals rely on CDC for the response to technical-

scientific queries during the disaster. The communication challenges are connected to issues of sending information.

- **Increasing Public Health Labor Force:** Nation's capability to plan for and respond to bioterrorism or attack rests mainly in states' public health systems. States must reconstruct many components of the public health infrastructure, enlarge their conventional focus to include the threat of bioterrorism and organize endeavors across various levels of government. Moreover, the need for enough well-trained skilled persons equipped to offer proper diagnosis, therapy, and prophylaxis is essential.

Pakistan's Policy and Preparedness against Biological Threat

The proliferation of biological threats has become one of the most significant security concerns in Pakistan. Pakistan has gaps in the current policy to tackle broader issues related to rising biological threats. The broadening vision of policy transformation requires management and public health preparedness for countering biological threats.⁴⁵ For achieving security against biological threats in Pakistan, the most effective tool for countering these threats is the proper implementation of laws and policies. The laws and policies of proper implementation have adequate safeguards to prevent biological threats. Therefore, limiting the biological threats requires raising awareness among the science community, law enforcement agencies, policymakers and health regulatory agencies in Pakistan. Pakistan is working on laws, policies and building up a national framework for biosafety as well as increasing disease surveillance policy which covers up timely tracking of the public health system and controls the dangerous pathogens in Pakistan. Pakistan has also established a strategic framework for the systematic collection, interpretation, analysis, and distribution of health data.

International Policies and Laws to Counter Biological Threats

International and national laws are crucial components to counter biological threats. The foremost measures and laws to counter biological threats were taken in the Hague Conference in 1899.⁴⁶ The main prohibitions to avoid and control the use of poisonous substances and biological agents were regulated clearly under Article 23 of the Hague Convention.⁴⁷ In 1925, Geneva Protocol was signed; it only banned the use of biological agents and poisonous substances as weapons but not their stockpiling and development. However, Geneva Protocol clearly explained that the use of diseases and biological agents in the war would be illegal as stated by international provisions.⁴⁸

The 1972 Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), which was based on the 1925-Geneva Protocol, stimulated the international community to approve the Convention. Initially, 100 countries gave their endorsement, and afterward, many countries (more than 172 including Pakistan) endorsed the BWC. The BWC is the first multilateral disarmament international and legal banning treaty that condemns the development of the entire category of biological weapons. The BWC negotiations and non-proliferation treaty have contributed significantly to banning the production of lethal biological material.⁴⁹ A nation's capability to counter a bioterrorist assault, hence, depends

significantly on the condition of awareness of therapeutic care systems and public health infrastructure. Therefore, strong public health infrastructure is imperative not only to protecting and enhancing public health but also to the nation's security.

International Health Regulations – 2005

The aim of the International Health Regulations (IHR) – 2005 is to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Thus, IHR is a legal instrument which has partnerships with the World Health Organization (WHO) and its purpose is to ensure protection against the spread of diseases.⁵⁰ In 2005, the Government of Pakistan along with other 196 states, which chiefly are WHO member states, accepted and implemented the revised IHR. The IHR involves member states to build the essential capacities and necessary measures to detect, identify, alert, respond, assess, and report international public health emergencies.

These regulations help member countries to expand their capabilities to detect and report threats early with the aim of prevention and keeping the effect of infectious diseases threats to a minimum. Also, the IHR is designed to prevent, control, and counter the threats of biological events. Pakistan has the implementation of the IHR widely strengthening the essential public health capacity and advancing the building of public health emergency capacity along with preventing, controlling and countering the threats of biological events.⁵¹

Biological agents' threat represents a substantial challenge to agencies and organizations responsible for handling biodefense. Preparation in opposition to a biological agents' threat and attack is complex and requires the coordination of many branches of government that have not worked together. Early detection and performance organization of an assault, however, will be the primary responsibility of a public health system. The public health system would soon be besieged by biological agents' threats. For the public health sector to be actual in its tasks of discovery and intervention, more consideration should be rewarded for fixing the infrastructure of public health and biological agents' threat surveillance system specifically.

Development of the public health infrastructure not only defends Pakistan in the case of biological agents' threat but will also help recognize and manage natural outbreaks of infectious diseases in peacetime. Therefore, there should be a development of public awareness before, during and after such an attack. The people should be educated concerning the potential exposure of a biological weapon and numerous steps that are required to be taken to check bio-defense capabilities and certify enough protection from emerging threats. The government should provide emergency health insurance coverage during a bioterrorist attack. A nation's capability to counter a biological threat assault, hence, depends significantly on the condition of awareness of its therapeutic care systems and public health infrastructure. Pakistan needs to transform the policy to strengthen the public health system so the new policies would also strengthen Pakistan's capability to respond to any occurrence of infectious disease.

Unlike other national security protection measures, the defensive actions against biological outbreaks have suitable dual-use implications that would help Pakistan's citizens in a disaster and daily life. Developing the public health infrastructure will not only defend Pakistan in the case of deliberate outbreak of biological agents but will also assist in recognizing and managing naturally occurring infectious diseases. Pakistan has deficient financial and human assets to afford adequate health facilities to its whole population. Consequently, detection and anticipation of infectious diseases, such as Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever at an early stage is very remote, particularly, in rural areas and peripheral districts of Pakistan. Pakistan has experienced several hemorrhagic fevers outbreaks caused by Dengue and Congo virus.

In general, preparedness against biological threats is complex and needs the coordination of numerous branches of government that have not previously worked together in Pakistan. In terms of existing policy measures to prevent biological threats, Pakistan has the Drug Act (1976), Export Control Act (2004), Environmental Protection Act (1997), Anti-Terrorism Act (1997), National Biosafety Guidelines (2005), Pakistan Biosafety Rules (2005), National Counter Terrorism Authority Act (2013), International Health Regulations (2005) and National Internal Security Policy (2014). At this time, the National Command and Control Centre has constituted by Prime Minister Imran Khan for ensuring effective coordination among the federal and provincial governments. Moreover, the National Disaster Management Authority with Provincial Disaster Management Authorities is the leading operational agency working in response to COVID-19. A major component of the national regulatory framework policy is legislation, which includes biological threats connected to guidelines and rules.⁵²

Medical Management Strategy in Pakistan

Pakistan pre- and post-disaster preparedness planning has a passive impression. The comprehensive policy framework and preparedness policies of medical management can decrease vulnerabilities in Pakistan. A public information strategy should be devised that can provide clear and accurate information about when treatment is required and where it should be received. In Pakistan, the laboratory capability policy refers to the blockades that prevent biological threats whether theft or deliberate or accidental release of dangerous biological agents from laboratories. No sole tool is adequate to recognize any biological threat definitively, hence, diagnostic systems must be competent to identify numerous biological markers.

Surveillance Policy of Pakistan

The vulnerabilities to natural outbreaks of biological agent's upheavals rank top in the third world countries. The emergence of infectious diseases, especially, Dengue, Congo Virus and Coronavirus is a serious health problem in Pakistan. Consequently, there is a need for rapid identification of disease surveillance policies which constitutes timely tracking of the public health system and controls the dangerous pathogens. The surveillance system is an emerging policy instrument in epidemiology that plays a major role in preparedness and gives early warning, which is a

significant factor in minimizing biological threats. The health surveillance policies have a link with the systematic collection, interpretation, analysis, and distribution of health data which indicate biological outbreaks and provide disease transmission information about a person, time, and place immediately after diagnosis. The existing disease surveillance system and reporting system in Pakistan are not working properly and response is slow to detect the natural or deliberate outbreaks. There is a need for constant surveillance and alertness for the effective detection of biological outbreaks.

Recommendations for Future Threats

The current COVID-19 pandemic is an opportunity to revise the biodefense policy and develop new norms against biological risks. In Pakistan, there is a need to identify critical gaps in preparedness and also prioritizing defense against biological risks. As there are a large number of coronavirus cases in Pakistan, thus, it is engaging government agencies and mobilizing the private sector to work collaboratively against the COVID-19 pandemic and health threats. Yet, COVID-19 pandemic cases are prevailing in Pakistan because of the shortage of workforce, risk communication, surveillance, preparedness, and training. Pakistan needs to strengthen the capacity-building strategies against biological risks at the national and local levels, such as health workforce, a technical support unit, monitoring and early reporting of disease. Moreover, global and national cooperation needs sustainable developments for countering new challenges of an outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and future biological risks.

Conclusion

The natural or accidental and the subsequent deliberate use of biological agents after 9/11 have clear implications for the whole world. In this regard, extensive organizational measures at the international and national levels have been taken against the natural or deliberate proliferation of biological agents. Yet, the terrorist incident of 9/11 and recent outbreaks of a novel coronavirus and Ebola virus revealed numerous weaknesses in the existing policy tools for countering the biological threats. Though biosecurity, predominantly early detection, identification of the pathogen, early diagnosis by real-time and vaccines or drugs, are necessary tools for combating biological outbreaks.

COVID-19, which occurred in late 2019, has posed a global health threat, thus, concrete steps have to be taken to counter ongoing pandemic. The WHO is also promoting and supporting national public health responses against the natural or deliberate outbreaks and also focusing on rapid investigation, surveillance, and containment. Hence, comprehensive policies are an appropriate tool or mechanism to counter biological threats. Moreover, to meet the new challenges, there is still a dire need for research in the areas of early detection of biological attacks and control of infectious diseases. Pakistan may have already embarked on the path of building laws and policies with proper implementation, which has helped in ensuring adequate safeguards against biological threats. Nevertheless, no single tool or mechanism is

sufficient; consequently, limiting the biological risks requires raising awareness among the scientific community, law enforcement agencies, policymakers, and health regulatory agencies, especially in developing countries. Currently, Pakistan needs long-term funding in the field of biosecurity for the elimination of potential current biological risks and future outbreaks.

References

- ¹ Koblenz, Gregory D. "Biosecurity reconsidered: calibrating biological threats and responses." *International security* 34, no. 4 (2010): 96-132.
- ² Edelstein, R. L., C. R. Tamanaha, P. E. Sheehan, M. M. Miller, D. R. Baselt, Ljetal Whitman, and R. J. Colton. "The BARC biosensor applied to the detection of biological warfare agents." *Biosensors and Bioelectronics* 14, no. 10-11 (2000): 805-813.
- ³ Zilinskas, Raymond. "Assessing the threat of bioterrorism: Congressional testimony by Raymond Zilinskas." *Monterey Institute of International Studies* (1999).
- ⁴ Lentzos, Filippa, Michael S. Goodman, and James M. Wilson. "Health security intelligence: engaging across disciplines and sectors." (2020): 1-12.
- ⁵ Li, Qun, Xuhua Guan, Peng Wu, Xiaoye Wang, Lei Zhou, Yeqing Tong, Ruiqi Ren et al. "Early transmission dynamics in Wuhan, China, of novel coronavirus-infected pneumonia." *New England Journal of Medicine* (2020).
- ⁶ Zeb, Shah. "Threats of Bioterrorism in Public Health, Epidemiological Clue, Detection and Safety Pre-cautions Deliberate by CDCs." (2019).
- ⁷ Wu, Guizhen. "Laboratory biosafety in China: Past, present, and future." *Biosafety and Health* (2019).
- ⁸ Gao, George F. "For a better world: Biosafety strategies to protect global health." (2019).
- ⁹ Ramphul, Kamleshun, Stephanie G. Mejias, Vivian C. Agumadu, Shaheen Sombans, Ruhi Sonaye, and Petras Lohana. "The killer virus called Nipah: a review." *Cureus* 10, no. 8 (2018).
- ¹⁰ Abrol, Sumeet. "Countering Bioterrorism Threat to India: Employing Global Best Practices and Technology as Force Multiplier." *India Quarterly* 72, no. 2 (2016): 146-162.
- ¹¹ Spencer, Robert C. "Bacillus anthracis." *Journal of clinical pathology* 56, no. 3 (2003): 182-187.
- ¹² Bush, George W. "Homeland security presidential directive 5." *National Security Presidential Directives* (2003).
- ¹³ Cordesman, Anthony H. *Terrorism, asymmetric warfare, and weapons of mass destruction: Defending the US homeland*. Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002.
- Yunus, Zalini. "Combating and reducing the risk of biological threats." *The Journal of Defence and Security* 1 (2010): 1-15.
- ¹⁵ Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention (CDC), Bioterrorism Agents/Diseases, website, April 4, 2018, <https://emergency.cdc.gov/agent/agentlist-category.asp>.
- ¹⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ Trull, Melanie C., Tracey V. du Laney, and Mark D. Dibner. "Turning biodefense dollars into products." *Nature biotechnology* 25, no. 2 (2007): 179-184.
- ¹⁹ Simon, Jeffrey D. "Biological terrorism: preparing to meet the threat." *Jama* 278, no. 5 (1997): 428-430.
- ²⁰ Morgan, Matthew J. *The origins of the new terrorism*. MILITARY INTELLIGENCE BN (125TH) SCHOFIELD BARRACKS HI, 2004.
- ²¹ Morens, David M., Gregory K. Folkers, and Anthony S. Fauci. "Emerging infections: a perpetual challenge." *The Lancet infectious diseases* 8, no. 11 (2008): 710-719.
- ²² Török, Thomas J., Robert V. Tauxe, Robert P. Wise, John R. Livengood, Robert Sokolow, Steven Mauvais, Kristin A. Birkness, Michael R. Skeels, John M. Horan, and Laurence R. Foster. "A large community outbreak of salmonellosis caused by intentional contamination of restaurant salad bars." *Jama* 278, no. 5 (1997): 389-395.
- ²³ Török, Thomas J., Robert V. Tauxe, Robert P. Wise, John R. Livengood, Robert Sokolow, Steven Mauvais, Kristin A. Birkness, Michael R. Skeels, John M. Horan, and Laurence R. Foster. "A large community outbreak of salmonellosis caused by intentional contamination of restaurant salad bars." *Jama* 278, no. 5 (1997): 389-395.
- ²⁴ Laqueur, Walter. "Postmodern terrorism." *Foreign Affairs* (1996): 24-36.
- ²⁵ Barbera, Joseph, Anthony Macintyre, Larry Gostin, Tom Inglesby, Tara O'toole, Craig DeAtley, Kevin Tonat, and Marci Layton. "Large-scale quarantine following biological terrorism in the United States: scientific examination, logistic and legal limits, and possible consequences." *Jama* 286, no. 21 (2001): 2711-2717.
- ²⁶ Atlas, Ronald M. "The medical threat of biological weapons." *Critical reviews in microbiology* 24, no. 3 (1998): 157-168.
- ²⁷ Perrings, Charles, Mark Williamson, Edward B. Barbier, Doriana Delfino, Silvana Dalmazzone, Jason Shogren, Peter Simmons, and Andrew Watkinson. "Biological invasion risks and the public good: an economic perspective." *Conservation Ecology* 6, no. 1 (2002).
- ²⁸ Gilfillan, Lynne, Bradley T. Smith, Thomas V. Inglesby, Krishna Kodukula, Ari Schuler, Mark Lister, and Tara O'Toole. "Taking the measure of countermeasures: leaders' views on the nation's capacity to develop biodefense countermeasures." *Biosecurity and bioterrorism: biodefense strategy, practice, and science* 2, no. 4 (2004): 320-327.
- ²⁹ Rappert, Brian, ed. *Education and ethics in the life sciences: Strengthening the prohibition of biological weapons*. No. 1. ANU E Press, 2010.
- ³⁰ Ostfield, Marc L. "Strengthening biodefense internationally: illusion and reality." *Biosecurity and bioterrorism: biodefense strategy, practice, and science* 6, no. 3 (2008): 261-268.
- ³¹ Formally promulgated in Homeland Security Presidential Directive 10 and National Security Presidential Directive 33 on April 28, 2004. These directives are classified. An unclassified version can be found at <www.whitehouse.gov>. See "Biodefense for the 21st Century."
- ³² Bonin, Sergio. *International biodefense handbook: an inventory of national and international biodefense practices and policies*. Center for Security Studies (CSS), ETH Zürich, 2007.
- ³³ Kirby, Reid. "The Trump's administration's misaligned approach to national biodefense." *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 73, no. 6 (2017): 382-387.

-
- ³⁴ Berger, Kavita M., James LN Wood, Bonnie Jenkins, Jennifer Olsen, Stephen S. Morse, Louise Gresham, J. Jeffrey Root et al. "Policy and science for global health security: Shaping the course of international health." *Tropical medicine and infectious disease* 4, no. 2 (2019): 60.
- ³⁵ The Executive Office of the President, "Biodefense for the 21st Century," Homeland Security Presidential Directive 10/HSPD-10, April 28, 2004.
- ³⁶ Langmuir, Alexander D., and Justin M. Andrews. "Biological warfare defense: The Epidemic Intelligence Service of the Communicable Disease Center." *American Journal of Public Health and the Nation's Health* 42, no. 3 (1952): 235-238
- ³⁷ Fidler, David, and Lawrence Ogalthorpe Gostin. *Biosecurity in the global age: biological weapons, public health, and the rule of law*. Stanford University Press, 2008.
- ³⁸ Lentzos, Filippa. "The American biodefense industry: from emergency to nonemergence." *Politics and the Life Sciences* 26, no. 1 (2007): 15-23.
- ³⁹ "Biodefense for the 21st Century," White House fact sheet, 28 April 2004. Available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/homeland/20040430.html> (accessed August 2004).
- ⁴⁰ Iqbal, Shahzi S., Michael W. Mayo, John G. Bruno, Burt V. Bronk, Carl A. Batt, and James P. Chambers. "A review of molecular recognition technologies for detection of biological threat agents." *Biosensors and Bioelectronics* 15, no. 11-12 (2000): 549-578.
- ⁴¹ Reddy, Martha N. "Terahertz quantum cascade lasers for ultra-sensitive detection of explosives and improvised explosive devices." *DRDO Science Spectrum* 2009 (2009): 140-141.
- ⁴² Holloway, Harry C., Ann E. Norwood, Carol S. Fullerton, Charles C. Engel, and Robert J. Ursano. "The threat of biological weapons: prophylaxis and mitigation of psychological and social consequences." *Jama* 278, no. 5 (1997): 425-427.
- ⁴³ Robinson, Julian Perry. *Public health response to biological and chemical weapons: WHO guidance*. World Health Organization, 2004.
- ⁴⁴ Miller, Judith, William J. Broad, and Stephen Engelberg. *Germs: Biological weapons and America's secret war*. Simon and Schuster, 2012.
- ⁴⁵ Lumpkin, John R., Yoon K. Miller, Tom Inglesby, Jonathan M. Links, Angela T. Schwartz, Catherine C. Slemp, Robert L. Burhans, James Blumenstock, and Ali S. Khan. "The importance of establishing a national health security preparedness index." *Biosecurity and bioterrorism: biodefense strategy, practice, and science* 11, no. 1 (2013): 81-87.
- ⁴⁶ Vagts, Detlev F. "The Hague Conventions and Arms Control." *American Journal of International Law* 94, no. 1 (2000): 31-41.
- ⁴⁷ Rutherford, Ken. "The Hague and Ottawa conventions: a model for future weapon ban regimes?" *The nonproliferation review* 6, no. 3 (1999): 36-50.
- ⁴⁸ Moore, John Norton. "Ratification of the Geneva Protocol on Gas and Bacteriological Warfare: A Legal and Political Analysis." *Va. L. Rev.* 58 (1972): 419.
- ⁴⁹ Hashmi, Muhammad Jawad, Muhammad Mushtaq, and Masood Ur Rehman Khattak. "Non-Proliferation Regime: A Pakistani Perspective on Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT)." *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences (PJSS)* 35, no. 2 (2015).
- ⁵⁰ Khan, Amir Ullah, and Zafar Nawaz Jaspal. "Health Security Governance and Zoonotic Diseases in Pakistan: The International Health Regulations (2005) Angle." *IPRI JOURNAL* 17, no. 1 (2017): 122-145.
- ⁵¹ Ibid.
- ⁵² Reddy, K. Srinath, Bela Shah, Cherian Varghese, and Anbumani Ramadoss. "Responding to the threat of chronic diseases in India." *The Lancet* 366, no. 9498 (2005): 1744-1749.

RISE OF RIGHT-WING INDIAN NATIONALISM: IMPLICATIONS FOR SOUTH ASIA

*Marium Fatima, Ghulam Ali Murtaza and Arshi Saleem Hashmi**

Abstract

This paper examines the rise of right-wing Hindu nationalism in Indian politics in the 1980s premised on the hatred of minorities. It qualitatively analyses the political catalysts for the rise of Hindu nationalists, rationale behind Hindutva initiative, right-wing organizational interests, internal politicking among political parties, and the role powerful individuals played to promote Hindutva ideology through the works of intellectuals and expert in the field. It takes into account the important dimensions of the strategy employed to instill anxiety against the threat amongst the masses to draw electoral support. The paper elaborates on the discourse strategies utilized to propagate the Hindutva ideology within Indian society through media and politics. It actively analyses the ramifications of Hindutva ideology on Indian domestic politics as well as regional politics and highlights the potential risks that may ensue in South Asia.

Keywords: Hindu Nationalism, Discourse, Hindutva, BJP, Right-Wing.

Introduction

Modern Indian history of the 1980s witnessed political turmoil as India faced secessionist movements in Assam and Punjab in addition to the longstanding issue of Kashmir, thus, marking violent conflicts based on caste and community a recurrent theme of mobilization and counter-mobilization in politics. Indian National Congress, predominantly, a centre-left party despite earlier electoral triumphs faced shrinking popular support because of the bad governance and corruption, however, increasing political insecurity led Congress to evoke majoritarian sentiments to recapture its lost political ground.

During the 1980s, uncertainty pervaded Indian society, particularly, its middle class while Hindu nationalists skillfully drew political advantage through a communal politics and organizational competence against this backdrop. In 1989, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) succeeded in winning eighty-five seats in general elections (previously held two) signifying the popularity of Hindu nationalists in Indian politics. Towards the end of this politically-fateful decade, the remarkable success of Hindu nationalists transcended beyond politics, transforming the social landscape of India and depicting innate acceptance of Hindu nationalism in the minds of Indian polity. Therefore, this

*Marium Fatima is lecturer at the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, National Defence University, Islamabad. Ghulam Ali Murtaza received his Masters Degree from School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, UK. Dr. Arshi Saleem Hashmi is Head, Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, National Defence University, Islamabad.

paper discusses crucial factors contributing to the spectacular victory of Hindu nationalism in the 1980s and the reasons for not reaching maturity earlier. This study advances by analyzing two general aspects. The first aspect is the political environment of the 1980s where developments prior to the decade defined and influenced the politics by engendering a slew of crisis which in turn was capitalized by nationalists to gain recognition and influence.

The second dimension of this study deliberates upon the internal progress of Hindutva movement (a predominant form of Hindu nationalism) and the dynamics, strategy and discourse employed by Hindu nationalists to expand influence and gain political victory. It argues that the interplay of two dimensions suggested the presence of a dialectical relationship between them and that the two did not play out in isolation from each other. This paper attempts to treat the two in separate sections to make lucid arguments despite an established link between the two aspects which becomes evident later as the work proceeds further.

This study has four parts: the first part commences with organizational history and ideological description of Hindu nationalism, juxtaposed to various affiliates. The second part presents the favorable political backdrop of the 1980s for the concomitant surge of Hindu nationalism and the crisis-ridden political environment under Congress. The formation of volatile elements in the political scene of the 1980s which occasioned the mobilization on the basis of identity (caste and communal) has been analyzed on the premise of a cohesive and encompassing theoretical framework. Furthermore, this work would examine if the uncertain and unpredictable political and social environment prevailing in the 1980s benefitted the Hindu Nationalists by providing fertile grounds to secessionist movements and economic deterioration. Additionally, this paper divulges the chemistry of disparate political contexts with political actors. In the third part, the focus is shifted away from structure and context to disclose how Hindutva elements used discourse and cultural practices as a strategy to develop an identity of selfhood and subjectivity for people which led to its emergence as a unified and well-coordinated political force in the 1980s. The fourth and final section of the paper discusses the implications of the right-wing Hindu nationalism within India and the neighboring states as the potential clash of communal ideologies.

Ideology of Hindu Nationalism

Hindu nationalism in the latter half of the 19th century, as an ideology and political project, originated via three methods: firstly, British objectification and essentialization of Indian communities; secondly, Indian civilization's unique characterization through the intellectual contribution of orientalist; thirdly, certain Hindus were inclined to emulate Semitic religion's discursive techniques.¹ There is no evidence to suggest that in the subcontinent the right-wing Hinduism offered articulate practical resistance to British imperialists but the right-wing was convinced that decentralization of Hinduism was the religious fault-line that made room for foreign powers, Mughals and British, to subjugate India. The Indo-Persian origin of the Mughal dynasty has been overlooked by Hindu nationalists branding it as foreigner despite

spending more than 1200 years in the Indian subcontinent while erroneously owned Aryanism which has foreign roots in Central Asia. Hinduism is a tolerant and pragmatic religion termed as pseudo-secularism by Hindu nationalists (Hindutva ideologues), a derogatory political term in the Indian context to demean the minority pacification efforts of secularists labelling these efforts as anti-Hindu, whereas, right-wing politicians capitalize on the term 'communalism.' In order to make concerted efforts for a centralized and forceful interpretation of Hinduism, a Hindu physician Dr. Hedgewar (1925) formed a nationalist organization, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), asserting multi-tiered influence on all strata of Indian society.²

A Hindu nationalist family, Sangh-Parivar, is a group of organizations with independent policies but having common objectives entrenched in the philosophy of Hinduism spanning politics and defense of the faith. The religiously pluralistic India, envisioned by Gandhi, did not fit well with the non-accommodationist RSS ideology which culminated in the assassination of Gandhi at the hands of Nathuram Godse, an incensed RSS member. RSS was briefly banned in the aftermath of Gandhi's assassination but the outfit became re-functional acquiring the largest membership of around 6 million Hindus.³

After the partition of the subcontinent in 1947, RSS being a staunch proponent of one Holy Undivided Land and opponent of the right of self-determination for minorities attributed the partition of India to be a direct backfire of inadequate secular pro-minority Nehruvian policies erroneously granting them political representation as Indian Citizens. Contrarily, Hindu nationalists aspired for a 'Hindu-nation India' without minorities or minorities' submissive to Hindutva ideology (not to be mistaken with Hinduism). In contemporary Indian politics, the nationalists accuse Congress of having an appeasement policy towards Muslims embedded in secularism, whereas, the Congress politicians assert that RSS claims of Hindus and Muslims being two separate nations led to trust deficit of Muslims in 'Free India', therefore, the two-nation theory was founded followed by the struggle for political power in a separate state (Pakistan).

Dogmatically, Hindu nationalists narrowed down the perception of a nation to culture by using culture-specific terminology, such as organic and homogenous entity while other religious communities especially Muslims were excluded. The threat perception attached to Indian Muslims was founded on false security risk to the integration of the Indian state. Savarkar, the chief Hindutva ideologue, defined 'Hindu' broadly including Sikhs, Buddhists, and Jains. Since Muslims and Christians fall short of fulfilling the criteria of Hindu religion, therefore, their loyalty to the state is generally suspected.⁴ The ideological rivals of Sangh-Parivar labelled this phenomenon as perpetration of saffron terror and authoritarian majoritarianism of Hindu right-wing nationalists.

Emergence of Hindu Nationalists on Political Realm

The emergence of Hindu nationalism in the 1980s was studied and explored in the failure of two principal architectures in the realm of Indian politics, i.e., the secular Indian state and Congress party. Scholars, such as Nandy and Chatterjee (both anarcho-

communitarians) link the rise of Hindu nationalism to the entire initiative of rationalization and modernization of the Indian state.⁵ In Nandy's view-point, against the institutional backdrop of Indian society, modernism and secularism as an initiative could not become successful. He candidly places the blame on the Indian state for allowing the rise of Hindu nationalism. Nandy, a staunch supporter of Gandhi, asserts that state-institutions and modernism were unsuitable, therefore, the Indian state initiated a disenchanting and dislocating process of modernization. According to his critique, an implication that emanated from the modernization discourse manifested when modernization adversely altered the religious, local and communal landscape of Indian polity. Nandy lamented the consequences of this process as clueless Indian people were left devoid of dignity falling prey to surging religious radicalism which he termed as a false religion.⁶

Nandy's criticism of Indian secularism rather enforced secularism and modernization is founded on the assumption that South Asian religions as systems of faith have an inbuilt mechanism and tolerant apparatus for coexistence to each other. Nandy asserted that modernization and secularization initiatives undertaken by the Indian state had sapped and altered the capability of religions to function as systems of faith. He contended that modernization weakened the ability of religion to address the needs of people in India. Therefore, religion instead of acting as a system of faith caused the psychological fulfilment of its adherents as an ideology channelized to be intolerant of diversity. The popular shift towards religion as an ideology promoted self-assertion of ethnic groups represented by radical movements, for instance, Hindu nationalism or religious identity which Nandy coined as a perversion of faith.⁷

Partha Chatterjee explores the inter-relationship of Indian secularism vis-a-vis religion. Chatterjee resembles Nandy for supporting the removal of religion as an ideology from the political sphere and believes that religious tolerance should have been an effective tool to achieve it but his ideals about secularism are divorced from Nandy's point of view. Chatterjee primarily contends that secularism (not estranged to Indian politics, therefore, still able to succeed) fails in India because, practically, religion is not completely isolated from Indian politics.⁸ State-intervention, according to Chatterjee, entails approval of one community over another which results in religiously charged politics suggesting the transfer of decision-power on religious matters and communities outside the scope of the democratic sphere, thus, separates religion from politics.

Thomas Blom Hansen presents another critique of Indian secularism in *The Saffron Wave* and characterizes the predominant myth of Nehruvian-era with hyper-rationalism and secularism, a notion recognized not only by the mainstream politicians but also the political rightists and leftists otherwise critical of the notion. Blom contended that the Nehruvian notion of India did not embrace the vision of secular citizenship.⁹ Communities were taken as a point of reference by colonial powers in India to comprehend the complicated Indian social landscape through essentialization presenting governance problems (persisting in the post-colonial era). Additionally, the colonial government policy that educated classes necessitated a different governance

challenge and strategy persevered in the post-colonial era (Mandal commission report). Hansen quoted Kaviraj who brilliantly expounded on Nehru regime's inclusive secular public sphere fit to sophisticated and un-intimidated elites at perfect ease with a stroll.¹⁰ India, in an attempt to reinforce its legitimacy, presented communities (culturally and religiously diverse) as a charming exhibition of Indian nationhood and culture, an alternative to fragmented communities. Hansen asserts that policies of the centralized planning commission and its rationality stood in stark contrast to the dominant structure of clienteles erected by none else but the Nehru regime to ensure Congress grip on power which later revealed the illogical stress on the Indian state.

Arguments propounded by all the three authors suggest different features of political contextualization since partition which helped Hindu nationalism to succeed later. Given that the observations may be flawed, for instance, Nandy's argument of religion as inherently tolerant system of faith is unsubstantiated. Similarly, one may question Chatterjee's proposition that if in a democratic fashion religious groups are allowed to regulate their internal matters then how would they thwart any chances of political influence and how the cascading effects of such politics would be controlled to guard the democratic values of a secular state.

Pragmatically, the experience and empirical evidence support the assertions of these authors despite the shortcomings. Hansen's argument, for instance, about weak Indian secularism and the rise of Hindu nationalism in the 1980s is intelligible.¹¹ Hindu nationalists allege that the state and Congress party's pacification of Muslim minority and disparagement of Hindu religion provided an impetus to their movement, a view that resonates well with their supporters and conforms to Nandy and Chatterjee's opinion. Since religion was not completely disconnected from Indian politics, therefore, in Chatterjee's view, Indian democratic politics remained confounded by religious issues.¹² The legislation, such as the Hindu Code Bill (1950) ensured Hindu nationalists' relevance in Indian politics opening the opportunity for continued exploitation. Likewise, the Supreme Court decision in the Shah-Bano case and the subsequent decision by Congress government to counterpoise the ruling through parliament paved the way for religious polarization of the country, stimulated the Hindutva movement.¹³ These authors merely offered explanations to an extent, however, they failed to take factors into account other than religion and religious communities instrumental in the surge of Hindu nationalism. The mutual interaction between religious communities and the secular state remained beyond the scope of their analysis. Therefore, this study attempts to find that why did Hindu nationalists achieve significant success in the era of the 1980s and not earlier.

The success of Hindu nationalism in the 1980s can be best expounded and comprehended by Sumantra Bose's theoretical studies which adjusted and realigned Gramsci's work into Indian perspective and context. With the help of concepts derived from Gramsci's research work, Bose designed an all-encompassing theoretical framework to investigate the rise of Hindu nationalism situated in the entirety of India's 1980s political sphere.¹⁴ Following Gramsci, Bose studied the growth of the Hindutva element against the backdrop of what he calls 'organic-crisis' of the Indian state.

Systematic features of permanence constitute such organic-crisis which, essentially, is multidimensional where communalism is one aspect of it. He argued that the glorification of communalism and the conflict it represents underestimated and veiled the inherent challenges in Indian society based on ethnicity, caste and linguistic schism. These social conflicts hold fundamental illustrative importance to rationalize the up-rise of the Hindutva movement.¹⁵

Bose by realigning with Gramscian notions splits organic-crisis in Indian state into two major aspects: first aspect function at the level of a democratic system while the other is situated in the sphere of the multiparty political system. The first dimension where democratic regimes have to deal with the crisis of legitimacy is further divided into two constituents:

- Regime efficacy crisis which considerably represents that regime is short of competence to deal with the fundamental political problem at the root of a political system;
- Effectiveness which signifies the regime's capability for the successful execution of policies (already formulated).

According to Bose, the Indian state failed to resolve four formational problems existing in Indian political organization, i.e., lack of national integration, slow economic progress, absence of social egalitarianism, and strength of multiparty democratic values by consolidation in a democracy.¹⁶ Congress party previously wielded political and ideological hegemony but in a multiparty political spectrum it is unable to maintain the socio-political supremacy. Drawing on Bose's works, the entire crisis served as a background which became the context for pro-Hindutva political elites, the BJP to grapple for power. Examining the political field of the 1980s through the lens of theoretical framework adopted in Gramsci and Bose's work, it elucidates upon catalysts for the origins of the surge of Hindu nationalism. In the 1980s, owing to the Indian state's failure in regulating centre-state relations and strong tendencies for centralization (crisis of legitimacy of the democratic regime), secessionist movements rose in India leading to a spike in violence.

The middle-class in India, particularly, became prey to insecurities spawned by secessionist movements; both Congress and Hindu nationalists took political advantage of this insecurity. Majoritarian democracy or political fashion adopted by Hindutva forces in the 1980s had already become an accepted mode of politics initially pioneered by Congress into Indian politics. In the face of diminishing political hegemony, Congress adopted a majoritarian style of democracy in the 1970s and 1980s, a political reconfiguration of new form across India. Decreased supremacy of Congress in the 1970s introduced majoritarian politics charming marginalized communities, however, in the 1980s, majoritarian politics acquired communal character.

Bose identified the legitimacy crisis of democracy as mass-mobilization based on caste discrimination and consequent violence with counter-mobilization of rival castes presented structural problems. Social injustice made quota-system for lower castes controversial which denotes a failure of the Indian state and dominant political

party. The political scene became confounded by the appearance of social groups, therefore, the patronage policy of Congress which had guaranteed its supremacy, had become fragmented. Superior castes so far supporting Congress in Gujrat and Uttar-Pradesh withdrew support in the 1980s fearing loss of political grounds to BJP as middle castes started intense political activism. As evident from the above discussion, Hindutva nationalism found an encouraging situation in the politically explosive 1980s with structural problems. The recognition of majoritarian style of politics as mainstream deterioration of centre-state relations and caste conflict are among others.

Mobilization of Right-Wing Hindu Nationalists

Hindu nationalists were quick to grab the political opportunities offered in the 1980s and they lost no time in using diverse strategies to rally people behind their political agendas materializing ineptly fertile ground. Hansen contended that most of the individuals constituting a society identify themselves through cultural and commercial expressions and political discourse in a given public sphere. Hansen, hypothetical supposition is corroborated by Hindu nationalists' deliberate endeavors to use symbolic Hindu practices to influence political identities using Hindutva discourse.

Hindu religious pilgrimage to sacred sites, *yatras* and smaller *upayatras* (religious processions of lesser significance relying on religious symbolism), were arranged by Sangh-Parivar in the 1980s to guarantee public visibility and capture public space. In order to register an impact in the society during these processions, effective communication strategy employing theatrical display of rituals including a symbolically significant act was the newly concocted and reinterpreted myth about Lord Ramayana's relevance to the contemporary India. In 1987, state-owned television channels broadcasted heroic Ramayana and Mahabharata holding Indians of varied castes glued lending support to Hindu nationalists. Hansen believes that Hindu Nationalists found fertile ground in Indian society from a plethora of imagery and narrative broadcasting through epics which helped in mobilizing people for the Ram janambhoomi campaign after 1989.¹⁷

In 1985, the reorganized Vishva-Hindu-Parishad (VHP) amongst all affiliates of RSS was at the vanguard to create unity among Hindu sects through organizing a chain of processions towards Ajodhya, where a committee for sacrifice for the liberation of Lord Rama's birthplace served as a stage. These strategies led the Faizabad District Court and later the Supreme Court of India to give in to the pressure, therefore, decreed to open Babri Mosque for Hindu worship. VHP extended its network amongst Indian diaspora through Diaspora Diplomacy who welcomed the VHP message openly and started funding Sangh-Parivar because of disconnect from local religious backdrop while the people at home did not embrace the message easily.¹⁸

Hindu nationalists changed their strategy in the political domain, therefore, BJP which had initially adopted a moderate approach until the elections of 1984 acquired a more aggressive posture because the moderate approach did not sit well with RSS leadership and cadre. In its former incarnation, Jan-Sangh, originally a nationalist

right-wing political party, constituted a coalition government with Janata Party in 1977 opposing Congress. Janata Party later morphed into Bharatiya Janata Party in 1981, which currently holds the largest representation in the Indian parliament. RSS overtly supported Congress for Delhi state legislature elections and general election (1984). Since BJP was wiped out in 1984-elections that forced BJP camp to rethink their political strategy. BJP and RSS political realignment in the 1980s was equivalent to submission of BJP's conservative respectable high-command, nonetheless, this change resulted in political success for BJP in 1989-elections.

The internal developments within Sangh-Parivar demonstrates the growing confidence of Hindu nationalists in the 1980s. In the middle of increasing insecurity, social disintegration, and economic discontent of the 1980s, particularly, more profound for superior and intermediary caste Hindus, the discourse strategy of Hindu nationalists involving the display of power and manliness reminiscing imaginary golden history and most importantly the promise of establishing a society based on harmony proved to be a matter of reassurance for a considerable number of people in India. Hindutva forces in Indian politics used abusive language in public discourse which in addition to undereducated classes disappointingly included some well-known academicians. Surprisingly, the Hindutva philosophy was entertained in the works of academics who originally embraced liberal and left-centrist views. The Nehruvian secularism concept during 1947 revolved around three major pillars, i.e., parliamentary democracy, state-led economic development, and secularism.

Democracy and economic prosperity fared well in India but secularism is debatable because Congress showed contradictions of right and left. Congress was more of a right-wing party during partition with a tainted track record of minority rights but leftists within Congress tended to be more egalitarian and compassionate towards all Indian communities. Currently, Hindutva right-wing lean towards social-order embedded in Hindu religion challenging egalitarian perception built by Congress through political discourse to woo increased political support of traditional religious communities. The general narrative of Hindu extremists was constructed on the idea that political space had shrunk for the Hindu population due to secular Congress which coerced Hindus to shun any religious discourse under threat.

The right-wing politicians deemed custodians of conservative ideologies (Hindutva movement) gained considerable public support especially from less educated classes because it offers an easy solution for ensuring Hindu structural order and protection against social adventurism of other ideologies. Right-wing Hindus do not interact with other religious communities because they follow conservative social ideologies due to preconceived prejudices. Whereas, Intellectual classes with liberal ideals tend to be non-conformist to traditional Hindutva ideology, therefore, more receptive of new ideas conforming to the original political manifesto of Congress.

In recent years, less cultured elements brought right-wing revolution erroneously believing that Hinduism was endangered despite 80 percent of Indians following Hinduism. Additionally, Hindus enjoyed 70 years of continuous economic and political control yet right-wing successfully harps on 'threat' and 'danger' mantra in

public discourse. Hindutva brand of one leader, one religion and one language, is supported through constructed facts disregarding historical diversity of India; dissent is tagged as a threat to order, therefore, propagating intolerant anti-democratic values. Academics and journalists tried to expose Hindu leaders discourse sowing Hindutva seeds establishing religious supremacy of Hinduism against other religions through different approaches. Hindutva politicians planned to convert Hinduism into an unyielding monochromatic entity bent at discovering its masculine and aggressive side to ensure Aryanization. They erased the difference between Hindu religion and Hindu-Rashtra demonizing Muslims as disloyal to India and pitching Hindus against Muslims.

Implications of Hindu Right-Wing Nationalism

Before partition, Congress as an anti-colonial movement reclaimed political power against British colonizers; however, the current shift in Indian politics has caused BJP to declare other nations as invaders. BJP official websites candidly designate India as a 'Hindu civilization' steadfast in the face of invading Turk and Afghan Muslim armies symbolizing Hindus as 'we the natives' and Muslims as 'others the outsiders.' This demonstrates that BJP is bent upon politicizing the indigenous Indian communities on the lines of religion and does not shy away from divisive politics in favor of the majority Hindu population. In order to comprehend the Indian right-wing politics, BJP's rise to power thrice and ensuing confrontational foreign policy and religious bigotry can be studied linearly. During the first term in power, BJP leader Vajpayee on his visit to the US (2000) remarked being RSS member first and Indian Prime Minister later.¹⁹ BJP's first tenure (1998) marked extreme measures nuclearizing South-Asia, warmongering rhetoric of rightist politicians against Pakistan, improved ties with Israel disregarding the sensitivities of a huge population resenting Israeli expansionist designs and Palestinian human-rights violation.²⁰ A favorable foreign-policy towards Israel was the first step with symbolic significance dawning many years down the line when BJP came into power again (2019).

The second BJP tenure (2014) capitalized on jingoistic posture in election campaign towards Pakistan; the electoral-win for Modi, master-mind of Gujrat Muslim massacre, manifests an acceptance of right-wing Hindu nationalism. Modi's government refused to condemn Israeli air-strikes on Gaza and abstained from voting in the UN while agreements for strong bilateral relations between Modi-Netanyahu displays paradigm-shift in India-Israel relations.²¹ Modi's government adopted a deliberate strategy to enforce Hindu literature in educational institutions, imposed laws against cow slaughter, boycotted Indian movies which promoted the message of tolerance towards Muslims, strict bans on Christian missionaries, and the policy to grant Indian nationality to non-Muslim Bengalis only constitute a combination of extreme actions intended to sponsor widespread cultural-violence in India.²² Hindu right-wing groups under BJP's political patronage try to establish strict control over protesting against the story-line of Bollywood movie *Padmaavat* depicting love between a 14th-century Hindu queen and a Muslim king suggesting that inter-communal relations in India are combustible. Hindutva forces' effort to radicalize art is a strategy to stifle thought-

process so that no intellectual academician dare venture into liberal or inclusive pursuits of art.²³

One step-ahead is the attack on architectural legacy. The rightist politicians argued that Taj-Mahal had no status of Indian (identifying Indian as Hindu) heritage because it was built by a Muslim ruler which predicts conflict of culture, history and art within the Indian society.²⁴ Academically, right-wing demand for Hindu holy-books to be made a national scripture because common Indian ancestry was 'Hindu first', depicts that Hindutva forces are seriously attempting to indoctrinate the next generation with one ideology. Politically, a law-maker rather a Hindutva ideologue at National Assembly eulogized Gandhi's assassin, Godse, as a national hero conveyed a message of gloom for the very fabric of the Indian society.²⁵ Rise of Hindu right-wing political discourse culminated in populist majoritarian dictatorship causing the public to lose power suppressing all political dissent and policy disapproval. Any criticism levelled at the Modi regime draws a very undemocratic black-mailing response of being anti-state and pro-Pakistan posture.²⁶ It is a discourse-strategy employed to preserve social-order and national-security, therefore, the Modi government brutally cracks down on valid political dissent playing upon the Hindu populations' insecurity of disintegration.

Socially, Hindu-Muslim tension over cow is old but Hindu right-wing militants aided by BJP's pro-cow ideology stigmatized the Muslims (for beef-consumption) emboldening Hindus to settle personal-vendettas on the pretext of Muslim eating, selling or buying beef. Hindu mob is galvanized into lynching, attacking Muslims with bricks and burning homes upon allegations of slaughtering (or eating) cow.²⁷ In order to challenge the political history by chalking out a different national identity, Hindutva elements frequently raise monochromatic saffron flags to represent 'Greater Mother India' (with expansionist designs include today's Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka) instead of Indian national flag (trichromatic representing minorities) which envisaged a pluralistic society.

Departing from internationally recognized humanitarian values, Hindu nationalists use national security as a tool against persecuted groups declaring Rohingya Muslim refugees as terrorists. Right-wing discourse in India is less cultivated often making recourse to threatening and repulsive incitements propagating a threat perception against any change in social-order.²⁸ International relations in South-Asia have specifically become strained owing to hardline policies, tough rhetoric against Pakistan, and frequent military aggression at the Line of Control (LOC) in Kashmir. Hindu nationalist (Modi) government openly supports insurgency in Baluchistan to destabilize Pakistan and derail China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to stop potential economic boom which may hinder its hegemonic designs.²⁹ The right-wing Hindu government also tried enforcing the Hindutva ideology in Nepal pressurizing it to declare Hinduism as state religion. Nepal's decision to adopt secularism brought a confrontational response from BJP through a blockade.³⁰

The hostile reaction to innocent civilians fleeing persecution branding them as 'outsiders', demand for firm military action in Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK) in stark contrast to the Law of Occupying Powers, and human-rights violations of minorities

and lowers castes are the outcome of bigoted beliefs of right-wing politicians making the public discourse.³¹ John Stuart Mill (1861) rightly said that adherence to conservative notions does not necessitate mental alertness or thought-process because it is an effort to maintain status-quo which BJP is arguably trying to do.³² Rise of the Hindutva ideology candidly promote Hindu religious fundamentalism where Sangh-Parivar demands a Hindu country, however, BJP's narrative of a cohesive and homogenous society is challenged by the presence of a huge minority population (twenty percent of the total population). BJP's fantasy to rid India of minorities, i.e., 'purify the country', difficult to achieve so far, nevertheless, the Hindutva ideologues after assuming power again in 2019 have set the year 2021 as the deadline to purge India of all other religious denominations.³³

In the absence of an effective opposition, the Modi government after winning the 2014-elections morphed itself into an authoritarian regime despite acquiring power through electoral competition in a multi-party system. The Modi regime was placed in an advantageous position, therefore, it influenced the 2019-election results by using coercive tactics to silence opposition on the ploy of national security and identity.³⁴ Strong Hindutva forces in India reignited the Khalistan movement by mobilizing Sikh diaspora,³⁵ whereas, earlier Congress decision to make Manmohan Singh Prime Minister had weakened the radical Sikh separatists.³⁶

In Kashmir, a Muslim-majority autonomous territory under Indian military occupation, BJP created an unprecedented divide by mobilizing the Hindu population to communal riots in 2014. Alliance of People's Democratic Party with BJP disillusioned Kashmiri youth and fueled the separatist movement, thus, drawing a strong reaction from Indian armed forces. The extrajudicial killing of young Hizbul-Mujahideen commander, Burhan Wani (2016), aggravated the situation. BJP rolled back political efforts of previous governments to keep Kashmir a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan in the spirit of Shimla Agreement (1972) by flagrant human-rights violations drawing attention of the international audience.³⁷ Pakistan has persistently lobbied to internationalize the human-rights violations in IOK to weaken India's strategic supremacy since the right of self-determination provided by the Security Council Resolutions has been denied to Kashmiris.³⁸ The office of High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) issued an international report five days after imposition of Governor's rule in IOK on June 14, 2018, criticizing the BJP government for human-rights violations, thus, demanding a UN Inquiry.³⁹

Sidelining political decency, Modi made fiery speeches to raise public anxiety as a psychological tactic based on religious-phobia that brought him political victory in 2019-elections but increased vengeance against Muslims.⁴⁰ Indian armed forces under Modi displayed pristine brinkmanship by crossing into Chinese Territory in June 2017 leading to a 73-day stalemate to prevent the construction of a road on behalf of Bhutan. Without calculating the inherent weaknesses of Indian armed forces, India is flexing its military muscles competitively, driving India into a Thucydides trap exhibiting the importance of US-India relationship. General Rawat also expressed the possibility of a two-front war with China and Pakistan, drawing candid diplomatic snub from China.⁴¹

In the milieu of February 14, 2019, Pulwama attack on Police force convoy in IOK, the BJP government gained political edge in pre-election campaign by making allegations against Pakistan for harboring terrorist attacks inside India. Though Pakistan denied, the BJP government upped its ante against Pakistan with threats of surgical strikes pushing the entire region to the brink of war, benefitting politically by military adventurism on February 27, 2019 to quell Indian public eagerness for disciplining Pakistan. Political manifesto of abrogation of Articles 35-A and 370 (determining the special autonomous status of Kashmir) allowed Modi to win the election with a greater majority and amend the Indian constitution by scrapping Article 370 on August 5, 2019. Kashmiris, even pro-Indian political leadership, believe that this unilateral legal move is tantamount to lawfare, ultra-vires of Indian constitution.

From a legal standpoint, firstly, since the right of self-determination of Kashmiris and demilitarization has been recognized by UNSC Resolutions No 39, 47 and 122, therefore, the current military conflict entails the application of the Geneva Conventions of armed conflicts of international character. Secondly, if the Indian constitutional arrangements vis-a-vis Kashmir are accepted then it would draw the implementation of Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocol II. Adopting the first legal perspective means that under international law, the Indian government as an occupying power violated a series of positive legal obligations to administer the occupied territory under articles 47 and 49 of the Geneva Convention-IV. Genocide Watch issued genocide alert about IOK, therefore, advising the UN to warn India not to commit genocide in Kashmir and Assam.⁴² BJP's Discriminatory Citizenship Amendment Bill (2019) stripping Muslims of Indian citizenship and dividing the families in Assam redeveloped the refugee crisis, which may potentially lead to a protracted social conflict with Bangladesh. The Sri Lankan government is dismayed with external influences from foreign forces involved in frequent attacks on minority Muslims even before the Easter attacks (April 2019). Frequently, fingers point towards Modi for spreading Hindutva Fascism to Sri Lanka pitching Buddhists and Christians against Muslims while cementing ties with Tamil Hindus to recreate internal disturbance in Sri Lanka.⁴³

Conclusion

Successive Indian regimes' policy of accommodating minorities varied with political climate. Congress under Indira Gandhi subtly played on 'Hindu card' comparatively less obvious but existent. Congress, however, constructed an attractive narrative for majority Hindus that minorities particularly Muslims could make political demands which the 'liberal' Congress government addressed to make a show of Indian democracy and secularism. In hindsight, Congress downfall since the 1980s adversely changed the fate of Indian politics by allowing BJP to become a political contender supported from all strata of Indian society. Rise of Hindutva did not emerge in vacuum unlike serious neighboring society where extremist ideologies were "alien", artificially imposed through state-policies, such as Pakistan. Mainstream religious beliefs culturally evolved in India but the interesting aspect was the deep-seated belief in a secular political framework. Hindu population did not borrow ideas under external influences

but they existed already yet subdued under political ideal of a secular state. What BJP and prior to that VHP did was to convince the population to reclaim their identity and express it forcefully.

The analytical outcome of this work suggests that new generations should give up romanticizing the Indian secularism of past since secular India run by political elites contained the possibilities, as discussed in this article, for emergence of extremist Hindu nationalism. Therefore, modern activists struggling to restore secularism should critically comprehend the kind of value systems required to avoid reproducing an antithesis which would increase their dismay. BJP deems religious freedom for minorities, a privilege not a democratic or constitutional right. Hindutva politics thrives on polarization rather than reconciliation driven by sabre-rattling against the fear of enemy ignoring poverty, disease and lack of education in India. In 1963, Donald E. Smith contended in his book while expounding on Indian secularism that “democracy and secularism are tightly held together by logic. If India abandons one, the other will go.”⁴⁴

Hindutva extremism has no ramifications for international politics but may prove to be a serious miscalculation if Muslim victimization within India invites a backlash from neighboring countries. Since moderates are steadily being phased out of Indian politics allowing hardliners to set the stage for discourse. Abrogation of the special status of Kashmir and Assam Citizenship Amendment Bill (2019) are the laws targeting Indian Muslims that may entail radicalization or indigenous insurgency. Nuclearized relationships in the strategic equation would complicate matters as the political sphere in the region is disarrayed with religiously driven nationalism. India, as a secular state, has become ‘Hindustan, a home of Hindus only’ demonstrating colonial characteristics where consent and dissent, two keywords are suppressed. Kashmir and Assam are not a simple question of territorial integrity or entitled citizenship rather grave human-rights concern. Reelection of staunch Hindu nationalists (2019) denotes that Indians not only support the tapered Hindu vision presented by Hindutva forces but demands for a more tapered vision.

References

- ¹ Corbridge, Stuart and John Harriss. 2000. *Reinventing India*. Cambridge: Polity Press.182-183.
- ² Jaffrelot, Christopher.2005. *The Sangh Parivar*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- ³ Jaffrelot, Christopher. 1999. *The Hindu Nationalist Movement and Indian Politics: 1925 to the 1990s: Strategies of Identity-building, Implantation and Mobilisation*. India: Penguin Books, 33.
- ⁴ Ibid., 16-17.
- ⁵ Nandy, Ashish. 1999."The politics of secularism and the recovery of Religious tolerance." In *Mirrors of Violence*, 76-77. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999, 76-77.
- ⁶ Ibid., 194-195.
- ⁷ Ibid., 135-158.
- ⁸ Chatterjee, Partha. 1993. *The Nation and its Fragments*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 88-103.
- ⁹ Hansen, Thomas Blom. 1999. *The Saffron Wave*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press,55.
- ¹⁰ Ibid., 38-54.
- ¹¹ Ibid., 57.
- ¹² Nany, "Politics of Secularism,"79-82.
- ¹³ Chatterjee, *The Nation*, 103.
- ¹⁴ Bose, Sumantra. 1997. "Hindu Nationalism and the crisis of the Indian state," In *State and Politics in India*. New York: Oxford University Press, 106-107.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., 85-89.
- ¹⁶ Ibid., 111.
- ¹⁷ Ibid., 119.
- ¹⁸ Rajagopal, Arvind. 2001. *Politics after Television: Hindu Nationalism and the Reshaping of the Public in India* .UK: Cambridge University Press,35-55.
- ¹⁹ Grogan, Courtney.2018. "Hindu nationalists trample Papal Image, Call for Christian-free India." *Catholic News Agency*, June 5, 2018. www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/hindu-nationalists-trample-papal-image-call-for-christian-free-india-63879.
- ²⁰ Zyskowski, Kathryn. 2013. "Pogrom in Gujarat: Hindu nationalism and anti-Muslim violence in India." *Contemporary South Asia* 21, no. 3: 354-355. DOI: 10.1080/09584935.2013.827443.
- ²¹ Grogan, "Hindu nationalists trample Papal Image, Call for Christian-free India."
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ Radhakrishnan, Shivani. 2018."In India, right-wing Hindu groups are recycling Britain's colonial ideas about religion." *Washington Post*, January 29, 2018. www.washingtonpost.com/news/global-opinions/wp/2018/01/29/in-india-right-wing-hindu-groups-are-recycling-britains-colonial-ideas-about-religion/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.f3c3146be70c.
- ²⁴ Misier, Amrita Baidjnath.2018. "A Power Unveiled: Insights on the Politicization of the Taj Mahal." Department of International Relations, Master's Thesis, Leiden University Repository, 30-08-2018. <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/64481>
- ²⁵ Visweswaran, Kamala, Michael Witzel, Nandini Manjrekar, Dipta Bhog, and Uma Chakravarti. 2009. "The Hindutva View of History: Rewriting Textbooks in India and the United States." *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 10, no. 1: 101-12. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43134195>.
- ²⁶ Yadav, Anumeha. 2014. "Modi critics belong in Pakistan." *The Hindu*, April 19, 2014.
- ²⁷ Siyech, Mohammed Sinan and Akanksha Narain. 2018. "Beef-related Violence in India: An Expression of Islamophobia." *Islamophobia Studies Journal* 4, no. 2 : 181-94. doi:10.13169/islstudj.4.2.0181.
- ²⁸ Yhome, k. 2018. "Examining India's Stance on Rohingya Crisis." *Observer Research Foundation*, no.247:3-9.
- ²⁹ Kinnvall, Catarina. 2019. "Populism, ontological insecurity and Hindutva: Modi and the masculinization of Indian politics." *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 32, no. 3, 283-302, DOI: 10.1080/09557571.2019.1588851.
- ³⁰ Arora, Vishal. 2015. "R.I.P.... India's Influence in Nepal." *Nepal Foreign Affairs* November 25, 2015.
- ³¹ Jodhka, Surinder and Murli Dharn. 2003. "Cow, Caste and Communal Politics Dalit Killings in Jhajjar." *Economic and Political Weekly* 38, no. 3:174-176.
- ³² Swain, Ashok. 2017. "There is a Psychological Reason why Right-Wing Supporters are Openly uncivil, abusive and Misogynistic." *Outlook India*(blog), October 15th, 2017.
- ³³ Anand, Dibeys. 2011.*Hindu Nationalism in India and the Politics of Fear*.US: Palgrave Macmillan Publishers.23-37.
- ³⁴ Swain, Ashok. 2017. "Why I am not celebrating Independence Day in Modi's India?" *Daily Opinion* (Blog), August 15th, 2017.
- ³⁵ Biswas, Bidisha.2004. "Nationalism by Proxy: A Comparison of Social Movements Among Diaspora Sikhs and Hindus." *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 10, no 2: 269-295. DOI: 10.1080/1353710490467702.
- ³⁶ Swain, Ashok. 2018. "Have Hindutva forces in India re-ignited the Khalistan movement overseas?" *Daily Opinion* (blog), January 14, 2018. www.dailyo.in/voices/sikh-diaspora-khalistani-movement-kashmiri-militants-sikh-separatists-1984-anti-sikh-riots-genocide/ story/1/21732.html.
- ³⁷ Swain, Ashok. 2018. "How Modi government is ensuring Kashmir becomes an international issue?" *Daily Opinion*, June 27, 2018.
- ³⁸ Mohanty, Simple. 2018. "The New Wave of Mobilisation in Kashmir: Religious or Political?" *Social Change* 48, no 1:58-71. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0270049085717743838>.
- ³⁹ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights,*First-ever UN Human Rights Report on Kashmir calls for International Inquiry into Multiple Violations* 2018. www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23198&LangID=E.
- ⁴⁰ Swain, Ashok. 2018. "Is 'Jumla' Modi government's biggest contribution in 4 years?" *Daily Opinion* (blo), May 29, 2018.
- ⁴¹ Ahlawat, Dilbir and Lindsay Hughes.2018). 'India-China Stand-off in Doklam: Aligning Realism with National Characteristics." *The Round Table, The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs* 107, no. 5: 613-625, DOI: 10.1080/00358533.2018.1530376.
- ⁴² *Genocide Watch*, 22 August, 2019. <https://www.genocidewatch.com/copy-of-current-genocide-watch-alert>.
- ⁴³ Lateef, Farooq.2019. "Is Modi spreading Hindutva Fascism to Sri Lanka?" *Colombo Telegraph* December 3, 2019. <https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/is-modi-spreading-hindutva-fascism-to-sri-lanka/>.
- ⁴⁴ Swain, Ashok. "Why I'm not celebrating Independence Day in Modi's India." *The Nation*, August 20, 2019. Available at <https://nation.com.pk/20-Aug-2019/why-i-m-not-celebrating-independence-day-in-modi-s-india> (Accessed March 20, 2020).

FROM GEO-ECONOMICS TO GEO-POLITICS: EMERGING MARITIME POWER-POLITICS IN THE INDO-PACIFIC OCEAN REGION

*Maliha Zeba Khan**

Abstract

The Indo-Pacific Ocean Region is a relatively new geopolitical entity that has particular features involving several economic, strategic, and political interests linked with its spatial dimension. This research is aimed at the analysis of emerging patterns of maritime power politics, especially, the struggle to control the Indo-Pacific Ocean region. For this purpose, the theoretical framework uses a synthesis of three approaches, i.e., geo-economics, geostrategic, and geopolitical as variables and instruments of maritime power politics and two inside-out and outside-in methods which act as dynamics for the highly complex interplay of regional and extra-regional actors and stakeholders in the oceanic region. The research has used hermeneutical style to interpret and analyze the power politics of this newly-emerged maritime region in which India, Pakistan, the US, and China have emerged as the core actors with their national interests. The US interests in India are multifold, i.e., enabling India to act as regional hegemon, to control geopolitics of the region, and to counter Chinese ambitions to command and control the region; while the Indian approach has been proactive in nature and its aspiration to explore and exploit the “blue” dimensions is quite challenging for the rest of the regional and extra-regional actors.

Keywords: Indo-Pacific Ocean Region, Geo-Economics, Geo-Strategy, Geo-Politics, Maritime Power Politics.

Introduction

The new millennium was not only a numeral change from the 20th to 21st Century but also brought major changes to the concepts of power politics and its spatial dimension was also being emphasized. The focal shift from continental to maritime was visible in all regions but the epicenter of maritime power politics were the two maritime regions, i.e., the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. The emerging power politics in these regions has now become the reason for the inception of another geopolitical entity known as the Indo-Pacific Ocean Region (IPOR), which is gathering much prominence in the recent times. As a maritime entity solely constructed on the basis of commercial, strategic, and geographical realities, the emergence of IPOR has caused a

*Dr. Maliha Zeba Khan is an Assistant Professor at the Department of International Relations, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad.

paradigm shift to the already fluxed regional power politics with many stakeholders involved in that region.

This article is an endeavor to seek the plausible answer of the core argument that if geo-economics, geostrategic, and geopolitics are considered three instruments of maritime power-politics, how would have emerging patterns been affected by the interplay of a prominent actor in the IPOR. The undertaken research is hermeneutical in nature as it aspires to interpret and analyze particular happenings in order to command and control the IPOR.¹ There have been several perspectives gaining attention since the inception of this relatively-new entity, dominantly, focusing on geopolitics taken over by the realist paradigm like Abhijit Singh talking about the 'maritime pivoting' of the US;² whereas, geo-economics has been overlooked even though the contemporary era has witnessed strong instances of power projection short of war and other coercive means as evident by the seminal work of Blackwill and Harris.³ The emerging power politics of IPOR has complex dynamics due to changing the maritime environment which needs to be studied to analyze their relational impact on other actors in the region. These dynamics are based on the struggle for power, maximizing economic gains, and command and control in the maritime arena, which would cause serious implications for the future of this region in terms of peace and stability. Studying these dynamics can be helpful to reach any corollary regarding maritime power politics.

From Geo-economics to Geopolitics: A Theoretical Framework of Maritime Power Politics

This section describes the nature of power politics on land and in the maritime sphere and then it proceeds with establishing a theoretical framework based on the synthesis of approaches to analyze the maritime power politics. The concept of power politics is a major tenet of realism and according to the realist school of thought, states aspire to increase their power for their survival. Mearsheimer believes that power is, fundamentally, of two types, i.e., latent power and military power. The latent power is underpinned in the socio-economic conditions of a state in terms of wealth and human capital which plays an important role in increasing military power.⁴ The power politics has a point of departure here from the realist thought of Mearsheimer in the maritime domain as he considers oceanic waters a natural constraint to the power politics due to which great powers face certain obstacles in their military power projection.⁵

The maritime power politics can be explained by establishing a framework in which three theoretical approaches are used as variables as well as instruments of the maritime power politics, i.e. geo-economics, geostrategy, and geopolitics with the purpose to study effects of the interplay of regional and extra-regional actors on the patterns of maritime power politics. The first variable geo-economics is the approach that grounds in realism and neo-liberalism. Nonetheless, the nature of interplay among stakeholders in this region has become complicated as dynamics have transformed over time. Geo-economics is, therefore, one of the aspects of international politics that is most significant yet neglected even though it determines the nature of several actions

adopted by states for power politics. A sustainable economy is a fundamental prerequisite to practice power politics because, without a strong and developing economy, a state may not be able to attain or maintain the desired status in the international system. Even, political power and authority and military power would be merely a ludicrous-will for states in absence of a sustainable economy. The use of economic means has emerged as an effective instrument of power politics though the economy is not a focal point in realism. From establishing cordiality among states to issuing warnings to non-compliant states, the economic means⁶ have replaced direct military offense effectively as was once the only predicament.⁷ These benign means put more pressure than military endorsements, therefore, wielding more political influence for major actors of a particular region.

Economy and geography have inherent relations with military power and have been used as historical state-practice but Edward Luttwak was first in the post-Cold War era who used the term 'geo-economics'. He exclaimed that the nature of conflict and rivalry would be transformed in the coming days from military to economic as "...civilian innovation in lieu of military-technical advancement and market penetration instead of garrisons and bases."⁸ Luttwak's approach could not get much attention because the New World Order had brought a wave of liberalism, neoliberalism, and globalization which was contradictory to Luttwak's approach. But, with the spread of interdependence and global economic integration aimed at peace as a spill-over effect, the consequences and challenges started to emerge in the 2000s.

The use of interdependence approach as an instrument of peace lately proved questionable because economic activities and budding opportunities always involve broader interests of the stakeholders causing further challenges. This environment finally brought the concept of economic security to counter emerging threats and challenges including illegal global-flows, such as trafficking, smuggling, and piracy.⁹ The need to provide security to the economy and safeguard economic opportunities became a matter of concern for international relations experts, academicians, and scholars to ponder upon Luttwak's perspective of geo-economics. Therefore, geo-economics as an approach took its place within international relations discourse quite recently, yet robustly; hence, providing a connecting point of realist and neo-liberalist approaches.

The main theme of geo-economics is hinged upon geographical realities which are explored or exploited to attain strategic purposes of states through economic means. However, there has been a remarkable occurrence that is related to point in time. The role of geo-economics takes place vigorously whenever there is a power transition in the international system and that power-shift could affect existing order pointing at the relationship between power politics and geo-economics. This is a stage where the role and relevance of geostrategy, the second variable, takes its course as an instrument that is considered artful use of states' geographical location as well as the exploitation of resource profile to its fullest to achieve desired policy objectives. Although geostrategy is extracting benefits of location and maximizing gains through effective domestic and foreign policies, however, it is not limited to states' territorial existence. Rather, geostrategic interests of states can go beyond their boundaries and may involve farther

regions where their strategic and national interests lie, such as US strategy in Afghanistan, Middle East and lately in maritime regions across the world and China's foothold in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. The bases established on foreign lands serve the purpose of states with extended agendas of command and control in particular regions in the name of serving their national interests.

The variable geopolitics by its meaning and definition has an absolute relevance with the study of power politics within the IPOR. Although this concept is not a new but quite important as it discusses the relationship between geographical entities and politics. According to Hagan, geopolitics is a contemporary rationalization of power politics. He asserts that the said concept had been found as a part of political discourse in different periods but could not get a proper place.¹⁰ Therefore, it can be established that geopolitical discourse involves world politics, states' behaviors towards each other, patterns of convergence, divergence, competition, and clashes, all in a spatial context and geographical realities. Therefore, geopolitics in the IPOR is linked with the realist paradigm of power politics by and large where states due to their insecurities and absence of overarching authority within the world system choose maximization of their power and gains in terms of a sustainable economy, military deterrence, and political influence. This interplay of states structures broader geopolitics whether on land or in oceans. The geopolitics is usually horizontal and can involve regional and extra-regional actors and thence, holds features of greater power politics essentially being classical realist paradigm.

Maritime Power Politics: Instruments and Approaches

Maritime politics is more dynamic and impactful than continental politics. The most distinct-part of maritime power politics is the spatial dimension which enables states to think in a different context, i.e., a geographical location that acts as the linchpin. Hence, geography is a shared concept among geo-economics, geostrategic, and geopolitics and is singularly connected. Despite admitting the difference between their instrumental and operative logics for competition between major powers, Baracuhy exclaims: "(G)eo-economics and geopolitics are two sides of the same coin," nevertheless, both work simultaneously under geostrategy.¹¹ This article argues that not only geo-economics and geopolitics work but it is also the combination of geo-economics, geostrategy, and geopolitics that plays a significant and effective role within the realm of maritime power politics, therefore, giving it largely a realist outlook due to these three instruments.

Two conceptual frameworks can be developed through which operational dimensions of these instruments (i.e., geo-economics, geostrategy, and geopolitics) would be comprehended. These are basically two approaches, inside-out approach and outside-in approach, describing the function of maritime power politics. The inside-out approach within maritime power politics emphasizes enhancing states' inner capabilities through exploring and exploiting the economic base for sustainable development. It is geo-economics which is driven by geographical location, domestic productivity, enhancement of economic base, and sustainable economic growth in the

first place. As the inside-out approach acts as a cyclic relationship, geostrategy and then geopolitics follow geo-economics respectively. The states rimming seas and oceans are the actors or basic units which opt to utilize economic base and to attain sustainable growth and interestingly, this stage can involve economic interconnectivity too as a part of the strategy. As soon as the state's geo-economic approach becomes robust, strategic challenges and threats emerge which bring along geostrategy to the arena. This stage can come simultaneously or after some time but it takes place as the continuity to broader economic security and state's strategic interests come afore plausibly. This is a time when state usually gets involved in geopolitics due to its competing and clashing interests in the region.

A vibrant example of the inside-out approach in Asia is China. The country started its struggle for survival after its inception in 1949 with setting goals and worked upon its geo-economics. Its robust geo-economic policy proved quite successful and brought China on the path of sustainable development by exploring and exploiting its economic base and as part of its geostrategy, it started aggressive-policy towards China Sea to keep its maritime frontier secure and maintain its control in that region. China's posture as an emerging economy and a challenger to existing world order and balance of power has put it deep into geopolitics with regional actors like Japan, Australia and India and extra-regional actors like the US.

The second approach which describes the function of maritime power politics is an outside-in approach for which all three instruments, such as geo-economics, geostrategy, and geopolitics are used to attain goals or maintain power politics. This environment usually creates greater challenges than the inside-out approach due to external pressures from the international system. It explains the phenomenon of maritime power politics with the perspective of pressures, challenges, and threats coming from outside regional and international politics. It revolves around needs, national interests, and opportunities to maximize gains as drivers by the world towards that specific state or region. The outside-in approach allows external factors to play a strong role in the international political environment and influence state(s) to the extent that the process of policymaking is affected yet providing more opportunities to control that region. Within this approach, all three instruments can be operational simultaneously, or as required without suggested dimensions. This is another attribute of the structural realist paradigm as states are compelled not to ignore the international system while making domestic as well as foreign policies. The outside world and the international system exploit and develop such conditions that states would choose to act under the system.

Within Asia, Pakistan is considered as an example of the outside-in approach. Since the inception of Pakistan, the outside-in approach has been there overwhelmingly due to the Pakistan's foreign policy choices and Pakistan could not adopt independent policies due to the external pressures. But, since the new millennium, there can be seen a gradual shift in Pakistan's approach, particularly, reference to its maritime frontier. Pakistan started working on developing its Gwadar Port in 2001 and then the first-ever National Maritime Policy was approved in 2002 which could be claimed as the first

major-step toward geo-economic approach, however, it had focused at exploring its untapped maritime potential both on-shore and off-the-shore, as yet.

Two Approaches and IPOR

In the contemporary era, the evolution of rather novel entity of the IPOR from two distinct oceanic regions, Indian and Pacific, can be studied as a struggle for holding maritime control and command in the wider arena. This construct is, therefore, not natural but more of a geopolitical nature which will serve several actors' interests, either economic, strategic, or political, all being attributes of maritime power politics. There can be witnessed the active presence of the inside-out and outside-in approaches. Intrinsically, the emergence of the IPOR is the portrayal of these two approaches. At the level of the Indian Ocean, India due to its aspirations of recognition as regional hegemon as well as its desire to expand control and command over the entire region in terms of power and economy can be studied as an example of the inside-out approach; whereas, with reference to the US-longing to expand its influence over the Indian Ocean, Indian acceptance of newer maritime entity shows the outside-in approach. Hence, it shows the simultaneous interplay of approaches potentially serving the interests of both sides. On other hand, the US within the Pacific Ocean has always been desirous to extend its command and control across the world considering it legit due to its belief of "American Exceptionalism" and want to remain as Global Policeman,¹² which too can be studied as an example of the inside-out approach.

Historically, the Indian Ocean Region and the Pacific Ocean Region were two separate regions with distinct features. On one hand, the Indian Ocean has been the center of political and economic activities for ages. The seaborne activities within the Indian Ocean are believed to be of extreme strategic significance due to its connectivity with different countries and regions, especially, economic connectivity for states and acting as a hub of global flows which include utilizing marine resources, merchandise trade, and oil and gas (energy) trade. As it is a quite vast region and active as well, it provides geographical connectivity through several chokepoints to the other seas and oceans. The connectivity through these chokepoints is not only a source of reliance but also a possible way to constraining-flow of sea traffic which could become a big issue for states relying on global flows or other regional and/or extra-regional stakeholders having interests in the Indian Ocean.

China relates the concept of geo-economics with the security of vital sea-lines as China's seaborne trade is used to pass through the Strait of Malacca because China was emerging as an economic giant and had been consuming around 80 percent of energy flow, greater than several other countries. The mere thought that any issue, accident, or even intentional blockade, especially, of energy flow could prove a deadly blow to its economy brought China to the verge where this reliance was considered decisively as strategic susceptibility and dynamic for China's national security. Chinese President Hu Jintao, in 2003, discussed this issue in his address to leaders of the Chinese Communist Party and named this phenomenon as "Malacca Dilemma" while emphasizing on seeking alternative strategy-building to address this issue.¹³ After

China's recognition of the Malacca dilemma as its vital national security threat, power politics within this region was transformed into a vigorous game of command and control among stakeholders where China emerged as a strong challenger to the international status quo. The launching of the Belt Road Initiative (BRI) by Chinese President Xi Jinping, in 2013, was the event that faced suspicion from different regional actors yet simultaneously provided an array of opportunities for several developing countries to engage in economic integration.¹⁴

On other hand, the Pacific Ocean Region (POR) emerged as the focal point of world politics for major conflicts as well as cooperation during World War II. The power politics of POR has distinct features which cannot be overlooked. One overwhelming feature is the presence of the US as the sole superpower and responsible for the world order. The US has been the most dominant regional actor of Pacific putting almost 25000 small islands into identity-crisis by making them undervalued while creating an issue of centre-periphery in terms of political, economic, and strategic importance.¹⁵ Australia, which is situated between the two said maritime regions, whereas, the third major feature is the emergence of economic powers on the Asian continental side of the Pacific known as Western Pacific.¹⁶ The real shift in the region took place after the end of the Cold War as soon as these economic powers held strong grounds which made this region a center of global flows of the economy, goods, technological advancement, and energy.

Emergence of the Indo-Pacific Ocean Region

The ancient concept of connecting geographical entities being socially constructed reality has not been a static concept. The emergence of IPOR is one of the most recent examples of social-construction with sheer uniqueness of focus shift from continental land to the maritime arena. The US has previously been identifying that region on the basis of continental connectivity giving it name Asia-Pacific including Southeast Asia, which was rimming the Western Pacific Ocean. The US was not ignorant of the importance of Asia¹⁷ due to resource-rich heartland and had established numerous military bases in different states to secure its national interests. Since the US connectivity with Asia is largely through the Pacific and Indian Oceans and both oceans have become economic backbone due to larger volumes of global flows, the US could not ignore the Indian Ocean and regional states, especially India, despite the fact that the Asia-Pacific region had been quite dominant in the US strategy since WW-II.¹⁸

As the international politics has been in constant flux, the US started reshaping its strategic relations in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) soon after 9/11 and signed a series of agreements including the Indo-US Civil Nuclear Deal (2005) with India making it a strategic partner for broader interests of the US in the region. Since 2007, the very concept started coming to the fore by academicians and practitioners during a conference about maritime cooperation between India and Japan and the term was coined by Gurpreet S. Khurana referring to maritime space from Western Pacific to the entire Indian Ocean including its oceanic boundaries till littorals of the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea and in the Mozambique Channel till Eastern Africa.¹⁹ Japan also supported

the term as Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe submitted about Indo-Pacific as broadening of Asia by including the IOR with Western Pacific Rim states and exclaimed it as “the dynamic coupling as seas of freedom and prosperity.”²⁰

The term ‘Indo-Pacific’ got recognition by the US in 2010 by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton²¹ when she showed the willingness of the US to work in collaboration with the Indian Navy in the Pacific Ocean by saying, “..because we understand how important the Indo-Pacific basin is to global trade and commerce.” This concept was accepted readily in India as it was giving India a great opportunity to play a far extensive role in international politics than regional politics. Based on this approach, India designed its naval doctrine focusing more on Blue Water Navy from Brown Water Navy.²²

Dynamics of Power Politics in the IPOR

The power politics in IPOR has a holistic approach based on two structural distinctions. The first is the one which is reflected through the US approach that includes the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean as one entity. This concept has essentially been extended on the cardinal principle of US foreign policy known as ‘Monroe Doctrine’ in which the first part enables the US to protect its national interests in self-preservation in the southern hemisphere, and the second part of that principle has to bring necessary constitutional amendments to facilitate the implementation of the cardinal principle in every era.²³ The inclusion of the whole of POR and IOR into the IPOR is a sheer manifestation of the US approach in that region having specific dynamics. The other structural outlook is Indian reflection considering the IPOR consisting of the western Pacific side and the IOR. Both considerations have particular dynamics involving three instruments, i.e., geo-economics, geostrategy, and geopolitics, which are giving way to change in power politics of this maritime region in retrospect of converging, diverging, and clashing interests of regional as well as extra-regional actors and stakeholders.

Expanding Command and Control in the IPOR

The desire to hold command and control of the IPOR is the prime dynamic of stakeholders including regional and extra-regional actors. The robust involvement of the regional actors in power politics of the IPOR and quite vigorous presence of the extra-regional naval forces in the region, however, not a recent phenomenon for parent regions, i.e., the Indian Ocean Region and the Pacific Ocean Region, have marked this maritime region as the most complex and threatening to peace and stability. Therefore, the most dominant stakeholders in this regard are extra-regional and regional naval forces present in the Indian and Pacific Oceans separately.²⁴ These naval forces are small, medium, and large according to their states and their capabilities. The presence of all these naval forces within the region and their interference rather exploitation of regional issues and emergent challenges make the IPOR further vulnerable. The strategic challenges as well as visible competition of modernization of naval fleets and merchant navies in compliance to states’ urge to embrace Blue concepts, as in Blue

Water navies and Blue Economy which have been emerging as a result of this interplay, are largely those which are putting security and stability of the IPOR at risk by and large through expanding their influence, control, and shifting paradigms of mutual interaction, i.e., diverging, converging, competing, and/or clashing interests.

Global Flows

One of the most overwhelming factors is the states' dependence on global flows of energy, trade and commerce, technology, information, and communication, which acts as an important dynamic behind power politics within the IPOR. When studied as a single entity, the region comprises the most active and vital arteries of these global flows. Both parent regions already had the status of the busiest routes, historically. There had been significant nodes of global flows known for centuries which have gained further commercial importance in the contemporary era. These old and new routes are of imperative interest for the whole world as these routes or Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC) are core sources and would make the IPOR hub of global flows. From both Americas in East to Western and Northern Indian Ocean for the US to Western Pacific to Western and Northern Indian Ocean for India, every sector of states' growth and sustainability is dependent on the uninterrupted supply of these flows making the emerging region more significant and challenging.

Regional Power Equation and Containment of China

One major dynamic behind the formation of the IPOR, making it prime maritime region, is the desire to counter China in the region. China's steady rise in terms of a sustainable economy, military, and political influence creating undercurrent for the US and India by and large by emerging as the challenger yet bringing world order into potential transition providing enough reason to form a counterstrategy. Scott does not believe that Pakistan could cause the slightest threat to Indian security,²⁵ whereas, China factor would be shared-dynamic among the US, India, and their allies present behind the IPOR power politics. China has been challenging the international status quo and world order, particularly, in the regions of the US interests. Especially, Chinese naval strategy and its planned transformation from "near seas" to "far seas"²⁶ which later became the basis for China's "two-ocean strategy"²⁷ aimed at expanding command and control to the IOR and POR has raised concerns for the US and its allies having shared strategic objectives, like India, Japan, and Vietnam. For issues like China's involvement in the South China Sea, expansion of China's influence through its projects of economic connectivity under the Belt-Road Initiative and states' aspirations to become part of China's economic plans are enough reason to trigger mistrust and intensify anxieties across the IPOR.²⁸ For India, China has been the cornerstone of Indian national security policy as both states have been locked into historic enmity over the territorial issue. Therefore, being a common concern, India and the US have focused to contain China together in the maritime domain.

The US is adopting a similar approach as was done during the Cold War to contain Communism but the point which is largely missing in the US calibration is a

stark different reality of today that this time conflict is not based on ideology or arms race rather economic growth and connectivity which has common approval by majority states in the IPOR. Though China is also upgrading its military forces with special focus on its navy, PLAN (People's Liberation Army Navy) as well as supporting Pakistan in the IOR as its partner in the BRI projects and establishing a military base at Djibouti, the basic motive is to provide security to SLOCs of China's vital economic interest.

On other hand, from Asia-Pacific to Indo-Pacific, the region has been a linchpin to the US foreign policy but in general, the US has been focusing more on hard politics. Particularly, the Obama administration's "Rebalancing to Asia" strategy-2011 saw Asia-Pacific as a new hub for power politics²⁹ moving away from Asian heartland. With President Trump's holding office in January 2017, "Rebalancing to Asia" strategy was disowned, however, India remained there in the US foreign policy as a cornerstone, reliable strategic partner, and capable of regional leadership.³⁰ Trump administration has a greater focus on Indo-Pacific in its "America First" doctrine emphasizing regional security and enhancing economic activities for prosperity in the IPOR but no integrated and coherent economic policy actions have been taken by this administration. Rather, the undertone of the doctrine by Trump sounds more threatening and harsher. Particularly, in reference to Southeast Asia where there are sustainable economies, hard politics feels inept. On the contrary, China's vision and economic plans based on shared-benefits as well as responsibilities and economic interconnectedness among countries and regions have created an environment of acceptance of the Chinese approach. However, the Cold War environment being created by the US-India duo and their joint efforts to contain China in the region is rather a greater threat to peace and stability.

Implications for Regional Actors

The IPOR has become an arena of complex maritime power politics due to the involvement of several actors and stakeholders from both parent regions. The Pacific Ocean has an existence of a superpower along with several great and middle powers active in that region, however, the Indian Ocean does not have any super or great power existing innately in the region yet the IOR has presence and role of these powers in form of military and naval bases and a few overseas territories/islands of the great powers like England and France are also situated there in the IOR. The IPOR makes quite extensive maritime region with several actors, such as Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, Japan, China, Australia, the US, several islands of IOR and POR and many small states, all are direct or indirect actors in the IPOR. Another factor which is increasing opportunities and challenges both is the involvement of extra-regional actors in the region like Russia or NATO countries. The Indian and Pacific Oceans have long been hubs of economic, strategic, and political activities, nevertheless, the IPOR would be hosting major power struggles between/among the states. The presence of extra-regional actors in the system and power politics could cause grave implications like insecurity, exploitation, threats and challenges, and compliance of other stakeholders' agendas and desires.

Regional and Intra-Regional Cooperation and Competition: Prospective Dimensions

The emergence of intense maritime power politics has given birth to complex patterns of cooperation and competition in the region. India and the US are in strong strategic partnership and collaboration and on the issue of Iran in the Strait of Hormuz, the US has been quite stern, whereas, India has strategic and economic relations with Iran. China's economic interconnectivity is another factor putting forth opportunities for further cooperation and competition and is involving a number of states. Therefore, there might be opportunities for reshaping of more alliances and trending among states for cooperation and competition. Another dimension that might be explored is the establishment of an international cooperation organization purely based on the IPOR for harvesting extensive benefits.

Conclusion

The emergence and acknowledgment of the IPOR have brought forward a unique combination of challenges and opportunities for maritime power politics. Therefore, this study explicates the interplay of three instruments of maritime power politics – geo-economics, geostrategy, and geopolitics – and two approaches, i.e., inside-out and outside-in by establishing the theoretical framework and proves that using a realist approach is not sufficient to evaluate the maritime power politics in the IPOR until synthesis of approaches is used by giving due space to geo-economics.

The IPOR has now been proved as a hub of power politics with the potential to bring substantial change to the maritime order with the emergence of competitive and clashing trends, security-related challenges, and intensified militarization of this maritime region which has previously been dominated by the US. It has given birth to several contingencies and the region has been converted into a potential theatre for strategic and operational planning and interactions. Particularly, China's increasing role and involvement in maritime politics, its heavy investment on naval capabilities and to provide security to its new economic ventures in the IPOR and beyond have compelled India to enhance its strategic standing, whereas, all these developments have increased instability and insecurity in the region. Since world focus has shifted from continental politics to maritime arena, the US interest in India is multifold in which enabling India to act as regional hegemon, to control geopolitics of the region, and counter Chinese ambitions to command and control through its "two-ocean strategy." Indian approach has been proactive in nature and its aspiration to establish its command and control over the IPOR through sustainable development in the 'blue' dimensions is quite challenging for the rest of regional and extra-regional actors. The interaction of the three identified instruments of geo-economics, geostrategy, and geopolitics as well as two approaches have guided the research to analyze emerging maritime power politics and its dynamics to predict the future of the IPOR and beginning of a transitory process of existing world order.

References

- ¹ The hermeneutics finds its roots in the ancient Greek mythology to interpret the biblical texts. In the later years, this approach was started being used as seeking explanation of different human behaviours, philosophical underpinnings, events, and their impact on other things. "Hermeneutics as the methodology of interpretation is concerned with problems that arise when dealing with meaningful human actions and the products of such actions, most importantly texts. As a methodological discipline, it offers a toolbox for efficiently treating problems of the interpretation of human actions, texts and other meaningful material... interpretation is a ubiquitous activity, unfolding whenever humans aspire to grasp whatever *interpretanda* they deem significant." For detail, see "Hermeneutics," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, first published on June 22, 2016, accessed on March 20, 2019, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hermeneutics/#HypoDeduMeth>.
- ² Abhijit Singh, "Mapping the 'Maritime Pivot' in *Geopolitics of the Indo-Pacific*", eds. Pradeep Kaushiva and Abhijit Singh (New Delhi: Knowledge World, 2014), 21.
- ³ Robert D. Blackwill and Jennifer M. Harris, *War by Other Means: Geoeconomics and Statecraft* (Cambridge and Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016).
- ⁴ "Great powers need money, technology, and personnel to build military forces and to fight wars, and a state's latent power refers to the raw potential it can draw on when competing with rival states." For details, see John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001), 55.
- ⁵ Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 58.
- ⁶ These economic means include economic sanctions, establishing alliances, trade agreements, foreign direct investments, banking systems, enterprises, joint ventures, economic incentives, and subsidies.
- ⁷ Sören Scholvin and Mikael Wigell, "Geo-economic power politics: An introduction" in *Geo-Economics and Power Politics in the 21st Century: The Revival of Economic Statecraft*, eds. Mikael Wigell, Sören Scholvin, and Mika Aaltola (Oxon: Routledge, 2019), 1.
- ⁸ Edward N. Luttwak, "From Geopolitics to Geo-economics: Logic of Conflict, Grammar of Commerce", *The National Interest*, 20 (Summer, 1990): 17-23.
- ⁹ Sören Scholvin and Mikael Wigell, "Geo-Economic Power Politics: An Introduction" in *Geo-Economics and Power Politics in the 21st Century: The Revival of Economic Statecraft*, eds., Mikael Wigell, Sören Scholvin, and Mika Aaltola (Oxon: Routledge, 2019), 4.
- ¹⁰ "[T]he relation which subsists between man and his geographical environment has been subject to speculation at least since the time of Greeks. The answers to the question have varied from time to time as well as the emphasis which attaches to that relation. The Greeks and the Romans treated of this matter, and the subject was revived by Jean Bodin in the sixteenth century. Later Montesquieu attempted to formulate a systematic theory of the influence which environment exerted on political practices. Carl Ritter in the early part of the nineteenth century wrote a gigantic work attempting to trace the relations between man and his geographic position." For details, See Charles B. Hagan, "Geopolitics" *The Journal of Politics* 4, no. 4 (November 1942): 478-490.
- ¹¹ BrazBaracuhu, "Geo-economics as dimension of grand strategy: Notes on the concept and its evolution" in *Geo-Economics and Power Politics in the 21st Century: The Revival of Economic Statecraft*, eds. Mikael Wigell, Sören Scholvin, and Mika Aaltola (Oxon: Routledge, 2019), 14.
- ¹² "Roosevelt declared that the United States might "exercise international police power in 'flagrant cases of such wrongdoing or impotence.'" For details, see "Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, 1904" in *Milestones: 1899-1913*, Office of the Historian, accessed on May 10, 2019, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1899-1913/roosevelt-and-monroe-doctrine>.
- ¹³ Lawrence Spinetta, "The Malacca Dilemma"- Countering China's "String of Pearls" with Land-Based Airpower", Dissertation presented to the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, June 2006, accessed on January 01, 2019, <https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a476931.pdf>.
- ¹⁴ Lauren A. Johnston, "The Belt and Road Initiative: What is in it for China?" *Asia & the Pacific Policy Studies* (2018): doi. 10.1002/app5.265.
- ¹⁵ Reiko Hayakawa, "Self-Determination for the Communication Policy in the Pacific Islands," in *Self Determinable Development of Small Islands*, eds. Masahide Ishihara, Eiichi Hoshino, Yoko Fujita, 179-202 (Singapore: Springer, 2016), 180.
- ¹⁶ Since 1950, the rise of East Asian economies started which included Japan and four Asian Tigers or Dragons named as Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea, and Singapore which adopted route of industrialization as their robust economic policy. During same period, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia from Southeast Asia adopted economic approach, though not as vigorous as four Tigers; however, it earned a significant place to these countries as four Tiger Cub Economies of the region. Nonetheless China joined that economic growth club much later in the late 1970s. See Paulina Restrepo-Echavarría, and Maria A. Arias, "Tigers, Tiger Cubs and Economic Growth," blog , May 25, 2017, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, accessed on January 22, 2019, <https://www.stlouisfed.org/on-the-economy/2017/may/tigers-tiger-cubs-economic-growth>.
- ¹⁷ Hillary Clinton narrated the US viewpoint in an article by saying that "(t)he 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." See Hillary Clinton, "America's Pacific Century," *Foreign Policy* 189, no. 1 (2011): 56-63.
- ¹⁸ Muhammad Saeed, "From the Asia-Pacific to the Indo-Pacific: Expanding Sino-U. S. Strategic Competition," *China Quarterly of International Strategic Studies* 3, No. 4 (2017): 499-512.
- ¹⁹ Gurpreet S. Khurana, "Security of Sea Lines: Prospects of India-Japan Cooperation," *Strategic Analysis* 3, no. 1 (July 2007): 139-153.

- ²⁰ "Confluence of the Two Seas," Speech by H.E. Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan at the Parliament of the Republic of India, August 22, 2007, Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) website, accessed on February 02, 2019, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/pmvo7o8/speech-2.html>.
- ²¹ Gurpreet S. Khurana, "The 'Indo-Pacific' Concept: Retrospect and Prospect," February 02, 2017, accessed on March 10, 2018, <http://maritimeindia.org/View%20Profile/636215922419657386.pdf>.
- ²² David Scott, "India's Drive for a 'Blue Water' Navy," *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 10, no. 02 (Winter 2007-08), accessed on November 12, 2018, file:///C:/Users/ACER/Downloads/57675-Article%20Text-156670-1-10-2009o819.pdf.
- ²³ Colby N. Chester, "The Present Status of the Monroe Doctrine," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 54, International Relations of the United States (July, 1914): 20-27, accessed on January 10, 2019, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/1012568.pdf>.
- ²⁴ "The US has about 12 bases in the Indian Ocean, including a base in every GCC country. Similarly, other European countries, also have their bases in the Gulf. Djibouti offers military bases to a number of countries including the US, China, Japan, France and Italy, right at the confluence of the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea. At any given time, there are 70-100 Extra Regional Force (ERF) units present in the Indian Ocean." See Azhar Ahmad, "Indian Ocean Politics and Pakistan's Maritime Compulsions" in *Maritime Economy and the Geopolitics of Indian Ocean Rim: Challenges for Pakistan-February 22, 2018*, Najam Rafique, ed., 19-23 (Islamabad: Institute of Strategic Studies and Bahria University, 2018), accessed on May 22, 2019, https://www.academia.edu/37138249/Maritime_Economy_and_The_Geopolitics_of_Indian_Ocean_Rim_Challenges_for_Pakistan.
- ²⁵ Scott, "Blue Water' Navy," 9.
- ²⁶ Nan Li, "The Evolution of China's Naval Strategy and Capabilities: From "Near Coast" and "Near Seas" to "Far Seas" *Asian Security* 5, no. 2 (June 2009): 144-169.
- ²⁷ Robert D. Kaplan, "China's Two-Ocean Strategy," *China's Arrival: A Strategic Framework for a Global Relationship* (Washington: Centre for a New American Security, 2009).
- ²⁸ Saeed, "Asia-Pacific to Indo-Pacific," 510.
- ²⁹ Wu Zhengyu, "The Crowe Memorandum, the Rebalance to Asia, and Sino-US Relations," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 39, no. 3 (2016): 389-416.
- ³⁰ The White House, "National Security Strategy of the United States" (Washington, D.C.: White House, December 2017), 46.

EMERGING NETWORK CENTRIC WARFARE CAPABILITIES OF INDIAN MILITARY: CHALLENGES FOR PAKISTAN'S SECURITY

*Muhammad Jawad Hashmi and Sultan Mubariz Khan**

Abstract

The changing strategic dynamics of South Asia have posed serious challenges for Pakistan. The Indian military doctrinal development suggests that it is aiming for limited, swift, and intense warfare. To operationalize such operations, the Indian military is focusing on the Network Centric Warfare (NCW) capabilities. These capabilities would enhance the Indian military intelligence gathering, improve communication, and provide real-time situational awareness to commanders for timely decision-making during any contingency. This paper, therefore, highlights that the Indian military NCW capabilities entail serious consequences for the strategic stability of South Asia especially Pakistan. The NCW skills would improve the capabilities of Indian armed forces and achieve greater shared battlespace awareness through self-synchronization against Pakistan. It would create conventional disparity and push the region towards an unending costly arms race in the NCW domain.

Keywords: Network Centric Warfare, Strategic Stability, Nuclear Deterrence, Arms Race, Security.

Introduction

India is engaged in a continuous process to revamp its overall military capabilities to create regional dominance in the region. The strategic partnership between Pakistan and China has forced the Indian policymakers to modernize their military to meet the emerging challenges. When it comes to China, the Indian strategic thinking adopts defensive realism approach and try to balance the Chinese military prowess. But against Pakistan, it espouses an offensive realism approach to maximize its military might and outclass Pakistan in all domains. With this background, this article highlights India's massive investment in the Net-centric domain and its likely implications for the security of Pakistan.¹

Modern warfare depends on information superiority, in other words, it is based on the Network Centric Warfare (NCW) capabilities of a country. This is the reason that countries with greater real-time information always outclass their enemies in modern warfare.² The NCW is an emerging concept; many advanced countries have already begun working on these lines to integrate their forces accordingly.

*Muhammad Jawad Hashmi is a Lecturer at the Department of Political Science and International Relations, University of Gujrat. Dr. Sultan Mubraiz Khan is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Political Science and International Relations, University of Gujrat.

The term NCW mainly focuses on the amalgamation of strategies, innovative tactics, modern techniques, advanced procedures, and greater synergy and integration among tri-services.³ A country with fully networked military and technologies always gets an advantage in this modern age. The application of NCW deeply impacts human and organizational behavior. It deals with the performance of military forces; how do they act, perform, or unite themselves when they are schmoosed. According to one such assessment, “interaction with the networked soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines executing operations at the tactical or operational level of war gets a substantial advantage over enemies because of the shared situational awareness.”⁴ Therefore, it could be assumed that “the NCW capabilities are applied at all three levels of warfare (strategic, operational and tactical) and across the full-range of military operations to stability and peacekeeping operations.”⁵

The NCW capabilities help the military to increase its tempo and quick responsiveness to any military contingency. It decreases the risks/costs and enhances combat effectiveness of military and increase its chances of victory. To understand the effectiveness of NCW capabilities for the Indian military, it is pertinent to understand some key concepts in this domain. The Indian military is a huge force spread over the whole Indian landmass from the Himalayan mountains to the Rajasthan desert. To maintain vigilance, counter threats and remain dominant in case of any rivalry, it is important for the Indian military to maintain information edge against enemies in the region and beyond.⁶ Following is the figure illustrating NCW governing principles:

Figure-1: Governing Principles of NCW



The Indian military is working to overcome its deficiencies in the NCW domain to connect and share situational awareness with its geographically dispersed forces. The idea of NCW is to bring onboard isolated forces spread over huge landmass so that they can effectively communicate and share the battlefield situation.⁷ Timely information about the adversary's character, placement, and mobility would help the Indian forces to plan and execute their operations accordingly. In this way, the best use of NCW capabilities would not only connect the remotely deployed forces but also it would help to produce good results in the shape of information edge on the battlefield.

After the 2001-02 standoff between Indian and Pakistan, the Indian army with the Cold Start Doctrine (CSD) stressed the rapid military operations within 72-96 hours at multiple locations.⁸ A military doctrine cannot work effectively without the support of adequate technology, offensive weapons, their assimilation in the armed forces, synergy and coordination along with NCW and EW capabilities. In its attempt to assimilate the NCW in the Indian military, the first serious attempt was made during Vajra Shakti military exercise in 2005. The Indian army introduced the Force Multiplications Command Post (FMCP) to integrate the flow of information from aircraft, AWACS, ground forces, and radars to the field commander to have a better and clear picture of the battlefield. Though it is difficult to assimilate NCW capabilities in the military, the Indian military realized that without a network centricity it would not be possible for them to effectively execute their military doctrines against their enemies.⁹

All previous warfighting doctrines of India had a few similarities; first, they emphasized on limited nature of warfare; second, the Indian military envisaged force modernization and NCW capabilities; third, synergy and integration; fourth, quick mobilization and shallower thrusts; fifth, greater emphasis on the timely information, observation, and effective reconnaissance abilities.¹⁰ The Indian military realized in their several doctrinal reviews that to successfully execute their strategies they would require comprehensive NCW capabilities to maintain information edge during any short or prolonged military conflict in the future. At the moment, the Indian military may not be enjoying overwhelming conventional asymmetries but in future if this trend of modernization is continued then security situation in South Asia may get worse and provide Indian military an opportunity to carry out limited rapid military operations to establish its strategic dominance in the region.

Indian Military NCW Capabilities

India is striving to plug the gaps and overcome its operational weaknesses in its overall military machines. The Indian military is planning a lean, mobile and technologically oriented force in the future.¹¹ Since 2003, the Indian military strategy has changed from total wars to shallow maneuvers, limited war, hot pursuit or surgical strikes, etc. The Indian leaders have also repeatedly stressed that the future wars would be short and intense.¹² To successfully execute such operations, the Indian military is aspirant to acquire NCW capabilities, which would enable them with an information advantage and help them to execute their quick and swift operations.

Spy Satellites: Real-time Information

In the NCW sphere, spy satellites play a key role in obtaining real-time information about the enemy. The Indian military has invested heavily in this domain.¹³ India considers space as an important part of its quest for NCW capabilities.¹⁴ It has carried out close cooperation with countries, like Israel, to improve its overall space program for military usage. According to former Director General of Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO), V. K. Saraswat, “the Indian military is planning to acquire designated (spy) satellites for its tri-services.”¹⁵ The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), since 2009, has achieved strides in the field of spy satellites. India joined the space club in the 1960s. Initially, it focused on civilian use but later, enhanced its capacity and launched many spy satellites to support its military overall command and control structure and to acquire seamless real-time information.¹⁶

- **RISAAT-II Spy Satellite (2009):** The Indian military took a drastic step after the Mumbai attacks in 2008 and launched the RISAT-II Spy satellite in 2009 in close collaboration with their strategic ally-Israel. The RISAT-II comes in the category of spy satellites. It can scan deep inside the territory of an adversary, check for the movement or deployment of troops in all weather conditions.¹⁷
- **GSAT-7 Rukmini-Maritime Domain Awareness (2013):** India considers itself as a net security provider in the region and wants to dominate IORs¹⁸ because of the increasing presence of the Chinese navy and its close economic and strategic partnership with Pakistan in the region. However, to maintain vigil over its huge maritime boundaries, the ISRO launched its maritime specific GSAT-7- (Rukmini) satellite in 2013. It has enabled the Indian navy to share situational awareness with its warships, submarines, maritime surveillance aircraft, Indian Air Force (IAF) and their land-based platforms and command and control systems to effectively coordinate their operations in the Bay of Bengal, the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean region.¹⁹ According to an expert, The GSAT-7 helps Indian maritime forces to scan a vast area of about 3,500-4,000km in the IOR and beyond.”²⁰
- **EMISAT-Information Edge in the Land Warfare Operations:** The ISRO launched EMISAT in 2019 to plug in information gaps in its land warfare strategy. Since then the Indian army is utilizing the EMISAT for its information gathering in South Asia.²¹ This spy satellite is considered to be the most important strategic asset for the Indian army when it comes to their communication with their soldiers operating in diverse and difficult terrain. These isolated forces would be able to get real-time information about the target, and situational awareness about the battlefield. The induction of EMISAT would free the Indian soldiers operating in mountainous, rugged terrain from carrying huge communication equipment and gadgets.
- **GSAT-7A Spy Satellite-Aerial Reconnaissance:** The ISRO launched the GSAT-7A satellite to provide the Indian military with secure, quick and

clear communication capability.²² The GSAT-7A satellite is a designated satellite for the IAF and it will be operated by them. The induction of GSAT-7A would augment IAF global outreach and NCW capabilities for optimum utilization of resources during a conflict. It would connect the aerial assets with the ground station for early warning, and accurate round the clock information to enhance IAF's precision and strike capabilities. It would also enhance the range and outreach of current and future armed UAVs in IAF arsenal to take out adversary's defenses from elongated distances.²³ The ISRO is also planning another satellite GSAT-7C for the IAF to improve its NCW capabilities in the changing strategic environment.

Airborne Early Warning Systems/Aircraft

- **Phalcon AWACS-Aerial Surveillance and Reconnaissance Aircraft:** In 2004, the Indian government inked a deal with Russia and Israel to acquire three advanced AWACS to beef up their surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities.²⁴ The Phalcon AWACS has a maximum speed of 972 Km per hours with high precision and capability to identify moving targets. The Phalcon system can track over a hundred incoming targets and it can intercept at least half of them. Moreover, it covers all maneuvering objects from ground to 40,000ft in the air. The Phalcon AWACS operates at 30,000ft and covers the range of 500km deep inside enemy territory.²⁵
- **Airborne Early Warning and Control System-Indigenous Reconnaissance Aircraft:** The IAF has developed its first-ever locally manufactured airborne early warning and control system (AeW&CS) in 2017. This aircraft can track incoming missiles, aircrafts and UAVs. It is equipped with 240-degree coverage Radar and would identify the incoming threats and relay that information to command centers and also to fighter jets in the air for a quick response. The AeW&CS has a potent range of about 200km with an effective surveillance ability.²⁶ The procurement of AeW&CS enhances Indian overall surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities and gives IAF greater flexibility, outreach and space for prompt countermeasures against incoming threats.
- **P8-I Aircraft-Maritime Domain Awareness:** To keep a constant check on huge maritime boundaries, surface, and subsurface warships, the Indian navy has inducted highly advanced maritime surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft P8-I. In addition to Rukmini Spy Satellite, this aircraft with its superior NCW capabilities is a force multiplier. India bought eight P8-I aircraft from the US under a \$2 billion contract²⁷ to boost its Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) and get the information edge. This aircraft possesses about 1,200 nautical miles range in the IORs, which helps the Indian navy to maintain its maritime dominance.²⁸ The induction of this maritime surveillance aircraft would boost India's maritime domain awareness.

Highly Advanced UAVs: Surveillance and Targeting

- Israeli Heron TP and Heron-1 UAVs:** The Indian military started the acquisition of armed UAVs from Israel in the post-1999 situation. Since then Israel has been supplying the advanced drones to India for reconnaissance and surveillance purposes. The efficacy of UAVs in modern warfare cannot be ignored. They could be used for up-to-date information gathering, close air support, targeting the enemy positions, C4I vehicles in the battlefield, strategic assets, command and control centres, etc. It is reported that India and Israel are contemplating “project cheetah” to equip its all UAVs with missiles.²⁹ The IAF operates about 180 Israeli manufactured drones, which includes 108 Searchers and 68 unarmed Heron-1 for surveillance and reconnaissance purposes at high altitude. The Indian military in 2015 inked a deal worth \$400 million with Israel for the acquisition of highly sophisticated ten Heron TP armed UAVs. It possesses 40-hour of long endurance time and it can carry a 1000kg warhead.³⁰ The Heron TP is a multipurpose UAV with greater outreach, lethal firepower, and long endurance. It gives the Indian military a wide range of options. It could be used for intelligence gathering deep inside enemy territory and provide close air support to the advancing troops. It could also be used against hardened targets, such as, bunkers, enemy fortifications, strategic sites, etc.
- Induction of Harop Missile-Suicidal Drone:** Israel developed a suicidal drone that can operate in an area of more than 1,000km. The Harop missile can fly over the intended object for more than six hours and then self-destruct into the target.³¹ The Harop UAV carries a warhead of about 15kg,³² which makes it extremely destructive for the radar sites, command and control vehicles in the battlefield, missile sites and strategic installations. The Harop UAV is remotely controlled by the field commander, who may select a target and take it out with greater precision.³³ India has ordered ten Harop-UAVs under a deal worth \$ 100 million. These drones would revamp the Indian military’s network-centric, electronic warfare, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities.

Surveillance Radars and Reconnaissance Systems: Operational and Future Plans

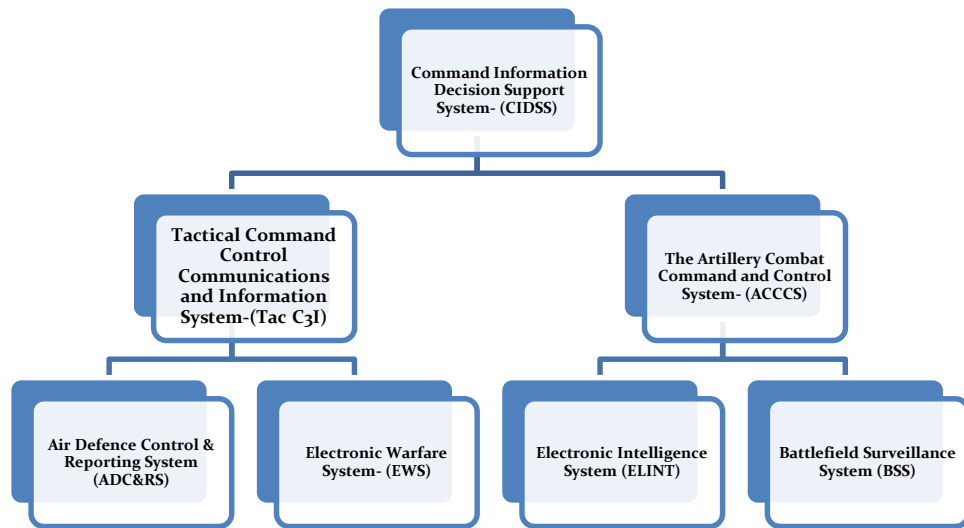
- Long Range Reconnaissance and Observation System- 2003:** The Indian military after the failure in Operation Parakram in 2001-02 learned a lesson that long drawn conventional war is not possible in the existing strategic environment. Later the idea of CSD emerged, which focused on synergy, integration, speed, and mobility of the Indian armed forces. To acquire these capabilities, the Indian army needed a wide range of weapons and equipment. In that context, the Indian military signed a deal with Israel and inducted LORROS.³⁴ This particular system provides round the clock vigilance at a potent distance of about 5-10 km. Such a system in

place would give the Indian army an edge on the battlefield. They will get to know about the deployment, movement, and size of enemy forces during a war. The LORROS is a remotely controlled system that provides 24/7 visibility against any incursion or movement by the enemy forces. It helps the Indian forces positioned at the border to spot, identify, and neutralize any movement and attack by providing an advantage of time and distance for the optimum results.

- **Force Multiplication Command Post-Integration and Synergy:** The Indian army in 2005 introduced Force Multiplication Command Post (FMCP) in the Vajra Shakti exercise to integrate the flow of information to improve operational competence and proficiency.³⁵ The FMCP helped the Indian military to practice the NCW and EW warfare capabilities in a war-like situation. Such capabilities are essential in modern warfare. It helps the field commander with real-time information, battlefield visibility, enemy's disposition, connectivity of all arms and uninterrupted contact with the high command for instructions and updates.
- **Swathi Weapon Locating Radars-Threat to Artillery Forces:** The induction of Swathi Weapon Locating Radars (SWLRs) can detect the exact position of artillery fire, mortar and rocket sites, which provides Indian army with an option to strike back with greater precision and accuracy. According to the reports, the Indian army has installed almost 30 SWLRs on the border, which, according to the Indian COAS, "is being used extensively along the LoC." Mr. Parrikar, former Defense Minister of India, said that, "Swathi could be a great equipment to ensure adversaries do not use artillery fire."³⁶ The SWLR can store up to 99 weapon locations of the enemy and swiftly relay that information to the command for timely countermeasures.³⁷

Tactical Communication System

The Indian army has also developed the Tactical Communication System (TCS) to improve its coordination, situational awareness, and integration. The connectivity among forces is the backbone of every military around the globe because the nature of warfare has become information-based and totally relying on the digitized battlefield communications network. The TCS was initially coined in 2000 but due to some governmental and bureaucratic hurdles, it faced many delays until 2014. This project was under the "made in India" slogan by the Indian government and this is the reason that local defense companies including BEL Larsen and Toubro, Tata Power SED, and HCL Ltd were tasked to come up with a prototype of TCS.

Figure-2: Command Information Decision Support System

(Source: https://www.indiastrategic.in/topstories3648_Indian_Army_Modernisation_and_Current_Status.htm)

The total cost of the TCS project is close to \$2 billion.³⁸ The TCS plays a vital role in military communication and it is employed within or direct support of tactical forces deployed on the battlefield. It is designed to incorporate changing strategic and tactical dynamics and offers safe and secure communication within the army. It takes less installation time in case of repositioning of tactical forces from one front to another.³⁹ The induction of TCS in army boosts NCW capabilities, enable situational awareness, enhance synergy and integration and improve command and control system. The primary function of the TAC C3I system is to provide commanders with precise, appropriate, and reliable information. It would enable the Indian army to convey command decisions to their troops during hostilities and peacetime.

IAF's Integrated Air Command and Control Systems

The modern warfare is heavily dependent on information edge available to decisionmakers or commanders on the field. The decisionmaker's failure to acquire precise situational awareness of the battlefield would lead to disastrous consequences. To overcome these strategic underpinnings, the IAF came up with the Integrated Air Command and Control Systems (IACCS) to improve interaction, integration, command and control in its aerial operations. The establishment of IACCS is a significant step towards the concept of joint operations with greater connectivity and intensity. The IAF is largely dependent on fiber optics-based network called Air Force Network (AFNET), on which the IACCS operate and synchronize all land-based radars and air sensors, weapon systems, airbases and other air force installations and command centres.

The IACCS is an indigenous project developed by the Indian defense companies at the cost of about \$ 1.3 billion.⁴⁰ The IAF has installed 5 nodes of this system at Barnala (Indian Punjab), Wadsar (Indian Gujarat), Aya Nagar (New Delhi),

Jodhpur (Rajasthan) and Ambala. The IACCS has been linked with vital Air Defense installations of the IAF, which has provided the Network Centric ability to the Indian air defence units. The main objectives of IACCS are to collect real-time information from all assets on the ground and in the air including AWACS, UAVs, aircraft, satellites, etc. It provides Indian military's command with a better picture of the situation on the ground for timely countermeasures. In this way, the IAF will ensure 24/7 vigil over its air corridor and it would quickly detect any aerial movement by any enemy aircraft, helicopters, UAVs and AWACS.⁴¹ The induction of IACCS in the IAF would improve communication network, accurate information acquisition and round the clock air space vigilance which may allow the Indian military with timely countermeasures against any intrusion. However, after the Pulwama incident in response to the Indian botched surgical strikes, the Pakistan Airforce (PAF) did cross the LoC and dropped some bombs near their key strategic installations.

Artillery Command, Control and Communication System

The Indian defense firm BEL in collaboration with DRDO developed indigenous Artillery Command, Control and Communication System (ACCCS) for the Indian army. The ACCCS would improve the Indian army's precision to take out the targets on the LoC or international border. The ACCCS is also known as 'Shakti' in the Indian army. It is going to enhance the effectiveness of Indian artillery with improved tactical computer, handheld control system, gun display unit, all of which are synchronized through tactical radio networks, landlines, or fiber optic cables to boost the performance of artillery fire against the enemy.

According to reports, the major functions of ACCCS are "technical fire control (trajectory computation), tactical fire control (processing of fire requests and ammunition management), deployment management (suggesting deployment areas for guns and observation posts for defensive and offensive operations), operational logistics (timely provisioning of ammunition and logistic support) and fire planning (generation of fire plans, task tables and automatic generation of gun programs)."⁴² Currently, the Indian artillery system is being operated manually but after the installation of the Shakti system, the Indian army will make use of software with GIS and GPS functionalities to assimilate and systematize all artillery operations.

Challenges for Pakistan's Security

The above-mentioned developments will create a conventional imbalance in South Asia and compel Pakistan for countermeasures. Though, currently, some C4I systems are in place and Pakistan's indigenous defense industry tries to cope up with the challenges but in future, it would require the induction of spy satellites, highly sophisticated AWACS for air, ground and maritime surveillance and reconnaissance. India's acquisition of NCW capabilities would seriously erode the conventional parity and push Pakistan to follow suit and indulge in arms race. Pakistan may invest in quality, lethality and optimum utilization of available resources with smart acquisitions and tactically sound strategies.

The Indian military's whole war-fighting strategy is focused on Pakistan. Since 2001-02, India has been trying to find a gap in Pakistan military's nuclear and conventional capabilities to execute CSD or carry out punitive strikes. India's doctrinal maneuvering has been fluctuating since 2004 because of the lack of adequate offensive firepower and required NCW capabilities. Since 2004, the Indian military has inducted many weapon systems in its arsenal and it is in the process of improving its NCW and EW capabilities to maintain information superiority. The Indian military's new land warfare doctrine of 2018 has mentioned that India would carry out "punitive strikes" to counter any alleged terrorist act.⁴³ It could be assumed that India's offensive doctrines, modernization and capabilities are seeking to resort to limited strikes, which may take the conflict to next level.

There is no doubt if India tries to cross the border again or conduct any counterfeit surgical strike, there will be a strong response from Pakistan.⁴⁴ It has been demonstrated recently by the PAF. In the future, if India again resorts to any misadventure and the casualties on the Pakistan side increases, there will be quid pro quo plus response, which may seriously hurt the Indian side. Supposedly, if India faces huge casualties in case of Pakistan's response, then because of the public pressure and prestige, it may escalate the conflict and carry out more strikes against Pakistan. Pakistan's military will not stay idle, they would also respond accordingly and both sides may escalate the conflict.

Conclusion

Recent strategic trends in South Asia suggests that this region would remain volatile for next few years because of the unresolved issues, proxy wars, aggressive military doctrines backed by NCW capabilities and force modernization at rapid pace. The Indian military strategies and doctrines are offensive in nature and India's assimilation of NCW capabilities, modern sensors and weapon systems may have adverse implications for the region. Pakistan cannot afford to remain idle to the changing strategic dynamics in the neighborhood. Therefore, Pakistan must consider four areas to meet the challenges posed by the Indian military's NCW capabilities. First, it must improve digitized communication links within armed forces to enhance their integration and synergy on the battlefield. Secondly, Pakistan must boost its situational awareness through incorporation of NCW capabilities. It would help a commander to take right decisions at the right time. Thirdly, Pakistan needs to improve its C4I system. It must be robust, quick and secured from any decapitation strike. Lastly, it is the human factor that plays an important role. It is always men behind the guns, who play their role. It is pertinent for the Pakistan military to assimilate NCW capabilities in its all corps, cadres and ranks from top to bottom so that they can get familiar with revolution in military affairs. The digital weaponry is the future of warfare; it is, therefore, necessary for Pakistan to master this trick to overcome challenges to its security.

References

- 1 "India to spend a whopping USD 130 billion to modernize forces" *Economic Times*, September 10, 2019. <https://m.economictimes.com/news/defence/india-to-spend-a-whopping-usd-130-billion-for-military-modernisation-in-next-5-7-years/articleshow/71053542.cms>.
- 2 Gordon Arthur, "Network-Centric Warfare in Asia" *Center for Security Studies*, August 14, 2013. <https://css.ethz.ch/en/services/digital-library/articles/article.html/167921/pdf>
- 3 Kartik Bommakanti, "Electronic and Cyber Warfare: A Comparative Analysis of the PLA and the Indian Army" *Observer Research Foundation*, July 2019, <https://www.orfonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/OP203.pdf>.
- 4 John J. Garstka, "Network-Centric Warfare Offers Warfighting Advantage" *afcea.org*, May 2003. <https://www.afcea.org/content/network-centric-warfare-offers-warfighting-advantage>
- 5 A.K Cebrowski, *The Implementation of Network-Centric Warfare* (Washington DC: DIANE Publishing, 2005), 4
- 6 Cebrowski, 8.
- 7 Christopher Paul et al, "Improving C2 and Situational Awareness for Operations in and Through the Information Environment" *Rand*, 2018. https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR2400/RR2489/RAND_RR2489.pdf
- 8 Yogesh Joshi and Frank O'Donnell, *India and Nuclear Asia: Forces, Doctrine, and Dangers* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2018), 54.
- 9 David S. Alberts, "Information Age Transformation Getting to a 21st Century Military" *Department of Defense*, June 2002. http://www.dodccrp.org/files/Alberts_IAT.pdf, 8.
- 10 Dr. Masood Ur Rehman Khattak, Dr. Muhammad Khan and Dr. Ghulam Qumber, "Evolution of New Indian Military Strategy: Implications for Pakistan" *Margalla Papers*, Volume XXIII, Issue-I 2019. https://ndu.edu.pk/issra/issra_pub/articles/margalla-paper/Margalla-Papers-2019-Issue-1.pdf
- 11 Harsh V. Pant, *Handbook of Indian Defence Policy: Themes, Structures and Doctrines* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 84
- 12 "Rigid rules trip Modi's \$250 billion plan to modernize India's defence" *Economic Times*, July 13, 2018. <https://m.economictimes.com/news/defence/rigid-rules-trip-modis-250-billion-plan-to-modernise-indias-defence/articleshow/60370605.cms>.
- 13 "ISRO in service of the Indian soldier, Indian war machine" *Economic Times*, July 14, 2018. https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/isro-in-service-of-the-indian-soldier-indian-war-machine/articleshow/54638711.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst
- 14 Marco Aliberti, *India in Space: Between Utility and Geopolitics* (Austria: Springer, 2018), 264.
- 15 Ajey Lele, *Asian Space Race: Rhetoric or Reality?* (New Delhi: Springer, 2013), 190.
- 16 Mian Zahid Hussain and Raja Qaiser Ahmed, "Space programs of India and Pakistan: Military and strategic installations in outer space and precarious South Asian regional strategic stability" *Space Policy*, xxx (xxxx) xxx-xxx, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.spacepol.2018.06.003>.
- 17 Gp Capt (Retd) G D Sharma, *Space Security: Indian Perspectives* (New Delhi: Vij Books Pvt Ltd, 2011), 85.
- 18 Lieutenant Colonel Dhiraj Kumar, "Indian Ocean Region (IOR): India as a Net Security Provider-The Way Ahead" *USI of India*, April 2019. <https://usiofindia.org/publication/usi-journal/indian-ocean-region-ior-india-as-a-net-security-provider-the-way-ahead/>
- 19 "What is GSAT-7 Rukmini?" *Indian Express*. July 5, 2017. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/2BCNwc3>.
- 20 Dr. Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan, Narayan Prasad, *Space India 2.0: Commerce, Policy, Security and Governance Perspectives* (New Delhi: Observer Research Foundation, 2018), 190.
- 21 "EMISAT can bolster India's surgical strike capability" *Economic Times*, April 01, 2019. https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/emisat-can-bolster-indias-surgical-strike-capability/articleshow/68670153.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst.
- 22 "ISRO launches Angry Bird satellite to help Indian Air Force connect all its birds" *Times of India*, December 19, 2018. <https://www.indiatoday.in/science/story/isro-launches-communication-satellite-gsat-7a-1412861-2018-12-19>.
- 23 Satish Dhawan, "GSAT-7A Military Communications Satellite" *Airforce-Technology*, December 2018. <https://www.airforce-technology.com/projects/gsat-7a/>.
- 24 B. M. Jain, *South Asia Conundrum: The Great Power Gambit* (New York: Lexington Books, 2019), 101.
- 25 Prashant Dikshit, "The Value of the Phalcon AWACS for India" March 22, 2004. *IPCS*. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/2eOFYpX>.
- 26 Masood Ur Rehman Khattak, "The Indian Military Modernization: Impacts and Recommendations for Pakistan." *Strategic Studies Journal* Vol. 39, No.1, Spring 2019, 34
- 27 George J. Gilboy and Eric Heginbotham, *Chinese and Indian Strategic Behavior: Growing Power and Alarm* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 177.
- 28 C. J. Jenner and Tran Truong Thuy, (Ed). *The South China Sea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 128.
- 29 Anna Ahronheim, "India to Buy 15 Harop Suicide Drones from Israel" *Jerusalem Post*, January 28, 2019. <https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/India-to-buy-15-Harop-suicide-drones-from-Israel-578947>.
- 30 Ahronheim.
- 31 Bill Yenne, *Drone Strike!: UCAVs and Aerial Warfare in the 21st Century* (Manchester: Crecy Publishing, 2017), 107.
- 32 Yenne.
- 33 Yenne.
- 34 Robert O. Freedman, *Contemporary Israel* (Philadelphia: Westview Pres, 2009), 443.

-
- ³⁵ Masood Ur Rehman Khattak, "Indian Military's Cold Start Doctrine: Capabilities, Limitations and Possible Response from Pakistan" *SASSI*, Research Paper 32, March 2011. <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/151240/RP-32-Masood-Indian-Militarys-Cold-Start-Doctrine-Mar-2011.pdf>, 15.
- ³⁶ Khattak.
- ³⁷ Lt. General P.C. Katoch (Retd), "Swati Weapon Locating Radar - Good development" *SP Guide Publications Pvt Ltd*, October 23, 2017. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/203jpmx>.
- ³⁸ Lt General V.K. Kapoor (Retd), "Developments in Tactical Communications System in the Indian Army" Issue No. 22. November 16-30, 2015. <http://www.spsmai.com/military/?id=3716&q=Developments-in-Tactical-Communications-System-in-the-Indian-Army>.
- ³⁹ Kapoor, 16-30.
- ⁴⁰ Gp Capt GD Sharma (retd), "The IAF's shift to IACCS is a major step towards Net Centric Warfare" *Forceindia.Net*, September 14, 2010. [http://forceindia.net/cover-story/bigger-impact./](http://forceindia.net/cover-story/bigger-impact/)
- ⁴¹ Sharma.
- ⁴² "BEL delivers new artillery combat system to Army", *Business Standard*, January 20, 2013. https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/bel-delivers-new-artillery-combat-system-to-army-109061300065_1.html.
- ⁴³ "Land Warfare Doctrine- 2018" *ssri-j.com*, <http://www.ssri-j.com/MediaReport/Document/IndianArmyLandWarfareDoctrine2018.pdf>, 6.
- ⁴⁴ Murtaza Ali Shah and Hamza Azhar Salam, "Don't take Pakistan's N-capability as a bluff: Gen Kidwai", *The News*, February 8, 2020. <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/610630-don-t-take-pakistan-s-n-capability-as-a-bluff-gen-kidwai>.

NUCLEAR DETERRENCE AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION: ASSESSING STATES BEHAVIOUR IN SOUTH ASIA

*Hassan Jalil Shah and Naseem Anwar Khan**

Abstract

The Pulwama saga has once again brought to the fore the volatility of the region in which full-scale war was ostensibly averted through behind the curtain interlocutors but more by the nightmare of the nuclear holocaust in the region. The threat of nuclear showdown is not eminent anywhere else in the world but in South Asia. This academic foray endeavors to the concept of deterrence in South Asia and the role it has played in maintaining peace, thus far, a series of breaking points notwithstanding. The crises, though averted temporarily with the Kashmir issue remaining unresolved and India resorting to hybrid war against Pakistan, the volatile and uncertain strategic environment of the region has always caused anguish for the international fraternity. In obtaining geostrategic milieu, the US still has the wherewithal to influence the escalation ladder due to its large military footprints in the Indo-Pacific region. However, due to increasing Indo-US convergence of interests in the region, the role of the US can no longer be considered as non-partisan in the imbroglio, especially, when viewed in the context of deep cooperation between Pakistan and China, the epitome being CPEC. This calls for the involvement of international community in maintaining peace in the region. There is a dire need for the international fraternity led by the US to work in a non-partisan manner to maintain normalcy in the region and forge confidence amongst the unpredictable nuclear pugilists.

Keywords: Deterrence, Strategic Stability, Conflict Paradigm, Nuclear Weapons, Cold War.

Introduction

The advent of nuclearization in the subcontinent gave preeminence to the notion of deterrence in the strategic equation between the two arch-rivals of South Asia. The Pulwama incident and its aftermath, the so-called punitive airstrikes at Balakot and the brilliant strategic riposte by Pakistan Air Forces have once again brought to the fore the precariousness and vulnerability of peace in the region in general and to the efficacy of the concept and full-spectrum deterrence doctrine in particular. This almost led to the second postulate of the deterrence theory¹ in which deterrence became unstable with a visible decline of nuclear threshold and brinksmanship was at its peak during the period giving sleepless nights to policymakers on both sides of the divide.² The nuclearization

*Dr. Hassan Jalil Shah is an Advisor Human Resource Development at the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan. Naseem Anwar is a graduate of National Defence University, Islamabad, Pakistan, and Royal College of Defence Studies, UK.

of South Asia brought in a state of strategic equilibrium between the two arch-rivals which led to the state of deterrence in the region. The strategic restraint stood the test of time notwithstanding a number of events including Pathankot, Uri and Mumbai attacks. However, the so-called Indian airstrikes at Balakot have left strategists perplexed as to the efficacy of strategic deterrence in future conflicts between two states.

The post-Balakot raised a question: Would the nuclear deterrence prevent a conventional war in South Asia? The Indian strategists are painting a picture that Pakistan's nuclear arsenals notwithstanding Balakot incident have called Pakistani nuclear capability a bluff, thus, dealing a severe blow to the concept of deterrence in the regional milieu. The objective of this inquest is to reevaluate the changing regional security calculus vis-à-vis strategic posturing and the role of deterrence in preventing the conventional war in South Asia, especially, in the post-Balakot environment.

Research on the critical discourse of nuclear deterrence and conflict transformation regarding the behavior of states in South Asia has been carried out through the Research Onion method³ which elaborates on the various stages required to be covered while developing an effective research strategy. Ontologically, the research is based on the interpretivism with a positivist epistemological outlook. The research strategy includes a descriptive and systematic literature review on the concept of deterrence with a specific focus on its implications in South Asia.

Deterrence: Notional Aspects

The concept of deterrence came to the forefront at the beginning of the Cold War with a significant academic inquest. Henry Kissinger defines that "nuclear deterrence is the threat of nuclear attack as retaliation to prevent the opponent from using violence against the vital interests of the one who deters."⁴ Bernard Brodie suggests that "deterrence is a strategy intended to dissuade an adversary from taking an action not yet started; a credible nuclear deterrent must be always at the ready yet never used." Andre Beaufre states that "deterrence prevents an enemy power taking the decision to use armed forces compelling him when faced with a given situation to act or react in the light of the existence of a set of dispositions which constitute an effective threat. The result which it desires to achieve is, therefore, psychological one and it is sought by means of a threat."⁵ Robert Haffa Jr. defined conventional deterrence to be a "policy that seeks to persuade an adversary through the threat of military retaliation that the costs of using military force to resolve political conflict will outweigh the benefit."⁶

Deterrence is a comprehensive strategy bearing the psychological impact on the strategic choices of a nation while undertaking national-level decisions. Having the potential to cause fear and extreme damage, deterrence prevents or dissuades the opponent state(s) from unacceptable behavior. However, the attitude and response would largely depend on the rationality of belligerents as they have to formulate their choices and face consequences, thereof, the ongoing standoff between the US and

North Korea as well as the resolution of Cuban missiles impasse being cases of rational behavior in point.⁷

The end of the Cold War notwithstanding the deterrence regime retained its efficacy for almost two decades until the watershed event of 9/11 that shook its foundation having no appropriate response in the nuclear domain which could be undertaken against such an asymmetric attack. However, the concept of strategic deterrence has been impacted recently by the quest for multi-polarity, the new entrants in the nuclear power club and the increasing influence of Violent Non-State Actors (VNSA). The annexation of Crimea despite NATO's overarching military capabilities and Russian aggression against Georgia are the manifestation of emerging reality in which Russia undertook these actions considering any nuclear response by NATO as less attractive and disproportionate.⁸

The edifice of the deterrence theory rests on the notion that a force inferior in nature, having the destructive capability of weapons, can deter a more powerful belligerent with the condition that this force remains protected against destruction by a surprise attack. Based on the notions of psychology, deterrence aims to deter the hostile belligerent from initiating an action that has yet to start. The inhibition is demonstrated through the posturing of a threat of reprisal or to dissuade them from undertaking something that another state desires. As a credible proponent of nuclear deterrence, Bernard Brodie advocates that deterrence should always be in the state of readiness yet never be used. It can, hence, be concluded that the use of power to hurt, as bargaining power, is the edifice of the theory of deterrence and optimally successful when it is held in reserve.⁹ Frank C. Zagare, on the other hand, posits towards the deficiencies of the deterrence theory and instead proffers "Perfect deterrence"¹⁰ which postulates that states may vary in their internal characteristics more so in the credibility of their threats of retaliation.¹¹

While proponents of the deterrence theory led by Frank C. Zagare have long been advocating its utility on the ground because major wars have been averted due to the effectiveness of deterrence, and many scholars have been advocating its downside citing a number of inconsistencies in the theory.¹² Similarly, several leading pundits of the deterrence theory have altered their stance on the efficacy of deterrence owing to a host of reasons including proliferation and instabilities in nations possessing nuclear weapons and resultant absence of safeguards of nuclear weapons. Such stalwarts include Henry Kissinger, George Shultz, Sam Nunn and Bill Perry.¹³

A deterrence policy can be subsumed in two categories: direct deterrence, i.e., preventing an armed attack against a state without the involvement of great powers, and extended deterrence, which encompasses preventing an attack on another state involving great powers. Successful deterrence hinges on defending the state's strategy vis-à-vis the extent of attacking the state's vulnerability. The former rests on a strategy that balances coercion and credibility based on the criterion of proportionality, reciprocity, and coercive credibility while minimizing the domestic and international constraints. The vulnerability of the attacking state is carved by domestic political and

economic environments.¹⁴ The three imperatives for deterrence include enabling geostrategic environment, strategic restraint and responsibility, and maintenance of balance. The geostrategic mosaic includes a sustainable mechanism for dispute resolution, whereas, strategic restraint and maintenance of balance in nuclear deterrence emphasize the need for arms control rather than the competition.¹⁵

The application of the deterrence theory to non-nuclear, post-nuclear, and hybrid warfare is denoted as Modern Deterrence which aims to deter the adversary from taking offensive action by imposing costs outweighing the gains. Modern Deterrence reduces the threat of non-nuclear attacks by establishing norms of behavior, tailoring of deterrence threats to individual actors, governmental and societal response adoption, and establishing the credibility of threat with an adversary.¹⁶ The deterrence theory has also been criticized for a wide array of issues including suicidal/psychotic propensities of the adversary to budge to the threat of use of force, haste to go for first strike advantage with the intent of destroying adversary's capability to retaliate, diplomatic and political nuances, and escalation of perceived threat.¹⁷

Regional Strategic Calculus

The recent events unfolding in Kashmir with the epitome being the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35(A) of the Indian constitution has once again highlighted that the South Asian region will continue to remain turbulent owing to unresolved issues. Despite the best efforts of India to wish away the Kashmir issue, the recent events have amply clarified that unless the unfinished agenda of partition is resolved according to the aspiration of the local population, the nuclear-armed region will continue to simmer in a war-like situation. This outstanding issue has led to other disputes including boundary disputes and the so-called cross border terrorism which India alleges Pakistan to harbor. The resultant lack of trust has created an atmosphere of arms buildup in the region and growing size of nuclear arsenals, hence, the emergence of a nuclear factor in the subcontinent.

The equilibrium of power in South and East Asia has been disturbed. The relentless bellicosity between the states has ostensibly molded the strategic outlook of the region where enormous resources have been diverted by these nations to acquire unparalleled means of power as instruments to favorably mold the strategic environment.¹⁸ The South Asian conflict paradigm is primarily shaped by the unresolved conflict of Kashmir and hegemonic attitude of India which has led both states embarking upon the nuclear path to draw the security environment as envisaged by their policymakers being the first case of two arch-rivals having nuclear arsenals that has made South Asia as a potential nuclear flashpoint.¹⁹ There is, therefore, a need for a discourse on the dynamics of nuclear deterrence and its impact on conflict transformation, particularly, in the aftermath of the February 27 incident vis-à-vis the role of international actors and application of strategic restraints regime in the region.

The strategic environment in South and East Asia is an interwoven web of power contestation amongst the states. In response to China's entry into nuclear club and resultant attainment of regional power, India undertook the nuclear path in 1974

and conducted nuclear tests in 1998 which was followed by Pakistan with equal intensity to maintain the balance of power in South Asia. Drawing inspiration from this trend, Iran and North Korea have embarked upon the journey to acquire nuclear status. Post-1998, both belligerents have shown tremendous restraints by avoiding a full-scale war. By keeping the conflict limited to Kashmir, both sides have demonstrated that nuclear deterrence is the key to strategic restraints and avoidance of a direct military confrontation.

The Indian quest to counter growing Chinese influence has made her a natural ally of the West in general and the US in particular, which is amplified by Indian ambitions to achieve a permanent seat in the UNSC. Indian access to the Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG) while denying the same to Pakistan and the US abetting India in pivot to Asia or rebalancing Asia initiative speak volumes about the US tilt towards India in the region.²⁰ The meteoric rise of India has triggered a strategic competition with China and Pakistan in the region.²¹

Four sets of assumptions are proffered by the states having ambitions to acquire nuclear status, i.e., security consideration, economic advantages, domestic pressures, and political prestige. Security reasons remained the predominant factor for Pakistan to go nuclear. The Indian “Smiling Buddha” nuclear tests of 1974 added further fuel to Pakistani ambitions to adopt a nuclear path for its security. Pakistan and India have been engaged in different kinds of conflicts. The military escalation of 1986 in the garb of exercise Brass-tacks is a case in point. The situation became tense and India congregated its military might on the eastern border of Pakistan in preparation for any possible military showdown. Pakistan’s perception of being extensively coerced by India to give up or regress on the core issues of Kashmir, water resources and other border demarcations further got ingrained in the strategic calculus of Pakistan. Whereas, the nuclearization of South Asia has brought in strategic stability in the region by averting the prospects of full-scale war. However, this has not solved the burning issue of Kashmir, thus, transformed the conflict paradigm transiting into other forms like hybrid and proxy warfare leading to a stability and instability conundrum in South Asia. This phenomenon of stability/instability paradox has been described by S. Paul Kapur as making of nuclear relationship safer but also causing a lower-level conflict in the subcontinent.²²

The strategic stability has given incentive to the pugilists to engage in sub-conventional and non-traditional warfare in which India unabatedly blames Pakistan for abetting uprising in Kashmir and other incidents like Mumbai attacks of 2008, Pathankot and Uri incidents of 2016 and Baramula incident of 2019. Pakistan reciprocates by blaming India of stoking instability in FATA (now a part of KP) and Balochistan through RAW-NDS nexus, the arrest of Kulbushun Yadav corroborating the assertion.²³ However, the appetite for a confrontation between the two hostile neighbors remains low, the nuclear deterrence being the instrument of stability in the region.²⁴

The nuclear restraint has forced India to re-orientate its military offensive options by curtailing the scope and objectives giving birth to new Indian military strategies known as Proactive Operations (PAO) and Cold Start Doctrine (CSD), which

are aimed at achieving objectives while remaining within the restraint regime. The strategies of CSD and PAO have posed yet another challenge for the credibility of Pakistan's nuclear deterrence as a massive nuclear response against limited or multiple Indian military incursions closer to the border, could be viewed as disproportionate and irrational. To respond to the threat of full-spectrum deterrence, Pakistan embarked upon the development of Tactical Nuclear Weapons (TNW) for area-specific use,²⁵ thus, leading to a 'no war no peace' situation where both the hostile states are endeavoring to achieve their strategic ends by using sub-conventional warfare and indirect means keeping the regional environment hostile and simmering.

From the above discussion, it can be subsumed that nuclear deterrence has significantly altered the conflict paradigm in South Asia causing deep anguish for the international community and leading the US to act as a balancer and remains pivot to deescalate and defuse the tension between the two states.²⁶ To prevent the spiraling of conflict beyond the controllable level of escalation, the US has been providing effective diplomatic channels evident from the active support provided by the US to defuse the Kargil crisis in 1999.²⁷ While the US still retains the capability to play a dominant role in escalation control within the region due to its huge military and economic clout, the growing Indo-US nexus is clearly undermining Pakistan, who considering US role is forcing Pakistan to integrate other important players in the region like China and Russia in the security calculus of the region to balance out perceived US tilt towards India.

Chinese mediation in the region would not be acceptable to India due to obvious reasons. Russia, a Cold War ally of India and having improved trajectory of relationship with Pakistan, might have space but the dominant role of the US may not allow her to act as a stabilizing factor in the region. The outsourcing escalation control consists of initiating and maturing bilateral institutionalized mechanisms for escalation control including CBMs and Nuclear Risk Reduction Measures (NRRM).²⁸ In the Indo-Pak scenario, outsourcing would remain undermined due to the historic mistrust and unresolved Kashmir dispute. The conflicting interests of the US and China in South Asia notwithstanding the permanent membership of the UNSC place them in a position to play an important role in the region.²⁹ However, this would entail developing CBMs and NRRMs for mutual deterrence to hold and to avoid any miscalculation.³⁰ Towards this end, Pakistan proposed a Strategic Restraint Regime (SRR) to India in 1998 to limit the nuclear arms race in South Asia.³¹ The SRR comprises of three inter-related facets, i.e., maintaining nuclear restraint to uphold deterrence stability, maintaining conventional arms balance, and averting conflicts and seek some subsequent resolution. Pakistan's proposal for SSR could not gain favor with India owing to the linking of conflict resolution with conventional and nuclear force restraints.

Regional Security Calculus Vis-à-vis Nuclear Deterrence in the South Asian Context

The South Asian security cauldron carries the burden of legacy inherited from British Raj. With the Kashmir issue remaining unresolved for the last seven decades, the trust deficit between the two neighbors has widened with every passing day and durable

peace remains elusive. The main variables undermining durable peace include Kashmir issue, terrorism, growing disequilibrium in conventional power, Indian quest for regional hegemony, radicalized Indian policies towards Pakistan, growing nuclear arsenals, and doctrinal asymmetry. All of these factors leading to a bilateral gridlock in CBMs and arms control measures.³² Deterrence has been working well so far owing to the near-parity in nuclear arsenals of both countries and massive riposte capabilities, thus, inhibiting any space for a pre-emptive strike by any belligerent. This stalemate has led to the attainment of national interests and objectives by pursuing a sub-strategic sphere, i.e., remaining below the nuclear threshold, thus, foray into hybrid warfare. This has led to the exposition of TNW in the regional milieu. While focusing on blaming Pakistan, any event that is calibrated as the crossing of Indian threshold of tolerance may invoke Indian military response, the Pulwama being a case in point. This raises a question that is deterrence failed in the post-Pulwama environment.³³

Efficacy of Deterrence in Post-Pulwama Environment

Achieving its objectives while remaining below the nuclear threshold, India introduced the much-trumpeted CSD in which it would rather than going for spatial depth, the Indian military would make shallow offensive maneuvers to destroy the war-fighting capacity of Pakistan, thus, rein in the so-called rogue elements. Pakistan responded to this by introducing the TNW on the battlefield. The deterrence theory postulates two scenarios, i.e., equilibrium and disequilibrium. In a state of equilibrium, the reduced security dilemma and threshold of using nuclear weapons raise the prospects of peace in the region, whereas, in case of disequilibrium, the lowering of nuclear threshold resulting in the failure of deterrence and possibility of war increases. Whereas, the nuclear deterrence stood the test of times even in events like Kargil. The raising of the ante-post-Pulwama has cast shadows of doubts on the efficacy of deterrence in the region in any future conflict, especially, when seen in the background of the reelection of BJP in India. The so-called Balakot strikes are being projected as a failure of deterrence. The fact that India chooses only one point for demonstrating its military might instead of going for an all-out offensive is being projected as limited aim keeping the conflict well below the nuclear threshold, hence, the efficacy of deterrence remains in place.

It is assumed that in the cost-benefit analysis, Pakistan acting as the deterrer was able to impose caution on India by raising the cost for India to expand its offensive operations while going for similar response across multiple points in Indian territory. The spectacular response by the PAF reestablished deterrence and reinforced redlines. The analysis of the recent escalation would suggest that by limiting their choices of attack by both sides, nuclear overhang played a decisive role in preventing a full-scale war. The retaliatory strikes by the PAF amply demonstrated the cost it would incur on India, thus, kept the deterrence intact.

Conclusion

The efficacy of the concept of deterrence has been questioned by security analysts based on the so-called Indian surgical strikes of 2016³⁴ and the recent in Balakot. These self-assumed Indian offensive actions have broken the threshold of TNWs. The matching and vigorous response of the PAF is, in fact, the beginning of a new era of the concept of failing deterrence. Whereas, the recent statement of Indian Defence Minister, Rajnath Singh, regarding the revision of “No First Use”³⁵ has put the theory of deterrence into question once again. The analysis of the recent escalation in post-Pulwama incident concludes that the possibility of tactical skirmishes in any future conflict cannot be ruled out, however, raising to a full-scale war with nuclear overhang is not envisaged. It can also be concluded that Pakistan’s conventional deterrence will redress slight imbalances while nuclear deterrence will ensure escalation control and the two taken together will strengthen overall deterrence.

The unfolding of the events in Kashmir has amply demonstrated that this will remain a nuclear flashpoint in the region until it is not resolved according to the aspirations of the local populace, otherwise, peace will remain elusive. The situation gets precarious when viewed in the backdrop of geographically contiguous adversaries being nuclear-armed with little reaction time. The concept of deterrence in such an uncertain environment becomes subsumed and gets pre-eminence. Both sides must, therefore, remain well below the nuclear threshold and maintain the integrity of deterrence. Sanity must prevail notwithstanding the popular sentiment. This could be achieved through CBMs, track-II diplomacy and foremost the third-party mediation.

References

- ¹ Patrick M. Morgan, *Deterrence Now*, vol. 89 (Cambridge University Press, 2003); Bernard Brodie, *The Anatomy of Deterrence* as Found in Strategy in the Missile Age (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959).
- ² Rizwana Abbasi, "A Strategic Shift in Indo-Pak Nuclear Strategy: Implications for Regional Stability," *IPRI Journal* 15, no. 2 (2015): 19–22.
- ³ Mark Saunders, Philip Lewis, and Adrian Thornhill, "Research Methods," *Business Students*, 2007.
- ⁴ Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (Simon and Schuster, 1994).
- ⁵ André Beaufre, *Strategy for Tomorrow* (Crane, Russak New York, NY, 1974); Brig Najeeb Ahmad, "Future of War and Strategy: Indo-Pak Dynamics," n.d., 20.
- ⁶ Gary L. Guertner, Robert Haffa Jr, and George Quester, "Conventional Forces and the Future of Deterrence" (ARMY WAR COLL STRATEGIC STUDIES INST CARLISLE BARRACKS PA, 1992).
- ⁷ Abram Chayes and Abram Chayes, *The Cuban Missile Crisis* (Oxford University Press London, 1974).
- ⁸ Alexander Lanoszka, "Russian Hybrid Warfare and Extended Deterrence in Eastern Europe," *International Affairs* 92, no. 1 (2016): 175–195.
- ⁹ Thomas C. Schelling, "The Diplomacy of Violence," in *Theories of Peace and Security* (Springer, 1970), 64–84.
- ¹⁰ Frank C. Zagare, "Reconciling Rationality with Deterrence: A Re-Examination of the Logical Foundations of Deterrence Theory," *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 16, no. 2 (2004): 107–141.
- ¹¹ Frank C. Zagare, 2004. "Reconciling Rationality with Deterrence," *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, vol. 16(2), pages 107–141.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ "The Growing Appeal of Zero - Nuclear Endgame," accessed June 7, 2019, <https://www.economist.com/international/2011/06/16/the-growing-appeal-of-zero>.
- ¹⁴ Bruce W. Jentleson and Christopher A. Whytock, "Who 'Won' Libya? The Force-Diplomacy Debate and Its Implications for Theory and Policy," *International Security* 30, no. 3 (2006): 47–86.
- ¹⁵ The Newspaper's Staff Reporter, "Deterrence Didn't Fail during Stand-off with India: Officials," DAWN.COM, June 1, 2019, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1485843>.
- ¹⁶ Amir Lupovici, "The Emerging Fourth Wave of Deterrence Theory—Toward a New Research Agenda," *International Studies Quarterly* 54, no. 3 (2010): 705–732.
- ¹⁷ Patrick M. Morgan, *Deterrence: A Conceptual Analysis* (Sage Publications Beverly Hills, CA, 1977).
- ¹⁸ M. C. Abad Jr, "A Nuclear Weapon-Free Southeast Asia and Its Continuing Strategic Significance," *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs* 27, no. 2 (2005): 165–187.
- ¹⁹ Bakhtawar M. Jain, *India in the New South Asia: Strategic, Military and Economic Concerns in the Age of Nuclear Diplomacy*, vol. 45 (IB Tauris, 2010).
- ²⁰ Kurt Campbell and Brian Andrews, "Explaining the US 'Pivot' to Asia," *Americas* 1 (2013): 1945–1975; Stephen Burgess, "The US Pivot to Asia and Renewal of the US–India Strategic Partnership," *Comparative Strategy* 34, no. 4 (2015): 367–379.
- ²¹ Sushil Kumar, "Power Cycle Analysis of India, China, and Pakistan in Regional and Global Politics," *International Political Science Review* 24, no. 1 (2003): 113–122.
- ²² S. Paul Kapur, "India and Pakistan's Unstable Peace: Why Nuclear South Asia Is Not Like Cold War Europe," *International Security* 30, no. 2 (October 1, 2005): 127–52, <https://doi.org/10.1162/016228805775124570>.
- ²³ "Emerging Challenges on Western Frontiers - ProQuest," accessed August 24, 2019, <https://search.proquest.com/openview/5e76a580b29be95ff28c49515bc894b4/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=616545>.
- ²⁴ "The Pulwama Crisis: Flirting with War in a Nuclear Environment - ProQuest," accessed August 24, 2019, <https://search.proquest.com/openview/ef405791d960859466fcd9e1604a4de3/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=37049>.
- ²⁵ Charles E. Costanzo, "South Asia: Danger Ahead?" *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 5, no. 4 (2011): 92–106.
- ²⁶ "The Harvard Nuclear Study Group. Living with Nuclear Weapons - Persée," accessed August 24, 2019, https://www.persee.fr/doc/polit_0032-342x_1984_num_49_3_3401_t1_0707_0000_3.
- ²⁷ Bhumitra Chakma, "Escalation Control, Deterrence Diplomacy and America's Role in South Asia's Nuclear Crises," *Contemporary Security Policy* 33, no. 3 (December 1, 2012): 554–76, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2012.727684>.
- ²⁸ Michael Krepon, Julia Thompson, and Henry L. Stimson Center, *Deterrence Stability and Escalation Control in South Asia*, 2013, http://www.stimson.org/images/uploads/research-pdfs/Deterrence_Stability_Dec_2013_web.pdf.
- ²⁹ Peter H. Koehn, "Chinese Americans and U.S.-China Relations in the Twenty-First Century: Applications of Cross-National Competence to Interdependent Resource-Consumption Challenges," *Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 10, no. 3–4 (January 1, 2001): 129–54, <https://doi.org/10.1163/187656101793645533>.
- ³⁰ "Banking on an Outsider: Implications for Escalation Control in South Asia," accessed August 24, 2019, <https://www.armstrongcontrol.org/print/4903>.
- ³¹ Feroz Hassan Khan, "Strategic Restraint Regime 2.0," in *Deterrence Stability and Escalation Control in South Asia* (Washington, DC 20036: Stimson, 2013), 161–74.
- ³² Arun Sahgal, "Examining Efficacy of Strategic Stability in South Asia: An Analysis." (Sandia National Lab.(SNL-NM), Albuquerque, NM (United States), 2019).
- ³³ Dr Mansoor Ahmed and Maimuna Ashraf, "The Pulwama-Balakot Crisis," *CISS Insight Journal* 7, no. 1 (July 15, 2019): 01–24.
- ³⁴ Muhammad Sajjad Malik, "Pakistan-India Relations: An Analytical Perspective of Peace Efforts," *Strategic Studies*, 2019, 18.
- ³⁵ Ankit Panda Diplomat The, "Indian Defense Minister: 'Circumstances' May Lead to Review of Nuclear 'No First Use' Policy," *The Diplomat*, accessed August 25, 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/08/indian-defense-minister-circumstances-may-lead-to-review-of-nuclear-no-first-use-policy/>.

ENHANCING THE EFFICACY OF NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION REGIME: SIGNIFICANCE OF PAKISTAN'S NSG MEMBERSHIP

*Rubina Waseem and Abeer Iftikhar Tahirkheli**

Abstract

The various arrangements of the nonproliferation regime have so far failed to address the political and security concerns of the states that are not a party to the Nonproliferation Treaty. Initiatives like the US-India nuclear deal and the sole Nuclear Suppliers Group waiver to India are undermining the efficacy and creditability of the nonproliferation regime. There is a need that the global community must cognizant of the nonproliferation motives before it attempts to resolve the issue of nuclear proliferation. This paper, therefore, explores the reasons behind the biased-behavior of the international community regarding Nuclear Suppliers Group membership. It also draws claim that an unbiased approach can sustain regional peace and security viz-a-viz strengthen the nonproliferation regime. It is also important to keep the threat of non-state actors in view, which are suspicious to acquire nuclear weapons-related technologies or materials for malicious objectives. In this regard, global efforts are required to ensure that all nuclear weapons-holder states remain engaged in nonproliferation efforts. Pakistan has always played a constructive role in nuclear nonproliferation and is part of many nonproliferation initiatives. Thus, it is imperative to bring Pakistan into the fold of the nonproliferation regime by taking it on-board in the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

Keywords: NSG, NPT, NPR, Nuclear Technologies, Nonproliferation.

Introduction

The main objective of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) is to prevent nuclear weapons and transfer of nuclear technology. Yet, both mechanisms differ regarding their scope, legality, and features. NPT is considered to be a formal treaty with legal bindings, whereas, NSG is an informal consensus-based group that lacks enforcement apparatus. The basic prerequisite for NSG membership is that the applying-state should have the capacity of supplying specialized nuclear technology and material. NPT is considered to be the most important pillar of the international nuclear nonproliferation norm (NPR), which is a set of global standards related to nuclear nonproliferation.

*Dr. Rubina Waseem is a Lecturer at the Department of Strategic Studies, National Defence University, Islamabad. Abeer Iftikhar Tahirkheli is an officer in Pakistan Army with MPhil degree in Strategic and Nuclear Studies from the Department of Strategic Studies, National Defence University, Islamabad.

Moreover, the criteria-based approach for NSG membership can strengthen NPR and enables states to play a more constructive role in raising the credibility of NPR. This approach is meant to give a balanced opportunity to the states that seek NSG membership and the states that meet the criteria should be granted membership. Presently, NSG criteria cannot admit non-NPT states due to the technical hitch of the January 1967-cutoff principle of NPT; Pakistan and India cannot join NPT as Nuclear-weapon States (NWS) and both states are also not convinced to roll back their nuclear programs. Therefore, NSG membership can be one approach to take them on board the whole gist of NPR and yet address their peaceful energy needs. At present, the guidelines of NSG are the main hurdle, as the regulation restricts the states, which are not a party to NPT, to become NSG members. But this rule was amended while granting NSG waiver to India. Stephen Krasner debates that the rules are authoritative and acceptable when they are binding to all with mutual negotiations.¹ India's economic rise and growing relevance in Asia-Pacific politics is the core cause of US strategic partnership with India. This paper contends that the bilateral agreement and the strategic interests of the states should not affect the normative values of the international regimes and arrangements. The international community ignored the past track record of India which switched its nuclear program from peaceful to weapon purposes. Thus, considering India for the NSG membership and leaving Pakistan will worsen the normative structure of NPR and will raise questions on the credibility of decades-long developments of the rules and principles to counter nuclear weapons proliferation.

Nuclear Nonproliferation and Role of NPT and NSG

NPT is fundamentally premised on the idea of permanently balancing the primary pillars of nonproliferation, disarmament, and sharing of civilian nuclear technology to the Non-nuclear Weapons States (NNWS). The December 1953-speech of the US President, Dwight Eisenhower, in the United Nations General Assembly essentially encouraged the technologically-advanced states, NWS and Nuclear-supplier states, to stimulate global peace and technology by sharing nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.² After the 'Atoms for Peace' speech by the US President, several states became signatories of more than 2,000 bilateral agreements of civilian nuclear cooperation for nuclear technology exchange, know-how, and materials for peaceful objectives.³ However, since the inception of NPT, four states (Britain, France, USSR, and China) have also attained NWS status, which in essence puts the principles of the treaty in jeopardy.⁴ Various arrangements of the nonproliferation regime including NPT have failed to address the political and security apprehensions of the states that are not a party to NPT due to realpolitik; therefore, they refused to be a part of NPT. North Korea's case is a unique case, as the state signed NPT and later withdrew in 2003 and Israel also has exceptional status due to its nuclear policy of opacity. Thus, this study does not include North Korea due to its withdrawal procedure and recent nuclear / missile tests; this case has become complicated. It does not discuss Israel as well because it is not a declared NWS and it has not applied for the NSG membership. On the other hand, India and Pakistan both had submitted applications for the NSG membership in 2016 and both seem interested too.

Although all states have their national export-control acts, there is no formal international treaty available that addresses export-controls. Nonetheless, some informal arrangements are in place. So far, the nonproliferation architecture envisaged under NPT remains unfulfilled. The treaty has failed to maintain a satisfactory track-record, which is apparently due to multiple factors including major transformation in the global geostrategic power structure since 1968. These geostrategic transformations have a great impact on the global security context as well as the security postures of the states that are non-party to NPT. The shift in the global security structure also triggered the proliferation of dual-use and nuclear technologies. India is the best example as it acquired nuclear weapons with the claim of peaceful usage and named it as 'Smiling Buddha' in 1974 but then shifted its so-called peaceful technology towards nuclear weapons development. Whereas, NSG was formed to contain further proliferation under the umbrella of peaceful technology.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was established in 1957 and it introduced safeguards to prevent nuclear weapons development. Following this, many other initiatives were taken to set guidelines for the export controls of sensitive and dual-use technology and materials.⁵ NSG is one of the informal groups of a broader set of Multilateral Export Control Regimes (MECR). The MECR comprises of NSG, which deals with the nuclear-related export-control procedures, Australia Group, which provides rules and regulations for the chemical and biological material trade, Wassenaar Arrangement, which deals with the dual-use and conventional technology trade, and lastly, Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), which provides guidelines regarding the transfer of aerial vehicles like missiles/rockets and other delivery means. The scope of this paper, therefore, focuses on NSG as it deals with the export-control guidelines of the nuclear-related material and dual-use technology.

NSG was established as a result of India's 1974-nuclear test and its aim was to plug the gap, which was exploited by India so that any other state cannot do the same. It is comprised of like-minded states (having the capacity of nuclear-related sensitive material transfer) which formulate stringent measures regarding trade-related issues and introduce comprehensive regulations among the technology-holder states which, as of today, include 48 members. All participating governments of NSG have the right to exercise discretion regarding the implementation and interpretation of the measures. The group is consensus-based and its latter formulation permits the member states to develop strict measures within the group.⁶ Ironically, this group was formulated as the consequence of Indian attempts to divert peaceful technology towards nuclear weapons development and yet NSG waiver was given to India, which initiated the debate to introduce a criteria-based approach instead of country-specific approach.

Repercussions of US-India Nuclear Deal and NSG Waiver to India

The US-India nuclear deal was finalized in July 2005 and this deal led to NSG waiver to India which allowed access to peaceful nuclear technology despite being a non-member of NPT. The waiver was granted while violating the guidelines of NSG, which defines that a state which is not a party to NPT cannot be a member of NSG.⁷

Therefore, the deal has negative implications on the overall structure of NPR. Unfortunately, regimes are based on mutual gains viz-a-viz rules and this exception raises questions on the reliability and credibility of NSG. Additionally, the exception was created due to the geostrategic interest of the US in India and its geographical relevance.⁸ Whereas, this paper argues that bilateral agreements are diverse than regimes where criteria are evolved to justify the measures otherwise elements of mistrust and injustice can reduce its relevance, thus, may lead to the failure of the regime.

Moreover, this deal has regional implications as Pakistan and India are intertwined with a long history of rivalry and the deal has further intensified the enmity of both states. Pakistan considers that as a result of the US-India deal, India would acquire more nuclear material and technology potential. The deal basically states that the material and technology given to India in the aftermath of the deal will be monitored under the IAEA safeguards, but the domestic uranium of India, which is already used in the 22 reactors, will be directed towards the nuclear program of India. The imported material can “free up India’s limited uranium reserves and allow India to increase its production from the estimated 6 to 10 additional nuclear bombs per year to several dozen a year.”⁹ This will obviously facilitate India to increase its fissile material and will raise a security dilemma for Pakistan. After the US-India deal, the IAEA approved India-specific safeguards and India got an exemption from the comprehensive safeguards which are, otherwise, applicable to all NNWS. This India-specific safeguard, under the IAEA-Additional Protocol,¹⁰ provided India an opportunity to separate its civil and military reactors.

India has still not identified its eight reactors (as military or civilian) despite signing the IAEA-Additional Protocol.¹¹ India was supposed to separate its civilian and military reactors and it has to apply IAEA safeguards to its civilian reactors, yet Pakistan, by the dint of this vagueness, considers those reactors as military reactors.¹² Resultantly, this will facilitate India to build its nuclear weapons technology/material and push Pakistan to indulge in an arms race. Thus, the deal has negative repercussions on the region as well. The nonproliferation supporters believe that “it is not in the US strategic interest to ignore the expansion of India’s current arsenal of 50 to 100 nuclear weapons, which could prompt Pakistan to increase its nuclear and missile arsenals.”¹³ Some analysts believe that once a nuclear state achieves nuclear parity with a contender, it is its discretion to follow arms race or not. Pakistan takes these developments very seriously and considers it as a threat to its sovereignty and security.

Moreover, while criticizing the US benefits from the US-India nuclear deal, analysts believe that India has not adopted international standards of nuclear liability.¹⁴ Therefore, it has blocked US nuclear firms from actually executing agreements with the Indian government. Russians and French are ahead of the US in nuclear trade with India because they have a different commercial setup. The US-India cooperation, whether for the purpose of strengthening bilateral relations of both states or a part of the US containment policy of China,¹⁵ has already raised concerns for the formulation of some kind of mechanism for the rest of non-NPT NWS. Chinese perspective is quite

clear and based on the logic that the exception given to India should be given to Pakistan as well.¹⁶ Though critics of this view believe that Chinese reservation is due to India's economic rise and concerns of becoming an alternative market to China.¹⁷ This, however, stands on thin ice as the Chinese economic rise is far more stable and wider than India. Moreover, some argue that Chinese strategy is meant to support Pakistan in order to attain NSG membership. According to both arguments, it seems that after the Chinese opposition, it is difficult for both states (Pakistan and India) to get NSG membership. Thus, it is important to formulate a uniform criterion keeping in mind the current challenges to the regime.

Paradoxically, the US-India nuclear deal and NSG waiver given to India alone have become a matter of concern for the nonproliferation supporters as this exceptional treatment is likely to prove counterproductive for the nonproliferation norm. This is posing additional challenges for the regime. Moreover, this perpetual state of inertia due to multiple security and structural flaws in the treaty as well as the failure of the international community to tackle the problems that have plagued NPT are further complicating the containment of proliferation of nuclear-related technologies.¹⁸ Keeping in view the above-stated argument, there is a plausible option available for the international community to restructure the NSG-membership criteria so that states can fulfil their sovereign needs of peaceful nuclear energy and contribute positively to the domain of nonproliferation.

NSG Membership: Prospects for Pakistan

Pakistan has acquired nuclear weapons intending to address its security concerns in an anarchic global security system. Security can be assured in the global arena with cooperation among states under such "rules and procedures which reduce the fear of the states of being cheated by their partners and consenting to focus on the benefits."¹⁹ It is argued that the solution to increasing global nuclear challenges lies in a mechanism that will allow the absorption of non-members of NPT into the broad framework of NPR.

With reference to the case of Pakistan and India, ever since 1947, there has been existed an exceptional rivalry between the two states. Although the international community has claimed to diffuse the rivalry, both states have affirmed that they will not join the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) or NPT till the improvement of security situation in the region.²⁰ The improvement in the political relationship with the initiation of several Confidence Building Measures (CBM) between two states in the backdrop of the Global War on Terror (GWOt) briefly gave hope to the international community but it was short-lived. In fact, after the Pulwama attack, the two nuclear-weapon states came to the verge of a nuclear war²¹ and the possession of nuclear weapons by both adversaries has played a significant role in the de-escalation of tension. Moreover, critics believe that due to the existence of nuclear weapons, there also exists an opportunity of negotiations over Kashmir (the disputed territory between India and Pakistan)²² as it helps to tone down the rhetoric over the historical dispute.²³ This anticipation has been depreciated after the Indian step of the revocation of Articles

370 and 35-A, which abolished Kashmir's independent status, and thus, multiplied the complexities of the relationship between both antagonist states.

Unfortunately, the US-India nuclear deal and discriminatory behavior of the international community may push Pakistan to build full-scale nuclear deterrence and thus, increase its nuclear development. In fact, this will be blowback to the global nonproliferation efforts. Nonetheless, India's exceptional entry in NSG can increase the dilemma in South Asia as well as raise questions on the efficacy of decades-long nuclear nonproliferation struggle. Hence, China took the principle-stand in the NSG plenary meeting²⁴ to introduce non-discriminatory criteria for the NSG membership. India has been granted NSG waiver and got the opportunity for peaceful nuclear trade, thus, the NSG membership demand of India is a matter of prestige rather than being its need. Technically, once India is in NSG, it will eliminate the chance of Pakistan's membership due to its consensus-based approach. Thus, this justifies Pakistan's demand to consider both states for NSG membership simultaneously.

Another important factor is the significance of NSG membership for Pakistan. It is pertinent to explore why Pakistan wants NSG membership. Essentially, Pakistan is facing an energy crisis and by building a Nuclear Power Plant (NPP), Pakistan can address this crisis effectively. France is the best example where 80% of its energy needs are being addressed with the help of nuclear energy. There is another debate in the scholarly circle which states whether Pakistan has the potential to build NPP or not; there is a need to explore Pakistan's civilian nuclear projects and its details for the deliberation. The Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) with the assistance of the UK and France established nuclear reprocessing plants in 1969. Then, in 1972, the Karachi Nuclear Power Plant (KANUPP) was launched with 137 MWs. An indigenous reactor was designed in 1986 with the 50 MWs capacity named Khushab-I²⁵ and it became operational in 1998. Afterward, in 1989, the Pak-China agreement was signed and as a result of it, Chashma Nuclear Power Plant (CHASNUPP) was built under the IAEA safeguards. Likewise, China expanded its contract with the PAEC to assist more 3-4 nuclear reactors. The above-discussed evidence draws an empirical claim that Pakistan has the potential to build NPP and, thus, proves the fact of having credentials for the NSG membership.

The Pak-China civilian nuclear commerce remained subject to criticism by the international community. Although both states claim that they have not violated any international rules as at that time neither side was NPT signatory (China joined NPT in 1992 and NSG in 2004).²⁶ Therefore, despite a well-planned defaming campaign of the western community, the collaboration between China and Pakistan continued in the domain of peaceful nuclear energy. Critics states that "China's sensitive nuclear assistance to Pakistan in the early 1980s was widely seen as a means of imposing strategic costs on India and diverting New Delhi's strategic attention away from Beijing. If states are to provide sensitive nuclear assistance to constrain rival states, it should be expected them to provide sensitive nuclear assistance to states with which they share a common enemy."²⁷ Yet, both states announced that the collaboration is under the *grandfatherly* clause²⁸ and, thus, is not violating international norms. Moreover, China is

assisting Pakistan for the nuclear reactor at Chashma and other plans of greater energy to have 8800 MW by 2030.²⁹ Nuclear energy is considered to play a crucial role in the economic growth of a state.³⁰ Therefore, “China is producing 19,050 MW at present and aspires to produce 400,000 MW by 2050.”³¹ Moreover, “India plans to boost its nuclear capacity 15 fold by 2032.”³² Consequently, Pakistan has to follow the trend to produce nuclear technology to address peaceful energy needs. The analysts are of the view that “nuclear power plants might just be Pakistan’s only chance to prevent power starvation and insufficiency on the sustainable ground. Nuclear energy, indeed, offers lower cost environmentally-safe source of energy for Pakistan.”³³

Pakistan’s involvement in the Soviet War and then GWOT intensified the challenges for the state, and Non-State Actors (NSAs) phenomenon added fuel to the fire. Pakistan continued to be the frontline state to fight against terrorism and yet suffered a lot of casualties. Pakistan along with fighting terrorism had also faced the A.Q. Khan saga in 2002 as he was blamed for the exploitation of global nuclear black-market and charged to facilitate nuclear material and technology transfer to the NPT states. Moreover, the proliferation of nuclear weapons is not a new phenomenon, for a matter of fact, the P-5 has also exploited these global networks for proliferation purposes.³⁴ Nonetheless, this is a separate debate but soon after that United Nations Security Council Resolution-1540 was introduced which obligated all the UN member states to take responsibility for monitoring nuclear safety and security issues on the national level. Thus, it will effectively keep a check on future proliferation incidents. Pakistan also adopted a more robust and comprehensive nuclear safety and security mechanism. As confirmed by the nuclear experts that:

*Pakistan’s nuclear security regime has four pillars: First, a well-defined command and control system comprising the National Command Authority (NCA), the Strategic Plans Division (SPD), and the Strategic Forces Command; second, strict regulatory regimes include Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) and Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority (PNRA), which cover all matters related to nuclear safety and security including prevention of illicit trafficking and border controls as well as plans to deal with possible radiological emergencies; third, an extensive export control regime, and finally, international cooperation consistent with national policies and interests as well as international obligations.*³⁵

SPD is considered to be responsible for the physical protection of the nuclear facilities and to improve safeguards following international practices. International critics and nuclear experts have endorsed Pakistan’s robust nuclear safety and security structure by stating that: “Pakistan’s nuclear weapons and installations are protected by heavy guarding with defense-in-depth, reinforcing layers of security, a blanket of secrecy, deliberate deception, the separation of warheads from missiles, and security practices including PRP and the Human Reliability Program (HRP) for military and civilian personnel respectively.”³⁶

Despite all the above-discussed challenges, Pakistan has been acknowledged to have one of the finest command and control structures as well as astringent audit

system.³⁷ Thus, this paper contends that it is a high time to take Pakistan on board along with India into the NSG. This proves that by granting NSG membership, Pakistan will strengthen the overall structure of the broader NPR edifice. This will provide Pakistan an opportunity to address its legal energy needs and add prestige to its status. This approach can resultantly bring stability to the South Asian security structure.

Conclusion

The prevailing security environment of South Asia requires a rational approach from the international community. Acting out on the perceived security threats from other states might lead the region towards further instability and destruction. The vulnerabilities of the regime demand the international community to take concrete measures to strengthen NPR and explore more plausible options for these states. The potential risk of escalation demands that the leadership of these nations make sincere and committed efforts to explore the possible areas where cooperation with their adversaries is likely to happen for the furtherance of international efforts towards arms control.

At the same time, NWS also need to take steps addressing security concerns and genuine energy needs. In doing so, the NPT-states should make endeavors to address the political and security apprehensions, thus, provide both states (Pakistan and India) equal opportunity to become NSG members. It is imperative to note that access to legal civilian technology is the sovereign right of the states and it should be granted to the states having the capacity to build nuclear reactors to sustain their strategic needs. Therefore, to counter some of the adverse developments due to transformations in the global nuclear order, NPR objectives require rationalizing and rebalancing in keeping with the new global security challenges. The unresolved structural issues within NPT will continue to perpetually undermine it in the coming years and decades if the non-NPT nuclear-weapons states are not appropriately adjusted in the treaty. Neoliberalism works under the umbrella of realism; the Indian geostrategic position and its potential to play a counter-weight role against China made it worthy of being given the label of *good proliferator* and, thereby, winning membership of technical export control groups, all due to political reasons.

The arrangements of the US-India nuclear deal along with the NSG waiver given to India clearly depict the discriminatory behavior of the US-led international community. These steps are undermining the very ethics of NPR and destabilizing the South Asian region. Therefore, it is imperative to take on board Pakistan in NSG viz-a-viz India to adopt a criteria-based approach for the states that refused to sign NPT due to their strategic and security needs. Albeit, the international community can play a vital role as these regimes can assist states to join hands for the common goal of nuclear nonproliferation.

References

- ¹ See Stephen D. Krasner (ed.), *International Regimes* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1983).
- ² See Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Address by Mr. Dwight D. Eisenhower, President of the United States of America, to the 470th Plenary Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly," December 8, 1953, http://www.iaea.org/About/history_speech.html, accessed May 10, 2019.
- ³ Matthew Fuhrmann, "Taking a Walk on the Supply Side: The Determinants of Civilian Nuclear Cooperation," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 53, no. 2 (April 2009): 181–208.
- ⁴ Sharon Squassoni, "LOOKING BACK: The 1978 Nuclear Nonproliferation Act," *Arms Control Today*, December 2008.
- ⁵ IAEA Safeguards Overview: Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements and Additional Protocols," *International Atomic Energy Agency*, October 14, 2014, <https://www.iaea.org/publications/factsheets/iaea-safeguards-overview>, accessed November 20, 2019.
- ⁶ Jozef Goldblat, F. Barnaby, B. Jasani and J. Rotblat eds., *Nuclear Energy and Nuclear Weapon Proliferation* (London: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 1979), 302.
- ⁷ Daryle Kimball and Kelsey Davenport, "The Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG) at a Glance," Fact Sheets and Briefs, *Arms Control Association*, updated August 2017, <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/NSG>, accessed August 10, 2019.
- ⁸ The debate is not the scope of the paper but this Indian geo-strategic position and its potential to play a counter-weight role against China made it worthy of being given the label of *good proliferator* and thereby winning membership of technical export control cartels, all due to political reasons.
- ⁹ Michael Clarke, Stephen Fruhling and Andrew O'Neil, *Australia's Uranium Trade: The Domestic and Foreign Policy Challenges of a Contentious Export* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2013), 43.
- ¹⁰ IAEA Safeguards Overview, International Atomic Energy Agency.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹² Ambassador (R) Zamir Akram (Advisor Strategic Plans Division, Pakistan), interviewed by the author, National Defence University, Islamabad, May 26, 2019.
- ¹³ Clarke, Fruhling and Neil, *Australia's Uranium Trade*.
- ¹⁴ Kimball (Executive Director, Arms Control Association), interviewed by the author, Washington DC, January 5, 2018.
- ¹⁵ Ashley Tellis (TATA Chair for Strategic Affairs, and Senior Fellow in Carnegie Endowment for International Peace), interviewed by the author, Washington DC, February 10, 2017.
- ¹⁶ Zhang Jiegen (Associate Professor, Pakistan Study Center, Institute of International Studies, Fudan University), interviewed by the researcher, Islamabad, August 12, 2018.
- ¹⁷ Sadanand Dhume (Resident fellow in American Enterprise Institute – (AEI), interviewed by the researcher, Washington DC, November 3, 2017.
- ¹⁸ Jeffery W. Legro and Andrew Moravcsik, "Is Anybody Still a Realist?" *International Security* 24, no. 2 (Fall 1999): 5–55.
- ¹⁹ Mark W. Zacher and Brent A Sutton, *Governing Global Networks: International Regimes for Transformation and Communication* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
- ²⁰ Shalendra Sharma, "India in 2009," *Asian Survey* 50, no. 1 (2010): 153.
- ²¹ Alex Lockie, "Pakistan readies military, hospitals for war with its nuclear rival India after Pulwama terror attack," *Business Insider*, February 22, 2019, <https://www.businessinsider.com/pakistan-readies-military-hospitals-for-war-nuclear-rival-india-kashmir-pulwama-2019-2>, accessed May 15, 2019.
- ²² The dispute has been intensified in the vague of the current Indian step; i.e. revocation of the article 370 and 35-A and thus nullifying the independent status of Kashmir dispute which is a clear violation of the UN resolutions on Kashmir issue, although details of the dispute are not the scope of the study.
- ²³ Moeed Yusuf and Adil Najam, "Kashmir: Ripe for Resolution," *Third World Quarterly* 30, Issue 8 (2009): 1503.
- ²⁴ "China refuse to budge, say no to India's NSG membership," *The Indian Express*, June 23, 2017.
- ²⁵ Usman Shabbir, "Remembering Unsung Heroes: Munir Ahmad Khan," *Defence Journal*, May 2004.
- ²⁶ "Australia-China Nuclear Material Transfer Agreement and Nuclear Cooperation Agreement," *Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade*, November 2007, www.dfat.gov.au/geo/china/treaties/faq.htm, accessed on January 19, 2019.
- ²⁷ Mathew Kroenig, "Exporting the Bomb: Why States Provide Sensitive Nuclear Assistance," *American Political Science Review* 103, no. 1 (February 2009).
- ²⁸ A *grandfather clause* is an exemption that allows one state to continue with activities that were approved before the implementation of new rules or laws. As China became member of the NSG in 2004, so it claims that the deal of the civilian cooperation with Pakistan on these NPP was made before 2004 and thus grandfathered.
- ²⁹ Peter Edward and Andy Summer, "The Future of Global Poverty in Multi-Speed World: New Estimates of Scale and Location, 2010–2030," Working Paper 327, *Center for Global Development*, June 4, 2013.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*
- ³¹ Rizwana Abbasi, "Nuclear Energy Security: Emerging Trends and Pakistan", *Policy Perspectives* 13, no.2 (2016): 167–192.
- ³² *Ibid.*
- ³³ *Ibid.*
- ³⁴ See Christopher Simpson, *BlowBack: America's Recruitment of Nazis and its Effects on the Cold War* (New York: Wheatland Corporation, 1988).
- ³⁵ See Naeem Salik, *The Genesis of South Asian Nuclear Deterrence: Pakistan's Perspective* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2011).
- ³⁶ John Barry, "How to Fight Al-Qaeda Now: An Ex-CIA Analyst Talks About the Terrorists' Power and Their Vulnerabilities," *Newsweek*, October 27, 2008; Rolf Mowatt Larssen, "Security in Pakistan: Reducing the Risks of Nuclear Terrorism," *Arms Control Today*, July/August 2009.
- ³⁷ James Cartwright (R) General (USMC, ret.) Harold Brown Chair in Defense Policy Studies in Center for Strategic & International Studies, interviewed by the author, Washington DC, September 17, 2017.

DETERMINANTS OF THE US NUCLEAR IMPERIALISM: A THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

*Nabeel Hussain and Shumaila Zahoor**

Abstract

The imperial nature of the US has always been dominant in all spheres of influence. To continue with this trend, it has adopted a policy similar to imperialism in the nuclear domain. The term 'Nuclear Imperialism' is a new addition in the security discourse that is defined as the domination and control extended and imposed by the US over the global nuclear regime. States are divided into the nuclear core, periphery, and semi-periphery. The US is placed in the nuclear core, while India and Israel are the nuclear semi-peripheries having close ties with the nuclear core. The nuclear core is continuously exploiting the nuclear periphery states, such as Pakistan and Iran by imposing its decision to abandon their nuclear programs and disarm unilaterally. The strategies opted for maintaining nuclear imperialism are the non-proliferation regimes, extended nuclear deterrence, and threat reduction program to keep its inspections on other states that possess nuclear weapons. This tendency of US nuclear imperialism has been explained by employing the Structural Theory of Imperialism by Johan Galtung.

Keywords: Imperialism, Nuclear Core, Nuclear Periphery, Nuclear Semi-Periphery, Nonproliferation.

Introduction

Imperialism is a policy of extending state influence beyond its territorial boundaries through economic, military, and other means. The US as a sole superpower has maintained its influence in all spheres. Keeping in view the imperial trends, the US has created a nuclear class distinction in which it is the sole proprietor of nuclear weapons and nuclear technology. This practice has led to the evolution of a new term "Nuclear Imperialism" in the field of International Relations. Nuclear Imperialism is, therefore, defined as domination, possession, and control on the use of nuclear weapons and civil nuclear technology.

The class division between the North and the South is created by the core states for their economic interests. This class distinction is not only limited to economic disparity but in the nuclear domain, it is created in the shape of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the non-proliferation regimes. The US, in the nuclear world order, acts as the "Nuclear Core or Nuclear Centre"¹ which controls the means² to use nuclear weapons and threat for its desired objectives. It also controls the civil nuclear business

*Nabeel Hussain is a Lecturer at the Department of Strategic Studies, National Defence University, Islamabad. Shumaila Zahoor is a Lecturer at the Department of International Relations, National Defence University, Islamabad.

and keeps the nuclear periphery states away from developing nuclear technology and weapons.

This paper is a theoretical analysis of the term 'US Nuclear Imperialism'. Since this term is new to the field of International Relations, hence, imperialism has been studied by incorporating the philosophies of Karl Marx, Vladimir I. Lenin, Hobson, and Johan Galtung. The Structural Theory of Imperialism by Galtung has been employed specifically on the term 'Nuclear Imperialism' to explain the US imperialistic policies in the nuclear domain. The US nuclear policy in the global nuclear world order is claimed to be imperialistic and hegemonic in nature. The nonproliferation regimes, Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), threat reduction laws, such as the Nunn-Lugar Act, and the International Convention on Suppression of Act of Nuclear Terrorism are used by the US as a tool for its imperial designs. Giving a critical view on the US extended deterrence and disarmament policy, it has discussed the US policies of division towards states including Pakistan, India, Israel, and Iran for its regional and global interests and to secure its nuclear imperialism.

Theoretical Framework

Johan Galtung defines imperialism "as a way in which the Centre nation exercises its power over the Periphery to bring about disharmony of interests between them." In other words, Imperialism is defined as a relation between the Centre and the Periphery nations. It means that (a) harmony of interest is there between the center of the Centre and the Periphery's center, (b) disharmony of interest is there within the Periphery nations than within the Centre nations, (c) there is disharmony of interest between the Centre's periphery and the Periphery's periphery.³

Hobson explains imperialism by criticizing the free trade policy of the English people. He is of the view that Free Trade increases national wealth but eventually, it harms the working class.⁴ Michael Doyle has explicated imperialism as effective control of a subordinated society by an imperial society in either a formal or informal way.⁵ The definition by Cooper is more precise and covers the Roman and Chinese imperialism. He defines that the "differences between the dominated and the dominant are institutionalized and reproduced by such kind of political unit which is expansionist and large and it produces inequality and differentiation among the people it incorporates."⁶ The conception of imperialism by Classical Marxists is more succinctly covered by Lenin by unfolding imperialism as "it is neither a trans-historical political form nor a policy of the state but it is a special stage in the development of capitalism."⁷

The concept of Neo-imperialism was developed by the US, USSR and Japan during the Cold War period based on their ideologies, culture, and power influence. President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana has defined Neo-colonialism as the highest stage of imperialism. He explained that it is the neo-colonial era and the last stage of imperialism.⁸ The core argument for neo-colonialism is that a state which is independent and free to exercise its sovereignty inside but in practice, its political parties and economy are controlled from outside. Thus, neo-colonialism is more

dangerous because an imperial power rarely garrisons its troops on the territory of the periphery state.

The economic and monetary means have been utilized by the neo-colonialists to exercise their rule. International organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank have also contributed to support the imperial powers. IMF has generated a class division in the world economies, such as the highly industrialized states like the US, the UK, Canada, and Japan. The second class is known as the other developed areas, such as Greece, Finland, Australia, New Zealand, and Ireland. IMF has formed a third category, less developed, comprising the Middle East, Latin America, non-communist Asia, and Africa.

In the nuclear context, to keep the periphery states restraint from developing nuclear technology and weapons, international treaties, such as NPT, Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (still not entered into force), Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (still a resolution) and other non-proliferation and nuclear threat reduction pacts are being used as tools by the US. The institutions like NSG are also formed to create a class division between the highly industrialized core and the peripheries to devise control on the nuclear material export and transportation. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which serves as the nuclear watchdog, is there to deter the spread of nuclear weapons by the early detection of the misuse of nuclear material or technology.⁹

The US Nuclear Imperialism is designed on the concept of a spillover effect. According to this concept, the US maintains its nuclear monopoly at the domestic level which has a spillover effect on the regional and systemic levels to counterbalance its adversaries. US nuclear complexes are civil nuclear companies and military-industrial complexes contribute also in the US defence and political realm. To attain its monopoly at the regional and global levels, the US concludes civil nuclear and defence agreements with the states, such as India and Saudi Arabia to counterbalance its adversaries, such as Russia and China (in South Asia and the Middle East). The US offered F-16 fighter jets to Turkey to counterbalance it with the Russian S-400 missile technology which Turkey purchased in 2019.¹⁰ Similarly, the US \$110 billion weapons sale to Saudi Arabia is to counterbalance its regional rivalry with Iran.¹¹ The above-mentioned tools are utilized to derive the criteria, mechanism, and phases of the US Nuclear Imperialism. The structure of nuclear imperialism has been explained below in this regard.

Nuclear Imperialism and the US

In the nuclear world order, there exists a Centre and Periphery; while discussing at the structural domain, the Centre continuously keeps on exploiting the Periphery by using its tactics of nuclear threat and terrorism. The Centre exercises its power on the Peripheries by using the non-proliferation regimes and disarmament policy. The Peripheries are also exploited for their nuclear raw material under the jargon of civil nuclear cooperation by the Core. The US-Kazakhstan civil nuclear deal, under

which the US is getting nuclear material from Kazakhstan for its energy needs, is an example of US Imperialism commemorating with the Nunn-Lugar Act.¹²

Nuclear Imperialism, in its other form, is that the decisions are imposed on Peripheries to join the nuclear non-proliferation regimes and to disarm their nuclear weapons. One of the examples is the South African state which was pressurized by the US administration to roll back its nuclear program under the Pelindaba Treaty,¹³ also known as the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty. It was signed by 47 out of 53 countries of the Continent. It “prohibits states from conducting research on, developing, manufacturing, stockpiling, acquiring, possessing, or having control over any kind of nuclear explosive device by any means and anywhere.”¹⁴ This type of imperialism is the result of direct relationship between the Centre and the Periphery through international treaties and organizations. Another type of imperialism explored by Johan Galtung in his Structural Theory of Imperialism as defined above, has been employed on US Nuclear Imperialism. To employ Galtung’s theory on US Nuclear Imperialism, it is essential to explain the Centre’s center and the Periphery’s center.

- The US nuclear weapon complexes, civil nuclear industries and decision-makers act as the center of the Centre in US nuclear policy structure. The nuclear companies of the Periphery or semi-Periphery states, such as the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) and the Westinghouse Electric Company, based in the US, work in collaboration having the harmony of interest between them. India and the US, under the 2005-Civil Nuclear deal, negotiated to build six nuclear power plants by a joint collaboration of these two companies in Gujrat, India.¹⁵ Having the harmony of interest between these two companies, the US for civil nuclear cooperation is more inclined towards India as compared to its major non-NATO ally, Pakistan, during the War on Terror.
- The nuclear complexes and companies raise funds for the election campaigns of US politicians. There is less disharmony of interest in the Centre as compared to the Periphery. A US based company, Westinghouse lobbied for Henry J. Hyde, a Republican candidate representing the 6th District of Illinois who drafted the treaty-text, with \$180,000 to materialize the Indo-US deal.¹⁶ This lobbying effect creates a less disharmony of interest within the Centre as the center in the Centre remains aligned with each other through the lobbying effect.
- The disharmony of interest between the Centre’s peripheries and the center of Periphery creates a situation that does not support US Imperialism in the nuclear sphere. The US public wants to reduce the spending on the defence budget¹⁷ and it acts as a disharmony of interest between the decision-makers and general public opinion.

This identifies that the Periphery’s center is tied to the Centre’s center with the best possible tie of harmony of interest. The US Nuclear Imperialism is based on these given three-criteria which revolve around the harmony and disharmony of interest between the Centre and the Periphery.

Mechanisms of US Nuclear Imperialism

The US Nuclear Imperialism has four mechanisms, which are explained below:

The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)

NPT has three key objectives: (a) to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and related technology, (b) peaceful use of nuclear energy, and (c) nuclear disarmament.¹⁸ The nuclear world order has created the Core and the Periphery within the nuclear system. This division has created by the US over a while. The US nuclear monopoly in the early years after WWII was to restrain other states from developing nuclear weapons. However, NPT has created a nuclear class division of 'haves' and 'haves not' in the global nuclear regime.¹⁹

The states, as per Article 9 Clause 3 of the treaty, having developed their nuclear weapons before January 1, 1967, are the legitimate and *dejure* nuclear-weapon states, while the other states are considered as *defacto* nuclear-weapon states. Article 1 of NPT restrains the *dejure* nuclear-weapon state to proliferate nuclear technology with the *defacto* nuclear-weapon state.²⁰ According to NPT, the nuclear haves particularly the P5 States (US, UK, USSR, France and China) fall in the domain of nuclear Core and rest of the states, who are not signatory to NPT (Pakistan, India, Israel and South Sudan), are considered as nuclear Peripheries.²¹ The nuclear Core has a special relation with respect to the nuclear Peripheries to counterbalance each other in the global nuclear regime.

Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)

The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), the Threshold Test Ban Treaty (TTBT), and the Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT) were not sufficient to limit the great powers' thirst and desire for conducting nuclear tests. The Conference of Disarmament participants were of the view that nuclear weapons tests should be banned in the atmosphere, underground, under the sea and on the ground.²² However, a controversy remained that CTBT should cover the hydro nuclear tests or not because a small amount of nuclear energy is released during the hydro nuclear tests. It was argued that such tests are essential to keep the reliability and safety of nuclear weapons and should not be kept under the treaty text of the CTBT.²³

The US, on August 11, 1995, accepted to accede to CTBT and also made a similar announcement setting the goal of achieving a true yield zero CTBT. The US Director of Arms Control and Disarmament Agency announced that the US would rule out all the hydro nuclear tests even those that release a few pounds of nuclear energy. Russia also supported the CTBT in 1995 after a meeting between President Clinton and President Yelstin. In the meeting, it was announced that Russia supports the banning of nuclear explosions whatever the yield is. The implementation of the treaty was quite a difficult task because the ratification of CTBT was refused by the US Senate. After the Versailles Treaty in 1919, this was the first rejection of the US for not ratifying a treaty.²⁴

The US was an opponent to CTBT because the US wanted to conduct a nuclear test for the safety and reliability of nuclear weapons and for the production of small low yield nuclear weapons which are used in the battleground than the strategic weapons. The US also ignored the Stockpile Stewardship Management Program (SSMP) of the US Department of Energy for the preservation of US nuclear deterrent without further nuclear testing. Also, the US Senate refused to verify CTBT on which President Clinton said that “in my judgment the treaty is verifiable.”²⁵

The US policymakers were of the view that states should sign CTBT and should stop testing new nuclear weapons.²⁶ However, since the US has huge military-industrial complexes in the conventional and nuclear domains, it cannot ratify the treaty. Also, under the Nunn-Lugar Act, the US dismantles Russian-based nuclear weapon program in the post-Soviet Union states for which underground testing is needed.²⁷ The US wants to increase and maintain its quality of nuclear weapons and for this reason, the US is reluctant to ratify CTBT.

Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)

NSG was created soon after the nuclear tests conducted by India in 1974. The group’s main aim was to ensure the non-proliferation of nuclear technology and weapons under certain rules for nuclear and nuclear-related exports. The parties to NPT created Zangger Committee in 1971 to clarify the matters related to the export of nuclear material. In 1974, the committee established the definition and source of the fissionable material as per the IAEA statute and issued a list called the Trigger List of material and equipment for its production and processing use.²⁸

In 1976, the original members of NSG (US, USSR, UK, Germany, Japan, France and Canada) were agreed to the first version of guidelines which was accepted after being discussed with the other 8 members who joined NSG in 1976-1977.²⁹ These guidelines were to ensure the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and technology under the rules of NPT. Since NPT did not deal with the export controls of nuclear material, therefore, NSG was created. It has no legally binding credential and works as a cartel that aims to control the nuclear business within 48 nations. It also creates a class division between the nuclear Core and Periphery.

NSG was formed by the advanced nuclear-weapon states, rich in research and development. Since 2001, the NSG membership has been increased from 39 to 48.³⁰ During that period, NSG made efforts to incorporate more members to increase its outreach. In 2004, the US requested to rethink the issues and decisions concerning enrichment and export control policy. Furthermore, blocs have been created within the NSG that support their ally and membership for respective imperial designs and monopoly over the nuclear business and global nuclear regime.³¹

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

IAEA was created in the backdrop of President Eisenhower’s speech at the UN General Assembly on December 8, 1953. He called for the creation of an organization for

the peaceful use of nuclear energy to ensure that nuclear energy will not serve the military purpose. The proposal of Eisenhower led to the creation of IAEA which served for the civilian use of nuclear energy until 1978. The main purpose was to create an international agency and member states to make a joint contribution from their stockpiles of fissile material and natural uranium.³² The idea of Eisenhower did not work and it did not reduce the US and USSR nuclear stockpiles. After the demise of the USSR, the idea of stockpiling of nuclear material was revived and stock of nuclear weapons was stored under the IAEA scrutiny to ensure that it will not be utilized for military use.³³

IAEA was created to stop other states from developing nuclear weapons. However, in the post-Cold War era, IAEA was used as a tool to invade Iraq in 2003.³⁴ In the late 1980s and early 1990s, a report of IAEA concluded that Iraq was no longer near to become a nuclear-weapon state.³⁵ The threat perception from Iraq provided a legal ground for pre-emption; henceforth, the UN inspectors did not complete their report about the WMD and transfer of technology to Iraq or any other state. Even the traces of WMD were not located after invading Iraq. IAEA reports were not considered as a legal binding force by the Bush administration. The threat of nuclear weapons has provided grounds for a hegemon to invade Iraq for its imperial designs.³⁶

Nuclear Threat Reduction Laws

One of the important mechanisms in exercising US nuclear primacy is the Threat Reduction Laws. These laws are framed under the banner of the UN and are based on the threat of nuclear weapons. The key nuclear laws to be discussed here are the Nunn-Lugar Act, the Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM), Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) and International Convention on Suppression of Act of Nuclear Terrorism.

The Nunn-Lugar Act is aimed to destroy chemical, nuclear and other weapons, transporting, storing, and safeguarding weapons to be destroyed and establishing verifiable safeguards.³⁷ Ashton Carter, a prominent figure in maintaining the Nunn-Lugar Act, wrote to the congressional authorization to spend \$400 million and asked that the administration should assist in destroying the nuclear weapons of former Soviet Union states.³⁸ The program ensued in benefit for the US because it resulted in non-proliferation between Kazakhstan and the US. Kazakhstan eliminated 1,410 nuclear warheads from its territory and also destroyed and removed missiles, nuclear bombers and Semipalatinsk nuclear test site.³⁹

The US being a hegemon has started the PSI as a global effort to combat the illicit trafficking of nuclear material and its delivery system and preventing it from the non-state actors. It is an important effort to break the black markets and illicit trafficking of WMDs. If a state endorses to the PSI, it must have to accept the rules designed by the US as:⁴⁰

- Commitment to halt the indirect transfer of materials related to nuclear weapon technology to and from state and non-state actors.
- Develop procedures to share information with other countries.

- Strengthen the domestic legal authorities to facilitate interdiction.
- Take specific actions in support of interdiction efforts.

The countries which have signed the PSI are abided by the rules stated by the US.⁴¹ However, the US in this sphere acts as a watchdog over the states which have signed the PSI and keeps the information about their state affairs and issues related to the nuclear sphere.⁴²

After 9/11, the concept of terrorism emerged as a new discourse to the study of International Relations. The concept was not confined to the state-to-state level; in the nuclear domain, it was highlighted the most by the Bush-II administration. The International Convention on Suppression of Act of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT) was adopted on April 13, 2005. As per this act, the use and threat to use nuclear material and radioactive substance, toxic and dangerous properties along with the illicit trafficking of nuclear material and supply by a state to the other states, were prohibited.⁴³

The ICSANT was made to counter the nuclear program of Pakistan. Pakistan has not signed the ICSANT on account of its reservation in respect of the provisions relating to extradition and prosecution, the inclusion of NPT obligations in the draft convention, the number of required ratifications for the entry into force, and the legal definition of terrorism and its relationship to the anti-colonial and liberation struggles.⁴⁴ The laws are formulated by using the international organizations to counter the nuclear programs of the periphery states that are allied with the US but not in terms of the nuclear domain.

Disarmament and Extended Deterrence

The US policy of disarmament is to eliminate nuclear weapons from the world. However, the US has pressurized states like South Africa to roll back its nuclear program for its imperial objectives and monopoly on nuclear weapons. The US provided South Africa with nuclear technology for peaceful purpose but after its decision to make an atomic bomb, the international community and organizational pressure was held on South Africa to disarm and roll back its nuclear program.⁴⁵ The US lobby has contributed 30 to 60 percent to the decision to dismantle nuclear weapons once the threat has received. In 1986, the US tried to persuade South Africa to join NPT in some confidential meetings with US Ambassador Richard T Kennedy and South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha that President Regan and later Bush administration will restore the scientific and nuclear cooperation with South Africa after acceding to NPT.⁴⁶

The extended deterrence policy, under which the US provides nuclear deterrence to its allies, particularly, the NATO states, Japan, and South Korea, was applied to Israel in 1973 during the Israel-Palestine war and to Iran in 1979. This policy in the Pacific is to ensure that the US troops and its tactical nuclear missiles are there for the protection of its allies. The concept of extended deterrence jells in with the definition of neo-colonialism under which the US has indirect control and its military presence in the Pacific and Europe through its nuclear weapons. The grand bargain of disarmament remains questionable when the US extended deterrence policy comes into

play.⁴⁷ The policy of extended deterrence also supports US military imperialism through the use of nuclear weapons.

Regional Dynamics of US Nuclear Imperialism

The US Nuclear Imperialism is not only confined to states only. It has implications on the regional level as well. Since the atom for peace speech by President Eisenhower more than 2000 bilateral civil nuclear cooperation agreements have been signed between the states.⁴⁸ In most cases, the US transfer of civilian technology has resulted in the proliferation of nuclear-weapon technology, particularly, in the case of India, South Africa and Israel. India built its first nuclear reactor with the help of British supplied designs in 1955.⁴⁹ In April 1956, Canada supplied India 40-megawatt research reactor (CIRUS). The US provided heavy water to moderate CIRUS reactor to be operational in 1960. The Indian nuclear program was facilitated by the US under the pretext of peaceful nuclear cooperation. However, the temptation of the US for Pakistan's nuclear program was somewhat different from the Indian nuclear program.⁵⁰

South Asia (1974-2006)

Pakistan and India in the South Asian region are the nuclear-weapon states. After the 1998-nuclear tests, the US did not accept India and Pakistan as nuclear-weapon states, resultantly, economic sanctions were imposed on both states. These sanctions were forced under the Glen Amendment (section 102 of the larger Arms Control Act of 1994). The legislation, authored by Senator John Glen, specified that "when a non-nuclear-weapon state tests a nuclear explosive device, the US administration must impose sanctions on the offending country."⁵¹ The nuclear tests by India and Pakistan allowed the US to impose these sanctions for the first time. President Clinton reported to Congress that the US will impose sanctions on Pakistan and India as imposed by the law.⁵²

These sanctions were made to send a strong message to the South Asian countries for damaging the US interests, to have maximum influence on both states and to target their governments. The demands or the goals behind the sanctions included the cessation of nuclear tests in the future and signing CTBT without any conditions. Both states would not deploy nuclear weapons and cut off the fissile material production. Cooperation in FMCT was also required along with maintaining and formalizing restraint on sharing the sensitive goods and technology.⁵³

The US suspended foreign aid under the Foreign Assistance Act and the foreign military services were also unsuccessful under the Arms Export Control Act. The Executive Order was used to prohibit the US banks for providing loans and credit to India and Pakistan.⁵⁴ However, Pakistan was affected the most not only because of the 1998-sanctions but also by the US sanctions under the Pressler Amendment since 1985. As per this law, US aid and government-to-government military assistance to Pakistan would be cut off unless it was clarified by US President that "Pakistan did not have any nuclear weapon and the proposed US assistance will help in reducing the risk that

Pakistan possesses a nuclear weapon.”⁵⁵ During the Bush administration in 1990, the sanctions were placed on Pakistan declining the Pressler Amendment certification.

The 2005-civil nuclear deal between the US and India brought a new dimension to South Asian nuclear politics. The US proposed sanctions on India and Pakistan but the US Nuclear Imperialism was more dominant in bringing restraint to Pakistan’s nuclear program as compared to India. As mentioned earlier, India is not a member of NPT, therefore, the US amended its Non-proliferation Act of 1978 for its own interest. In this regard, section 2 of the Non-proliferation Act was amended.⁵⁶

It is in the interest of the US to agree on nuclear cooperation, as said in section 123 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, with a country that has never remained an NPT member with respect to civil nuclear technology. The requirements for such a non-NPT state are that it should never be involved in the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and nuclear technology. It must have a democratic system. India meets the criteria as identified in the paragraph of the Henry J, Hyde’s US and India Nuclear Cooperation Promotion Act 2006.⁵⁷ Pakistan, however, meets the criteria proposed in Paragraph 6 of the Act⁵⁸ but Pakistan is considered as a rogue nation by the US in the proliferation of nuclear technology.⁵⁹ Although India was the first to proliferate the civil nuclear technology for weapon production, that was not noticed by the US.⁶⁰ In the South Asian region, the US is trying to counterbalance China by supporting India and delineating Pakistan from the nuclear mainstream. In the case of NSG membership, the US is more supportive to India by providing a special waiver, while China supports Pakistan for its NSG bid.⁶¹ The US Nuclear Imperialism in the South Asian is for two reasons; first, to counter-balance China in the region; second, to intervene in the Indian Ocean and to control the nuclear business of this region while using India as a Periphery of the region.

Middle East

In the Middle East, the US Nuclear Imperialism is also active. The US counter-proliferation policy in the region is to invade in the shape of direct intervention in Iraq. The case of Israel is quite interesting, though Israel keeps its nuclear program clandestine. The US supports Israel’s nuclear program and is not in favour of making the Middle East a nuclear-weapon-free zone to protect its ally – Israel.⁶² However, Iran officially declared that its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes and it is not making any nuclear weapon.⁶³ Despite all this, the US imposed sanctions on Iran until the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) signed between Iran and the US, Russia, France, China and Germany, i.e., P5+1 states.⁶⁴

The US and France are fundamentally responsible for the development of Israel’s nuclear weapon program. Both remained the significant contractors in this regard. The US provided Israel with much of the heavy water and technical and financial assistance while France supported Israel with nuclear reactors.⁶⁵ The US was in favour of the division of Palestine and creation of Israel during the President Truman era. Israel was more inclined to build a nuclear weapon to secure their identity in the

Middle Eastern region. In the year 1960, it was made public that Israel's nuclear program was for peaceful purposes.⁶⁶ The inspectors from the US, Eugene Winger and I. I. Rabi, were invited by Israel. During the period 1962-69, these inspectors visited Dimona building but they were not allowed to go underground to investigate. However, according to their report, Dimona was being used only for peaceful purposes.⁶⁷ On the other hand, the report presented by the head of Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Science and Technology Branch, Carl Duckett in 1968, confirmed that Israel had a nuclear program and it was producing nuclear weapons.

The US as a superpower was to check the proliferation issues in the international system after being convinced by the CIA report of Israel having a nuclear bomb. The Symington Amendment of 1976 was also not applied to Israel. Although the Symington Amendment curtailed the US from supporting a state economically and militarily that has developed nuclear weapons, on the contrary, in 1962, a \$25 million deal of military expenditure was concluded between the US and Israel. The US justified this deal as a result of creating an imbalance by the USSR.⁶⁸

The Symington Amendment of 1976 was applicable to Pakistan and India after their nuclear tests but US interest did not uphold this law to Israel. Israel is protecting the US interests in the Middle East; hence, the US Nuclear Imperialism is for the states like Iraq and Iran. Iran has remained under the US unilateral economic sanctions from 1979 till 2005. However, after the year 2005, international sanctions were also imposed on Iran to curtail its economic position in the region.⁶⁹ The UN sanctions were imposed on Iran under the impression of building an atomic bomb which Iran has rejected over time.⁷⁰ Iran is also a member of NPT and a democratic state but the US has supported the Israel program in the Middle East, contrary to Iran. Israel considers Iran's nuclear program as a threat. However, Israel is more of the view to take preventive strikes against Iran and its nuclear ambitions. The preventive strike which Israel took against Iraq on June 7, 1981, destroyed the Osirak reactor.⁷¹

The US imperial policies in the Middle East are interest-based. The US supports Israel's nuclear-weapon program being a non-member to NPT while declined its support to Iran's nuclear program, which is an NPT member state. Israel is a key ally of the US in protecting its interests in the Middle Eastern region. The US, as a nuclear hegemon, utilizes the international treaties, non-proliferation acts and the global nuclear regime to protect its interests and its nuclear imperialism. In the Middle East, the US supports Israel to counterbalance Russia. On the other hand, Russia and Iran have close ties and Russia supports Iran's nuclear program. Therefore, the US plays alliance politics at the regional level to secure its dominance and nuclear imperialism.

Conclusion

In the global nuclear world order, the US strategy is to curtail the development of nuclear weapons by other states while keeping its eye on the nuclear business as well through its military-industrial and nuclear complexes. The international non-proliferation regime is created to intensify the US Nuclear Imperialism and nuclear monopoly on the technologically advanced states. The counter-proliferation policy is

adopted by the US to pre-empt and roll back nuclear weapon programs of other states under its threat reduction laws and treaties. In the comparison of Democrats and Republicans, the Democrats maintain their nuclear imperialism by imposing economic sanctions on the Periphery states while the Republicans impose nuclear imperialism through pre-emption, counter-proliferation, civil nuclear deals and through the military-industrial complexes. The role of alliance politics in the US Nuclear Imperialism is more active at the regional level to counterbalance its rivals systematically. These strategies are determining the influential role of the US as the sole nuclear Core and its Nuclear Imperialism around the globe.

References

- ¹ According to the World system Theory by Neo Marxist Illumen Wallerstein, the world is divided into Core, Periphery and Semi-Periphery. In which the Core are the highly industrialized states and controls the means of production, while the peripheries are the less developed states and used for raw materials and cheap labor by the core states. The semi-peripheries are the developing nations and mostly capitalized states which lie between the Core and the peripheries.
- ² The term "Means" here justifies the US use of nuclear weapon during the WWII and the use of nuclear threat as a mean to invade Iraq in 2003.
- ³ Johan. Galtung, "A Structural Theory of Imperialism", *Journal of Peace Research* 8, no. 2 (1971): 83.
- ⁴ Timo Särkkä, *Hobson's Imperialism* (Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, 2009).18-20.
- ⁵ Doyle M W 1986 Empires. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY Frieden J A 1994 International investment and colonial control: a new interpretation. International Organization 48: 559-93.
- ⁶ Burbank, Jane, and Frederick Cooper. *Empires in world history: Power and the politics of difference*. Princeton University Press, 2010.
- ⁷ Alex Callinicos, *Imperialism and Global Political Economy* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2009): 3.
- ⁸ Kwame Nkrumah, "Neo-Colonialism, The Last Stage of Imperialism" (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1965). p. 26-27.
- ⁹ "Basics of IAEA Safeguards," available at <https://www.iaea.org/topics/basics-of-iaea-safeguards>, accessed on 30 May 2020.
- ¹⁰ Lister Tim, "Turkey bought Russian S-400 missiles designed to down NATO planes. For the US, that's a problem", CNN, July 13, 2019. Accessed on May 9, 2020, Available at: <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/07/13/europe/turkey-russia-missiles-nato-analysis-intl/index.html>.
- ¹¹ Landler, Mark, Schmitt Eric "510 Billion Weapons Sale to Saudis Has Jared Kushner's Personal Touch", New York Times, May18, 2017. Accessed on May 9, 2020, Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/18/world/middleeast/jared-kushner-saudi-arabia-arms-deal-lockheed.html>.
- ¹² Bleek, Philipp C. "US finishes packaging Kazakh plutonium, reviews next step." *Arms Control Today* 31, no. 6 (2001): 27.
- ¹³ Rabinowitz Or, and Nicholas L. Miller, "Keeping the Bomb in the Basement: US Non-Proliferation Policy Towards Israel, South Africa and Pakistan", *International Security* 40, no. 1(2015): 47-86.
- ¹⁴ Adeniji, Olu. *The Treaty of Pelindaba on the African Nuclear-weapon-free-zone*. United Nations Publications UNIDIR, 2002.
- ¹⁵ Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury, "Westinghouse Hopeful of Signing Nuclear Plant Deal during PM Narendra Modi's Washington Visit In June", *The Economic Times*, 2016, Accessed on 23 June 2016 http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2016-04-21/news/72508471_1_westinghouse-npcil-washington-visit.
- ¹⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁷ Mark Hannah, "Eurasia Group Foundation 2019," World's Apart: US Foreign Policy & American Public Opinion, Accessed on 8 May 2020: Available at: <https://egfound.org/stories/independent-america/worlds-apart>.
- ¹⁸ David A. Koplow, "Parsing good faith: Has the United States violated article VI of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty," *Wisconsin Law Review*, no. 301 (1993): 301.
- ¹⁹ Ruzicka Jan and Nicholas J. Wheeler, "The puzzle of trusting relationships in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty," *International Affairs* 86, no. 1 (2010): 69-85.
- ²⁰ George Bunn, "The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty," *Wisconsin Law Review*, (1968): 766.
- ²¹ Edwin Brown Frimage, "The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons", *American Journal of International Law* 63, no.4 (1969): 711-746.
- ²² "Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization", CTBTO Preparatory Commission, Available at: https://www.ctbto.org/fileadmin/user_upload/legal/CTBT_English_withCover.pdf.
- ²³ Josef Goldblat, "TTBT/PNET—STEPS TOWARDS CTBT?" *Instant Research on Peace and Violence* 7, no. 1 (1977): 26-33.
- ²⁴ Jozef Goldblat, ed., *Nuclear disarmament: obstacles to banishing the bomb* (IB Tauris, 2000):129.
- ²⁵ Harold P Smith Jr., and Richard S. Soll, "Arms Control Association" Challenges of nuclear stockpile stewardship under a comprehensive test ban, Accessed on 4th April 2019 <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/1998-03/arms-control-today/challenges-nuclear-stockpile-stewardship-under-comprehensive-test-ban>.
- ²⁶ Frank N von Hippel, "The decision to end US nuclear testing," *Arms Control Today* 49, no. 10 (2019): 14-20.
- ²⁷ Jack M Beard, "A New Legal Regime for Bilateral Assistance Programs: International Agreements Governing the Nunn-Lugar Demilitarization Program in the Former Soviet Union," *College of Law Faculty Publications* 164, (1994): 895.
- ²⁸ Tadeusz Strulak, "The nuclear supplier's group," *The Nonproliferation Review* 1, no. 1 (1993): 2-10.
- ²⁹ Strulak, "The nuclear supplier's group," 8-10.
- ³⁰ "Nuclear Suppliers Group," Participants of NSG, Accessed on 8 May 2020, Available at: <https://www.nuclearsuppliersgroup.org/en/about-nsg/participants>.
- ³¹ Mark Hibbs, "Carnegie Endowment for International Peace," The Future of Nuclear Suppliers Group 2011. Accessed on 30th May 2020, Available at https://carnegieendowment.org/files/future_nsg.pdf.
- ³² David Fischer, *History of the International Atomic Energy Agency: The First Forty Years* (Vienna: The Agency, 1997):9.
- ³³ Fischer, *History of the International Atomic Energy Agency: The First Forty Years*, 15-16.
- ³⁴ Jacques E. C. Hymans, "Bulletin of Atomic Sciences," How the IAEA went from lapdog to watchdog in Iraq. Accessed on 8 May 2020, Available at: <https://thebulletin.org/2014/04/how-the-iaea-went-from-lapdog-to-watchdog-in-iraq/>.
- ³⁵ Haymans, "Bulletin of Atomic Sciences.
- ³⁶ Ahmed Ijaz Malik, "An Evaluation of Preemption in Iraq", *IPRI*, no. 8 (2004): 5-7, <http://www.ipripak.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/ipn8.pdf>.
- ³⁷ Paul I. Bernstein and Jason D. Wood, *The Origins of Nunn-Lugar and Cooperative Threat Reduction*. (Centre For the Study of Weapons of Mass Destruction National Defense University, 2010).
- ³⁸ Rich Kelly, "The Nunn-Lugar Act: A Wasteful and Dangerous Illusion", *Foreign Policy Briefing*, no. 39 (1996): 5-7, <https://www.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/pubs/pdf/fpbo39.pdf>.
- ³⁹ Simon Limage, "US Department of State," US-Kazakh Nonproliferation Cooperation 2012, Available at: <https://2009-2017.state.gov/t/isn/r/s/rm/199215.htm>.
- ⁴⁰ Mary Beth Nikitin, "Congressional Research Service," Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), Accessed on 8 May 2020, Available at: <https://fas.org/spp/crs/nuke/RL34327.pdf>.

- ⁴¹ "US Department of State", Proliferation Security Initiative, Available at: <https://www.state.gov/about-the-proliferation-security-initiative/>.
- ⁴² PSI, "US Department of State" <https://www.state.gov/about-the-proliferation-security-initiative/>.
- ⁴³ "United Nations" International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism 2005, Accessed on 14 April 2020, Available at: <https://treaties.un.org/doc/db/Terrorism/english-18-15.pdf>.
- ⁴⁴ Riccardo Tremolada, "Illicit Nuclear Trafficking: States, Non-State Actors and the Quest for Criminalization in International Law." *OGEI Journal (Oil, Gas & Energy Law Intelligence) Nuclear Law and Policy OGEI 1* (2013):12-14.
- ⁴⁵ Roy E Horton, *Out of (South) Africa: Pretorias Nuclear Weapons Experience*. (DIANE Publishing Vol.27 2000).
- ⁴⁶ Peter Liberman, "The Rise and Fall of South African Bomb", in. *Going Nuclear: Nuclear Proliferation and International Security In 21st Century*, 1st ed. (London: MIT Press, 2010), 278-282.
- ⁴⁷ Richard C. Bush, Vanda Felbab-Brown, Martin S. Indyk, Michael E. O'Hanlon, Steven Pifer, and Kenneth M Pollack, The US Extended Deterrence Policy Considerations and Challenges, *Brookings: Arms Control Series*, no. 3 (2010): 14-16.
- ⁴⁸ Mathew Fuhrmann, "Spreading Temptation: Proliferation and Peaceful Nuclear Cooperation Agreements", in. *Going Nuclear: Nuclear Proliferation and International Security In 21st Century*, 1st ed, (London: MIT Press, 2010), 119-125.
- ⁴⁹ Fuhrmann, "Spreading Temptation: Proliferation and Peaceful Nuclear Cooperation Agreements," 124.
- ⁵⁰ Fuhrmann, "Spreading Temptation: Proliferation and Peaceful Nuclear Cooperation Agreements," 122-123.
- ⁵¹ Feroz Hassan Khan. *Eating Grass: The Making of the Pakistani Bomb*, (Stanford University Press, 2012):89-90.
- ⁵² M. V Ramana and A. H. Nayyar, "India, Pakistan and the bomb," *Scientific American* 285, no. 6 (2001): 72-83.
- ⁵³ Richard P Cronin, K. Alan Kronstadt, and Sharon Squassoni. "Pakistan's nuclear proliferation activities and the recommendations of the 9/11 commission: US policy constraints and options," Library of Congress Washington DC Congressional Research Service, 2005.
- ⁵⁴ Cronin, Kronstadt & Squassoni "Pakistan's nuclear proliferation activities and the recommendations of the 9/11 commission: US policy constraints and options,"12-13.
- ⁵⁵ Daniel Morrow and Michael Carriere, "The Economic Impacts of the 1998 Sanctions on India And Pakistan", *The Nonproliferation Review* 6, no. 4 (1999): 1-16.
- ⁵⁶ Rajesh Kumar Mishra, "Indo-US nuclear deal and Non-proliferation." *Strategic Analysis* 29, no. 4 (2005): 612-628.
- ⁵⁷ Sita Ram Mishra, *US Nuclear Agreement for Cooperation with India* (New Delhi: Alfa Publications, 2007):205-208.
- ⁵⁸ It is in the interest of United States to enter into an agreement for nuclear cooperation as set forth in section 123 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 USC. 2153) with a country that has never been an NPT member with respect to civilian nuclear technology if:- (a) the country has ensured responsible behavior with respect to nonproliferation of nuclear weapons (b) the country has foreign policy in lined with the United States and have uninterrupted democratic system (c) implement highest possible protection against the proliferation of technology related to WMD (d) such country will support US in achieving its global and regional objectives of nonproliferation in countering terrorist groups that seeks to get access to the nuclear weapons and the means to deliver such weapons.
- ⁵⁹ Rose Gottemoeller, Eilene and Rebecca Longworth, "Carnegie Endowment for International Peace," Enhancing nuclear security in the counter-terrorism struggle: India and Pakistan as a new region for cooperation, 2002. Available at: <https://carnegieendowment.org/files/wp29.pdf>.
- ⁶⁰ Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, Comparative Analysis of India-Pakistan Proliferation Contours, *JSSA*, Vol. IV, No. 1:(16-18) Available at: <https://thesvi.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Dr-Zafar-Nawaz-Jaspal.pdf>.
- ⁶¹ Shamaila Farooq, and Saima Gul. "Bid for Nuclear Suppliers Group Membership: A Critique of Pakistan's Diplomacy." *Global Social Sciences Review* 3, no. 1 (2018): 324-338.
- ⁶² "US, Israeli regime main hurdles in establishing WMD-free zone in ME: Ravanchi," Mehr News Agency, November 20, 2019. Accessed on May 8, 2020. Available at: <https://en.mehrnews.com/news/152483/US-Israeli-regime-main-hurdles-in-establishing-WMD-free-zone>.
- ⁶³ Paul K Kerr, "Library of Congress Washington DC Congressional Research Service," Iran's Nuclear Program: Status, 2019: 3-5. Available at <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/nuke/RL34544.pdf>.
- ⁶⁴ Albert B Wolf, "After JCPOA: American grand strategy toward Iran." *Comparative Strategy* 37, no. 1 (2018): 22-34.
- ⁶⁵ Atiq ur Rehman and Syed Shahid Hussain Bukhari, "Israel's Nuclear Program: An Analysis of International Assistance," *Berkeley Journal of Social Sciences* 1, no. 3 (2011):1-4.
- ⁶⁶ Avner Cohen and Benjamin Frankel. "Opaque nuclear proliferation" *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 13, no. 3 (1990): 14-44.
- ⁶⁷ Cohen and Frankel, "Opaque nuclear proliferation" 21-24.
- ⁶⁸ Cohen and Frankel, "Opaque nuclear proliferation" 30-32.
- ⁶⁹ Chaim Braun and Christopher F. Chyba. "Proliferation rings: New challenges to the nuclear nonproliferation regime." *International Security* 29, no. 2 (2004): 5-49.
- ⁷⁰ "Iran has 'no intentions' to make or use nuclear weapons, Abe says", Al Jazeera, June 13, 2019. Accessed on May 8, 2020. Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/06/iran-intentions-nuclear-weapons-abe-190613064055043.html>.
- ⁷¹ Målfrid Braut-Hegghammer, "Revisiting Osirak: Preventive Attacks and Nuclear Proliferation Risks." *International Security* 36, no. 1 (2011): 101-132.

COUNTERING STRATEGIC COERCION: A CASE STUDY OF PAKISTAN

Shabana Fayyaz *

Abstract

In pursuit of security, states often employ diplomatic instruments to achieve desired outcomes. Coercion is the preferred modum of defense and diplomacy at the bilateral, regional and global levels. The strategic coercion embodies three factors: demand(s), time, and the threat of consequences. In response, a state can employ a counter-coercive diplomacy strategy relying on its political/social/cultural strengths, diplomatic clout, and innovative use of media (traditional and contemporary) to foster linkages within coercer's domain. Pakistan has been the target of strategic coercion by its neighbors, specifically, India, and the US in various instances. Often, Islamabad walked on the tight rope – trying to balance strategic national interests while facing coercive diplomacy. While Washington used a carrot-and-stick policy, Islamabad relied on asymmetric strategies to respond, often dealing with competing economic and strategic pressures. The present study analyzes the concepts of coercive diplomacy and security dilemma. Secondly, it theorizes a Counter Coercion Diplomacy Model and relates it to Pakistan's case as a targeted state. It does so by surveying US attempts at coercion and Pakistan's effort at countering coercion while advancing its strategic interests. The study concludes that when facing US coercion, Pakistan was able to effectively mobilize domestic and diplomatic tools to counter US coercion. Pakistan's prudent diplomacy allowed it to pushback coercive pressures emanating from the US and register its point across the US audience.

Keywords: Strategic Coercion, Diplomacy, Pakistan, US, Security.

Introduction

International security environment has undergone a structural transformation since 9/11. The emergence of new threats, particularly, those linked to terrorism has changed the way states perceive national security threats. Consequently, the concept of coercive diplomacy has been employed by scholars to analyze confrontation/crises between two or more states. Coercion is the threat of the use of force or other destabilizing measures by a state to force an opponent to make concessions or change its course of action. It is, however, not a new concept. Scholar Alexander L. George formulated it in the 1960s and since then, it has been applied to diverse cases, such as Vietnam War, Cuban missile crisis, India-Pakistan crisis in 2001-02, and North Korean nuclear crisis.

*Dr. Shabana Fayyaz is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Defence and Strategic Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad.

This paper focuses on the perusal of coercive diplomatic strategies vis-a-vis Pakistan by the US and India in many instances. It traces the concept of coercive diplomacy and also security dilemma. Strategic compulsions and weaknesses of a state often provide a pretext for strategic coercion against it. It, thus, surveys US attempts at coercing Pakistan and influencing its strategic decision. The study proposes a theoretical and a practical framework termed as Counter Coercion Diplomacy Model (CCDM) to be adopted by the target state. Employing this model, Pakistan's case in countering strategic coercion is analyzed.

Conceptualizing Coercive Diplomacy

Coercive diplomacy can be defined as the employment of threats and the use of limited force to convince an adversary to stop a particular course of action or rollback steps, it has already taken.¹ It also requires a credible threat backed by the demonstration of capabilities and even limited use of force to persuade the adversary to concede to demands.² The over-arching goal of coercive diplomacy is to attain one's objectives and make adversary concede without resorting to war by making the opponent believe that cost for it will increase exponentially if it does not concede. And at the same time, it is assured that there will be positive returns if the adversary changes course. Flexibility is, hence, built in the nature of coercive diplomacy as both threats and concessions – a carrot-and-stick approach is employed to convince the adversary.

From here on, coercive diplomacy can be categorized into defensive and offensive postures. The defensive variant includes strategies to “persuade an opponent to stop to reverse an action,” while offensive focuses on threats that can be “employed aggressively to persuade a victim to give up something of value without putting up resistance.”³ Beyond this, defensive variant can be sub-divided into three more types:⁴

- **Type-A:** Persuading an opponent to stop short of reaching its goal
- **Type-B:** Persuading an adversary to undo an action
- **Type-C:** Convincing an opponent to undertake regime change

These and other actions take place at two levels: First, broader contextual environment; and second, narrower factors directly related to the clash. The first category includes factors, such as the global strategic environment, nature of provocation and causes of immediate crisis, kind of multilateral diplomacy, and level of integration of the targeted state in the international community. Factors involved in the second level include asymmetric motivation of two states, objectives, leadership, escalation fears, international support, and ideas about end-state.

In international relations theory, the concept of coercion is firmly rooted in the anarchic international politics.⁵ As all states are responsible for their security and economic prosperity, hence, they pursue their national interests with all elements of national power at their disposal. Coercion and the use of force are one of them. Coercive diplomacy is part of the broader function of force. It is, thus, crucial to distinguish coercion from other uses of force, such as compellence, deterrence, and defense.⁶ Deterrence, essentially, is a strategy aimed at dissuading an adversary from pursuing a

particular course of action. Coercion is, however, a reaction to an action already taken by the opponent. Compellence strategies are meant to force an adversary into the desired course of action.⁷

Moreover, the success or failure of coercive diplomacy is directly linked to the strength of a political system in the target state. When a weak state is targeted, the coercer can apply three indirect strategies: First, employing a third party to influence leaders of the target state; second, extending support to dissidents in the target state with polarized political system; and third, supporting selected political groups in the target state to build domestic pressures on the leadership.⁸

In recent decades, preferred tactics for coercion have included aid and trade embargoes, economic sanctions, scaling down of diplomatic ties leading to a formal break in diplomatic representations, and jeopardizing standing and presence at international forums. From here, it leads to the imposition of arms embargoes and travel bans on leaders and policymakers of the target state. Often, it culminates in severing financial linkages between the national economy of the target state and international financial system aimed at the crippling financial system and its ability to do business with the outside world.⁹ In recent years, cyber-attacks against power grids and critical infrastructure have been carried out to coerce the target state.

Inevitability of Security Dilemma

The strategic coercion of a state takes place in an environment of the security dilemma. The concept of security dilemma originates from John Herz, who held that in an anarchic international system, states seek security. States acquire new capabilities and weapon systems to secure themselves. In the process, states accumulate more power. In turn, this makes neighbors and adversaries more insecure and they take counter-measures. It leads to a vicious cycle of security competition and power maximization.¹⁰ Between states, where the security dilemma is present, they pursue security as a zero-sum game which leads to further instability.¹¹ The result is arms race and military build-up often leading to the development of nuclear weapons and missile systems and acquisition of defensive systems like missile defenses.

South Asia continues to experience dynamics associated with the security dilemma. Two competitions are in full play, i.e., India-Pakistan and India-China. The US is also a stakeholder in this competition owing to the US-China strategic competition at a broader level. When China develops or acquires a capability in response to the US for enhancing its security, it is viewed by India as destabilizing. In turn, India builds up its defenses and capabilities to guard against vulnerability to China and Pakistan sees Indian systems as threatening. This can be termed as a cascading effect of security competition in South Asia.

Yet, India is a bigger country with ambitions to be a key regional and major international player. India has stated a threat perception from China in its quest for being a major power. Meanwhile, Pakistan is a medium-size state pursuing its security without grand regional and global aspirations. However, India's military prowess and

nuclear posture are directed against Pakistan. Indian military continues to update its war-fighting doctrines, i.e., Cold Start Doctrine to fight Pakistan. Similarly, Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) is being acquired.¹² These developments exacerbate the security dilemma for Pakistan and when it is coupled with diplomatic coercion it poses far greater strategic challenges to Pakistan's policy-makers.

Coercive Diplomacy against Pakistan

Pakistan has been a consistent target of strategic coercion and long-standing diplomatic campaign aimed at transforming the country's strategic posture. India and the US have been leading the strategic and diplomatic coercion against Pakistan often cooperating to achieve desired goals. Islamabad and Washington have differed over geostrategic alignments in South Asia, the on-going conflict in Afghanistan, and Pakistan's pursuit of nuclear weapons development. Moreover, Pakistan-US bilateral relations have also been a roller coaster ride. At times, Pakistan was considered most "allied ally" (the 1950s and 1980s) and at other times, Pakistan has been most 'sanctioned' country by the US. During the 1990s, Washington imposed several economic and arms-related sanctions over Pakistan's nuclear weapons program.

Coercion takes the shape of a demand to be met by Pakistan and is backed by a threat of consequences. Often demand is made with time-specific actions to be taken by Pakistan. The US policymakers employed a carrot-and-stick approach in dealing with Pakistan after 9/11. This became a particular pattern since the onset of the War on Terror in October 2001. Islamabad, thus, has been forced to chart its course while balancing its national interests with coercive diplomacy.

Pakistan's decision to join the War on Terror in Afghanistan against Al Qaeda can be partly termed as a product of strategic coercion by the US. President Musharraf's regime came under significant international pressure in the aftermath of 9/11 attacks. These ranged from the threatening posture of the US to the possibility of India assuming a lead role in Afghanistan and the fast-changing geopolitics of the region. Then US Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, told the head of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence: "You are either 100% with us or 100% against us. There is no grey area."¹³ General Pervez Musharraf claimed in his Memoir, *In the Line of Fire*, that Armitage told the Director General that "not only that we had to decide whether we were with America or with the Terrorists but that if we chose the terrorists then we should be prepared to be bombed back to the Stone Age."¹⁴ This was followed by a list of non-negotiable demands presented to General Musharraf, which included the following:

- Stop Al Qaeda operatives coming from Afghanistan to Pakistan, intercept arms shipments through Pakistan and end all logistical support for Osama bin Laden;
- Give blanket over-flight and landing rights to US aircraft;
- Give the US access to Pakistani naval and air bases and the border areas between Pakistan and Afghanistan;

- Turn overall intelligence and immigration information;
- Condemn the September 11 attacks and curb all domestic expressions of supporting terrorism;
- Cut off all shipments of fuel to the Taliban and stop Pakistani volunteers from going into Afghanistan to join the Taliban;
- Note that should the evidence strongly implicate Osama bin Laden and the Al Qaeda network in Afghanistan and should the Taliban continue to harbor him and his accomplices, Pakistan will break diplomatic relations with the Taliban regime, end support for the Taliban and assist the US in the aforementioned ways to destroy Osama and his network.”¹⁵

It was based on these demands that when General Pervez Musharraf addressed the nation on September 19, 2001, the following four reasons for agreeing to cooperate with the US:¹⁶

- Safeguard the cause of Kashmir
- Prevent Pakistan from being declared a terrorist state
- Prevent an anti-Pakistani government from coming to power in Kabul
- Have Pakistan reemerge politically as a responsible and dignified Nation.

The crucial point here is that the US forced Pakistan to abandon its earlier pro-Taliban policy in Afghanistan. Resultantly, when the US invaded Afghanistan, it was able to remove the Taliban from power in three months. Kabul was captured and a new government was installed. Though decision had far-reaching strategic consequences for Pakistan in later years, it was termed as a tactical move to Pakistan’s pre-9/11 isolation and economy towards growth and development in addition to denying India strategic leverage in the US-led military campaign in Afghanistan.

For the next few years, Islamabad and Washington cooperated extensively against Al Qaida in Afghanistan. The security agencies of both countries undertook joint operations to capture and kill Al Qaida terrorists. Meanwhile, the Taliban also reorganized themselves and by 2006, started attacking US forces inside Afghanistan. In tandem, terrorist violence also gradually increased inside Pakistan. Islamabad was forced to send military forces to the semi-autonomous region of FATA (now part of KP) near Afghanistan. In retaliation, local tribes and terrorist groups started attacking Pakistani security forces and civilians. The US raised fears globally about instability inside Pakistan. This gradually led to a divergence between Pakistan and the US on conflict inside Afghanistan and terrorism in Pakistan. From 2008 onwards, Washington began to blame Pakistan for providing sanctuary to the Afghan Taliban and Haqqani group fighting US forces in Afghanistan. Pakistan denied it, professing that it has been a victim of terrorism itself and doing its best to counter this phenomenon.

As national security interests of both sides diverged in the later years, particularly, after 2008, Washington resorted to a carrot-and-stick approach in its engagement with Pakistan. Consequently, US policy focused on granting India a larger role in Afghanistan and undertaking a troop surge to escalate fight against the Taliban. Concurrently, the US carried out unilateral drone strikes against militant groups and its

leadership inside Pakistan's tribal regions. Moreover, the US also pressurized Pakistan to "do more" against the Taliban and Haqqani network. Pakistan, however, resisted as it was focused on anti-Pakistan groups. In turn, the US withheld economic and security assistance, it had promised. It led to instability in Pakistan as Islamabad has been seeking economic and development assistance from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Even the transactional nature of the relationship was used as leverage by US policymakers against Pakistan.

Similarly, India has been employing coercive diplomacy against Pakistan. In recent years, the most sustained campaign was carried out during the 2001-02 military stand-off. India enjoyed support from the US and other members of the international community. India attempted to take advantage of the post-9/11 international environment related to terrorism. Pakistan also held its ground; however, with the passage of time, the crisis was defused and armies of both countries were pulled back from the brink.

Following Mumbai terrorist attacks in November 2008, India again launched an international campaign against Pakistan. Bilateral dialogues aimed at resolving outstanding disputes through talks were suspended. New Delhi linked the resumption of dialogue on concrete action against terrorism. Pakistan rejected such preconditioning of the talks. India also moved against Pakistan at various international forums to declare it a state supporting terrorism. Pakistan effectively countered it. Gradually, New Delhi moved towards supporting terrorist groups that were attacking innocent people in Pakistan. This was done to pressurize Pakistan to change its strategic posture. In tandem, diplomatic pressure on Pakistan was increased. The sanctions committee of the UNSC was repeatedly used by India to sanction Pakistani nationals.

Matters came to head when US President, Donald Trump, in a tweet on New Year's Eve in January 2018, accused Pakistan of "lies and deceit" while receiving extensive foreign aid from the US.¹⁷ Pakistan reacted by saying that all funding was accounted for and US President was bitter due to its defeat in Afghanistan. For months prior to this showdown, Washington had been forcing Pakistan to accelerate actions against terrorist organizations.¹⁸ Trump administration had earlier suspended economic and military assistance to Pakistan and conditioned revival of any foreign assistance to cooperation in Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) also formally placed Pakistan on its grey-list due to 'strategic deficiencies' in anti-money laundering and terrorism financing regulatory regime.¹⁹ Pakistan believes that it has been done on the behest of India and with the consent of the US. At the moment, Pakistan is engaged with the Asia-Pacific Group (APG) and FATF to address short-coming in its regulatory regime. A plan of action has been drawn and is being implemented. Pakistan has also frozen assets of designated terrorist groups and individuals under UNSCR 1267 and 1373.

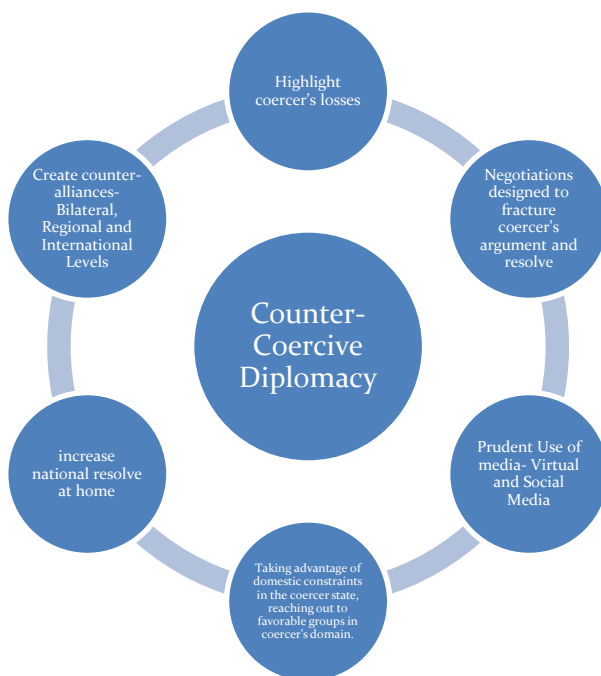
Counter-Coercion Diplomacy Model (CCDM)

Being at the receiving end of strategic coercion, Pakistan’s decisionmakers are faced with a question: What can they do to counter strategic coercion? This question is relevant for policymakers beyond Pakistan as well. Since strategic coercion as a policy-framework is applied in stages, it provides an opportunity for leaders in target states to come up with a response based on an in-depth SWOT analysis. This analysis should take into account the strengths of a state, its weakness, threat assessment, and opportunities available to policymakers for navigating a complex situation.

When coercive strategies are applied against a target state, coercer aims for the ultimate strategic objectives but follows a step-by-step approach. This gradual process is an opportunity for the target state to get a clear picture of the intentions of the aggressor and chart a counterstrategy. It also provides time to develop an effective response to the initial round of coercive strategies and in the process, the target state can increase the cost of continued coercion for the coercer. As the intensity and cost of coercion increase, it deepens the crisis between two states with conflict escalation becoming a possibility.

In CCDM, there is no sequential binding; each coercive move may reproduce a unique set of responses from the target state given its leadership’s calculation of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) in a given timeframe. The elements of CCDM are summarized in the following table:

Figure-1: Counter-Coercive Diplomacy Model (CCDM)



Principles of CCDM

Avoid War (massive repercussions) and Make Peace (foster understanding) through engagement with the coercer. That is minimizing risks to men, material and human aspects via counter-coercion mediums with the coercer or powerful actor.

Since the pursuit of national interest is at the core of every coercive and counter-coercive strategy, it requires rational decision-making. All nations pursue national interests without any compromise. Weak states, however, have to work hard for achieving their national interests in a single move. They can follow a gradualist approach as strength is relative in inter-state relations. Over the period, weak states can keep their national interests alive, build relative power, and continue pursuit of national interests.

Responding to strategic coercion is mostly a defensive act. Being subject to aggressive moves by opponents' forces, the target state is to undertake a rational cost-benefit analysis for its own sake. Facing with time-bound threat and with the increasing cost of the status-quo, policymakers need to focus on minimizing the damage to the national economy and keeping national cohesion. Meanwhile, in its external outlook, the state needs to convey that it does not seek confrontation. Foreign policy should focus on searching for common ground with regional states and major powers based on mutual interests and cooperation.

Strategic coercion is attempted when states do not have space for direct conflict but the threat of escalation is real. This factor entails certain uncertainty. Facing a prospect of conflict escalation, both sides (coercer and target state) lack full control over the response of the other side. Coercer cannot predict how a target state will respond. And, the target state cannot forecast how coercer will react to its counter-strategy. It is this danger that has the potential of stopping coercer in its tracks or even escalating tensions to an armed conflict, which will be an outcome that both sides would not have preferred.

A default response of the target state is to activate diplomacy and seek support from the state in neighborhood and major powers with critical interests in the region. The objective, often, is to divide the international opinion and bring to bear counter-international pressure on the coercer state. In this diplomatic battle, the target state has to navigate complicated alliances and intersecting interests and win diplomatic support against the coercer. In tandem, coercer will also be engaging in diplomacy to gain international approval for its coercive strategy.

In contemporary times, the role of media, particularly, social media platforms have become crucial in countering diplomatic and strategic coercion. In the age where states and societies are competing for narratives, it is the story about a country and a nation that has a multiplying effect during a crisis. Policymakers, thus, should prudently use media and social media platforms to communicate with international audiences and domestic constituencies. In current times, policymakers can weaken the onslaught of a coercer through effective signaling using new media platforms.

Pakistan's Strive for Counter-Coercion

In the face of consistent strategic coercion from the US and India, Pakistan's policymakers have pursued multiple strategies to gain necessary diplomatic support and space. To the US leaders, Pakistan made clear that its policy-change is permanent and it will not fight others' war again. In February 2018, then Foreign Minister, Khawaja M. Asif, categorically stated that "Pakistan has played a vital role in the war against terrorism but it cannot fight others' war on its soil."²⁰ Similarly, Prime Minister Imran Khan, responding to tweets of US President Donald Trump, stated that "Pakistan has suffered enough fighting US's war. Now, we will do what is best for our people and our interests."²¹ These consistent messages sent a signal to Washington that Pakistan is not ready to be coerced again and will put its national interests above everything else.

As the differences between Pakistan and the US deepened over the issue of terrorism and war in Afghanistan, Islamabad went the extra-mile in highlighting the cost it had paid in its war against terrorism. Pakistan held that it had suffered economic, military, and humanitarian losses. Islamabad also emphasized that it had conducted numerous operations against militant groups from its own resources. Given budget constraints and stretching out of Pakistan Army on two fronts, i.e., Indian border and western theater, Islamabad cannot go all-out against militants in Pakistan, at once. Pakistan's leadership committed a sequential strategy. Pakistan's sacrifices were acknowledged by the international community and leading major powers including China and Russia.

As for the conflict in Afghanistan, Pakistan committed to supporting Afghan-owned and Afghan-led peace initiatives for the settlement of decades-old war and strife. Islamabad vowed to support any peace process which delivers sustainable peace in Afghanistan. Pakistan professes that instability in Afghanistan leads to instability in Pakistan. To advance its position, Pakistan engaged with China, Russia, Iran, Turkey, the UK, and the US in holding various rounds of talks with the Afghan government and also the Taliban. In 2016, Pakistan was part of four-nation Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) which ultimately collapsed. Pakistan has participated in talks held in Moscow on Afghanistan. Pakistan continues to be part of the Afghanistan-China-Pakistan trilateral process. Pakistan continues to support direct talks between the Afghan Taliban and the US government in Doha. Facilitating and supporting these initiatives have given Pakistan a space to counter attempts at strategic coercion by the US. Even Pakistan's critical role in any peace process has been acknowledged by regional countries, major powers, and international organizations.

While the US in concert with India upped strategic and diplomatic pressure on Pakistan; in turn, Islamabad reached out to its friendly nations including China, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates. Continued engagement with these countries helped Pakistan in dealing with the consistent US pressures and demands to do more. An example is Pakistan's fight at FATF. While New Delhi and Washington sought to place Pakistan on the blacklist of FATF leading to punitive sanctions against Pakistan's financial sector. Islamabad with support from Ankara, Riyadh, Beijing and

Kuala Lumpur, twice averted placement on the blacklist. Islamabad was placed on grey-list and tasked with improving its anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing regimes. Islamabad developed an action plan and is working with FATF to implement it. China and Turkey, in particular, have called on to recognize Pakistan's fight against terrorism and not to politicize the process at FATF.

Meanwhile, internally, Pakistan's leadership – civil and military – built a national consensus on the country's relations with Afghanistan, India, and the US. Efforts were made for engaging discussions across party-lines. During the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) tenure, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif convened the All Parties Conferences (APCs) on important national issues to forge consensus. Given that major political parties have representation in the Parliament, it has helped in building a unified national position.

A crucial part of Pakistan's counter-strategy has been to highlight the futility of on-going US presence in Afghanistan. Pakistan's officials have stated on several occasions that the US expects Pakistan to defeat terrorism but it has not been able to secure Afghanistan despite spending blood and treasure running over \$1 trillion. At the height of the war in 2010, the US military had deployed more than 100,000 troops. With the most advanced weaponry, superiority in airpower, and backing of the world's most sophisticated intelligence and information gathering apparatus, US forces have been unable to defeat the Taliban. How can Pakistan deliver when the US has not made headway despite having abundant resources and technology at its disposal? When confronted with such stark truths about US failures in Afghanistan, US officials often evade the questions.

Similarly, Pakistan also engaged in the skillful use of traditional media and social media platforms to signal national resolve. Media effectively portrayed national message in the face of strategic coercion from the US. Policymakers also relied on media to signal to external interlocutors and build domestic support for Pakistan's position. Such use hindered US ability to put pressure by building a narrative inside Pakistan. Meanwhile, Pakistan also relied on social media platforms, particularly, Twitter to swiftly respond to tweets emanating from Washington, particularly, President Trump. Pakistan's leaders, government and opposition members, and spokespersons of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and military promptly react to any development related to Pakistan's external relations and put out the country's national position on such matters. Quick reactions to events help in setting the agenda and directing the conversations taking place in the cyber realm.

Conclusion

Strategic and diplomatic coercion is part of statecraft and inter-state relations. Every state employs variants of such strategies according to its capabilities. Similarly, responding to such coercion, target states also deploy counter-strategies. Literature has mostly focused on studying coercive strategies and its limitation has been ignored. Various crises between adversarial states (e.g., the US and the USSR, and India-

Pakistan) have been analyzed through the prism of strategic coercion. Meanwhile, less attention has been paid to the study of counter-coercive strategies. This paper has, therefore, proposed a counter-coercive strategy based on rational decision-making and prudent cost-benefit analysis. The model has been SWOT built-into it. As coercion takes place in a certain context and external strategic environment, this context and environment present strength and opportunities to the target states which can be exploited by a detailed analysis of their weakness and prudent threat assessment.

Pakistan has faced strategic coercion at multiple levels in recent years from India and the US. India-Pakistan relationship has been adversarial for decades. During post-2008 Mumbai attacks, however, India has relied on coercion to extract policy concessions from Pakistan conditioning the resumption of bilateral dialogue by first addressing Indian concerns on the issue of terrorism. Similarly, due to divergent strategic interests and outlook for the South Asian region, Islamabad and Washington have often been at odds. Employing a carrot-and-stick approach, the US has withheld approved economic and security assistance to Pakistan. It even suspended payments of the Coalition Support Funds (CSF), the amounts Pakistan has already spent and now is facing a crisis. Eventually, diplomatic coercion of Washington resulted in Pakistan being placed on the grey-list by FATF. It has added to Pakistan's economic woes amid an economic slowdown due to fiscal crisis. In response, Pakistan has focused on building its national resolve strengthening a political consensus on staying firm in the face of adversity. Islamabad has deepened its relationship with the Gulf countries and China to secure economic assistance and thwart efforts for putting Pakistan on the FATF blacklist. Pakistan also engaged in proactive use of social media and international media outlets to spread its narrative for building support. This led a pushback domestically and internationally against attempts to coerce Pakistan into changing its strategic outlook.

Effective counter-strategic coercion requires the activation of diplomacy by the target state and engaging in multi-layered response involving bilateral and multilateral diplomacy. Such multi-tiered diplomacy opens new avenues and adds to the diplomatic capital of a country. Like diplomacy, domestic consistencies also need to be taken on board. Building a national narrative is crucial to the success of counter-coercive strategies. It requires farsighted leadership and institutions' ability to undertake prudent analysis of challenges confronting states. In recent years, Pakistan has engaged in a counter-coercive strategy by activating diplomacy and building domestic consensus to advance national interests.

References

- ¹ Alexander L. George, *Forceful Persuasion: Coercive Diplomacy as an Alternative to War*, Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1991, p. 4.
- ² Gordon Craig and Alexander L. George, *Force and Statecraft: Diplomatic Problems of Our Time*, Oxford University Press: New York, 1995, p. 196.
- ³ Alexander L. George, 'Coercive Diplomacy: Definition and Characteristics,' in Alexander L. George & William E. Simons (ed.) *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994, p. 7.
- ⁴ Ibid, p. 9.
- ⁵ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979, 102-128.
- ⁶ Robert J. Art, 'To What Ends Military Power,' *International Security*, Vol. 4, No. 4, Spring 1980, pg. 5.
- ⁷ Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, New Haven, NJ: Yale University Press, 1966, pg. 69.
- ⁸ Alexander L. George, 'Need for Influence Theory and Actor-Specific Behavioral Models of Adversaries,' *Comparative Strategy*, 22: 2003, pg. 464.
- ⁹ Jentleson, B 2006, *Coercive Diplomacy: Scope and Limits in the Contemporary World*, The Stanley Foundation, Policy Analysis Brief, viewed 21 May 2019, <http://www.stanleyfdn.org/publications/pab/pabo6CoerDip.pdf>.
- ¹⁰ John Herz, "Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma," *World Politics*, vol. 2, 1950.
- ¹¹ Robert Jervis, "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics*, vol. 30, no. 2. (January 1978):169-70.
- ¹² Sumit Ganguly and S. Paul Kapur, *India, Pakistan, and the Bomb: Debating Nuclear Stability in South Asia*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2012, p.3.
- ¹³ Quoted in Owen Bennet Jones, *Pakistan: Eye of the Storm*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002, p.2.
- ¹⁴ Pervez Musharraf, *In the Line of Fire*, London: Simon & Schuster, 2006, p: 201.
- ¹⁵ Hassan Abbas, *Pakistan's Drift into Extremism*, New York: M. E. Sharpe, Inc, 2005, p: 217.
- ¹⁶ Quoted in Ahmed Faruqui, *Rethinking the National Security of Pakistan*, UK: Ash gate Publishing Ltd, 2003, pp: xviii-xix.
- ¹⁷ Donald Trump [@realDonaldTrump], Twitter post, January 1, 2018, 5:12pm, <https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/947802588174577664?lang=en>.
- ¹⁸ AP, "Tillerson urges Pakistan to step up action against terrorist 'safe havens'", *DAWN*, October 24, 2017, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1365745>.
- ¹⁹ "Improving Global AML/CFT Compliance: On-going Process - 29 June 2018", FATF-Gafi, June 29, 2018, <http://www.fatf-gafi.org/countries/d-i/iraq/documents/fatf-compliance-june-2018.html>.
- ²⁰ "Khawaja Asif, "Pakistan can't fight war of others on its soil," *Radio Pakistan*, February 20, 2018. <http://www.radio.gov.pk/20-02-2018/pakistan-keen-to-enhance-bilateral-relations-with-russia-in-defence-trade-sectors-fm>.
- ²¹ Imran Khan, @ImranKhanPTI, Twitter Post, November 19, 2018, 9:28pm. <https://twitter.com/imrankhanpti/status/1064556017881686021?lang=en>.

PRE-EMPTION AND COERCION – A CASE STUDY OF SYRIAN DISARMAMENT DISCOURSE

*Waseem Iftikhar Janjua, Ahmed Saeed Minhas and Farhat Konain Shujahi**

Abstract

The notions of pre-emption and coercions have been part of the offensive security policies around the world. These tools have been continuously applied in international relations by the relatively powerful against the weak during and after the Cold War, more specifically in the domain of Weapons of Mass Destruction. The manifestation of these concepts played a more constructive role in preventing an all-out war among the belligerents. However, the application of these tools against the same country has been comparatively an infrequent phenomenon which makes the Syrian case unique and a valid area of inquiry. Examining the Syrian aspirations of achieving nuclear weapons and the use of chemical weapons against civilians, this paper finds an interesting concord between the applicability of both tools. The research further concludes that pre-emption could only achieve partial disarmament leaving chemical weapons and facilities intact which had to be subsequently removed through coercion. Finally, the paper emphasizes the need for diplomacy and persuasion before pre-emption or coercion be employed.

Keywords: Syria, Disarmament, Pre-emption, Coercion, Weapons of Mass Destruction.

Introduction

For a long time, the greatest hurdle in declaring the Middle East as a Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone (WMDFZ) has been the selective implementation of disarmament regimes and regional realpolitik. While Israeli nuclear program is a taboo and remains completely defiant to any inspection or admission or denial, the US and the West are pushing other states to abandon their nuclear as well as conventional military aspirations especially if these programs are for military purposes. Many national armies in the Middle East especially those with robust standing and organization have been systematically stamped out. This process started towards the end of the 20th century. The 1991-Iraqi attack on Kuwait intended at “teaching Al Sabah and Kuwaitis an unforgettable lesson” by Saddam was a landmark in Middle Eastern history, however, Iraqi forces were penalized by the US mostly during withdrawal.¹ Subsequently, Arab Spring (2011) eradicated the Libyan Army, inextricably engaged the Egyptian Army on the domestic front and embroiled the Syrian Army in a sweltering

*Waseem Iftikhar Janjua is a PhD scholar at the Centre for International Peace and Stability, National University of Sciences and Technology, Islamabad. Dr Ahmed Saeed Minhas is the Pro-Vice Chancellor at DHA Suffa University, Karachi. Dr. Farhat Konain Shujahi is an Assistant Professor at the Department of International Relations, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad.

civil war. Moreover, in the greater Middle Eastern region, Iran was impugned for violation of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) in 2003 and slapped with multiple layers of sanctions.

Relatedly, international disarmament regimes have been working on disarming the countries aspiring to develop Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) including nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. However, disarmament regimes have also been criticized for being selective and biased.² Many nations have refused to cooperate with these regimes and tried to develop such capabilities covertly. Some of the countries were successful while others were coerced to stop and give-up their aspirations. Within this fragmented implementation of the disarmament regime, Syria is one of the most interesting and unique cases of recent history meriting valid inquiry for two reasons. Firstly, there has been an aura of mystery surrounding the Syrian nuclear program, part of which was pre-empted by Israel in 2007. Secondly, Syria has been a case of diplomatic coercion and it had to give up its chemical weapons stockpiles and become a 190th member of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Additionally, in the Syrian case, although volumes have been written regarding the civil war and the regime, a limited academic attention has been paid to the applicability of pre-emption and coercion, thus, making it a strong candidate for the analytical examination. There is a greater need to scrutinize the case of Syria to understand the application of these concepts in the 21st century.

Foregoing in view, this paper looks at the circumstances under which the Syrian regime agreed to not only become a signatory to the CWC but also agreed to give up the chemical weapons stockpile for destruction. Because of the volatile situation in Syria for the past many years, most of the academic endeavors and scholarly analysis have been placing substantial reliance on secondary sources. Methodologically, this is a case study, which focuses on two of the well-known international relations concepts – pre-emption and coercion. Therefore, this study contributes towards the existing knowledge by examining Syria as a unique case where the world has witnessed the manifestation and intersection of both these concepts. Most of the secondary sources have been used to develop and support the argument. However, for the understanding of the international disarmament regimes, such as NPT, CWC, etc., experts on the subject were also consulted.³

In this backdrop, this paper starts by examining the aspects related to the concepts of pre-emption and coercion in the context of international relations theory and security policy. The analysis also includes an understanding of NPT and CWC regimes. To build the argument, the next section delineates the pre-emptive case of Operation Orchard followed by its success in achieving partial disarmament. The case of coercion is then examined keeping the impediments of carrying out such an operation peacefully which resulted in achieving complete obliteration of Syrian chemical weapons. Before the conclusion, a few lessons learned through this case for the international disarmament regime have been tabulated.

Pre-emption and Coercion in the Security Policy

Pre-emption and coercion have been military doctrinal practices for millennia. These are the punitive tools in the hands of powerful nations mostly the nuclear states who decide to use them in line with the Rational Choice Theory. The danger of escalation and outbreak of an all-out war always loom in both options, thus, increasing the desirability of making the right choice. Despite the inherent risks, many countries opt for these tools to achieve favorable ends. Below is the hierarchy of these tools in security policies for military planners:

Figure-1: Coercion and Pre-emption on the Security Spectrum⁴

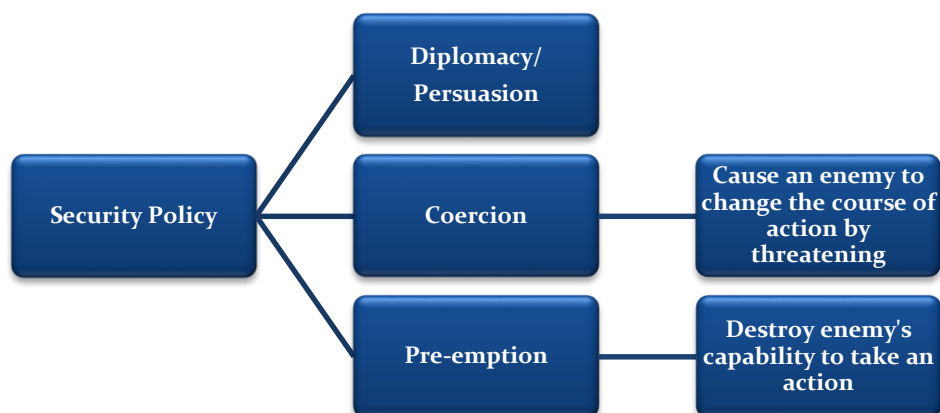


Figure 1 illustrates the concepts of coercion and pre-emption on the policy spectrum. Theoretically, pre-emption is considered as a military action taken by one country against another when incontrovertible evidence exists against the later likely to attack or harm the former. It falls short of an all-out war which is referred to as the preventive war. The 21st-century inclusion of pre-emption in the US National Security Strategy (2002) by the Bush administration brought this important military tool to the fore making it a subject of critical analysis. Also, concerning its applicability with international law, there is an ongoing discussion on the acceptability and justifiability of the pre-emption as a tool for the use of force.⁵ Robert Litwak argues that pre-emption has been one of the most revolutionary changes in the US military strategy since the Cold War dogma of the 1950s.⁶ Many US allies in the war against Iraq were skeptical about adopting such a threatening concept in the doctrine since repercussions could be larger than anticipation. The concept of unilateralism embodied in pre-emption was likely to be replicated by other states with such capabilities. However, the US assured the allies that this concept has always been a part of its doctrine but more importantly, the erstwhile and yet the significant concept of deterrence has not died and is still valid.

A nation realizing the enormous military might of an enemy might be deterred against any misadventure achieving the desired objective. However, in certain circumstances, a country may not be deterred, consequently, a more active form of show of force and existential threat – coercion might be another tool of final resort

short of war. However, many scholars continue to debate this concept in the cost-benefit analysis paradigm and argue that coercion may not work due to under or over-estimation of the belligerents' anticipated actions.⁷ This brief overview of both notions enhances the understanding of how states rationalize and react to the behavior of other states in their national security policy response options. These notions along with the concept of deterrence have affected the military calculus in a more pronounced manner during the 21st century. The next section explains why these two options are resorted to bypass more peaceful options of diplomacy and persuasion.

An Overview of NPT and CWC

NPT entered into force on March 5, 1970, and has 191 member states.⁸ This treaty is based on three main pillars, i.e., nuclear nonproliferation, disarmament, and peaceful application of nuclear energy. While members have been indulged in making unauthorized attempts for achieving nuclear weapons' capability, i.e., Iraq, Iran, North Korea, others despite being involved in similar activities were let off easy (South Korea) or dealt outside the NPT regime.⁹

Unlike nuclear weapons, chemical weapons have a long history of usage as well as control regimes. One of the oldest treaties on chemical weapons has been between France and Germany in 1675, when they agreed on the prohibition of usage of poisoned bullets.¹⁰ After the extensive use of chemical weapons in World War I, the Geneva Protocol was introduced in 1925 banning the Use of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or other Gasses and Bacteriological weapons for warfare. Further developments on the subject continued throughout the 20th century and finally on January 13, 1993, almost 130 countries signed up the treaty, which entered into force on April 29, 1997. As of the writing of this paper, 193 member states are signatories of the treaty. Syria became the state party on September 14, 2013.¹¹

CWC has three annexes: Chemical Annex, which lays down the classification of chemicals into certain categories; Verification Annex, which elaborates verification and inspection procedure for the member states of the convention and the operations of Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW); and finally, Confidentiality Annex that constitutes the standards for the release of certain classified information regarding national security obligated to be released by the member states to the convention and protection of such information. Chemical weapons are classified by their effect on human beings. Breathing is made difficult by Choking Agents, such as chlorine. Skin and eye irritation are caused by Blister Agents, such as mustard gas. Arsenic or cyanide-based Blood Agents act fast and are mostly lethal causing death within minutes and finally, Nerve Agents, such as Sarin or VX cause disruption in the nervous system.¹²

Syria is a non-nuclear-weapon state but it fostered an advanced chemical weapons program as well as interest in biological weapons.¹³ In the aspirational assessment, it does pose nuclear proliferation risk and is being watched by the international enforcement regimes. The civil war in Syria has been depleting its stockpile of the ballistic missile and other military capabilities. To show its commitment

towards nonproliferation regimes, Syria ratified NPT in 1969, CWC in 2013, and signed the Biological Weapons Convention in 1972 but not ratified it yet. The same is true for its signatures on the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

Operation Orchard – A Pre-emption on Nuclear Front

On September 6, 2007, Israeli Air Force jets attacked Dair Alzour at Al Kibar facility in Syria and dropped 17 tons of explosives destroying a nuclear complex without any resistance from Syrian armed forces.¹⁴ Israeli intelligence apparatus had been sniffing Syrian nuclear aspirations since 2001 and were able to obtain almost three dozen photographs.¹⁵ Besides a water pipeline running to Al Kibar facility from the Euphrates, a North Korean scientist by the name of Chon Chibu had also been spotted with Ibrahim Othman, the head of the Syrian Atomic Energy Commission. There is a contradictory account on the method of obtaining these photographs by Mossad, Eric and Holger in their article in a German magazine¹⁶ claimed that these photos were stolen from the laptop of a Syrian General, who traveled to London. ElBaradei in his memoir has also talked about the picture of a particular individual (who was also present in the six-party talks on North Korean program) spotted in the complex.¹⁷ Makovsky in his article has mentioned about the same photographs getting stolen by Mossad from Othman's laptop at his house in Vienna.¹⁸ The information, however, was perceived to be authentic that Koreans were trying to help Syria in building this nuclear facility.

The Bush administration was divided on destroying the Syrian nuclear facility and, in the process, implicating North Korea for aiding Syria.¹⁹ US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates wanted diplomacy to work and the international community to help stop Syrians from making this reactor hot.²⁰ Makovsky has pointed out a very interesting trend in the US foreign policy towards the Muslim world. During the discussion on attacking Syrian nuclear facility, Gates told Edelman (an Israeli Ambassador in Washington): "Every Administration gets one pre-emptive war against a Muslim country and this Administration has already done one."²¹ In his book *Duty*, Robert Gates has given a detailed account of the events leading up to the destruction of the Al Kibar facility and his refusal to get US involved in leading the strike.²² He admits, being blunt, in his remarks to persuade President Bush not to attack Syria. In his memoir, *Decision Points*, Bush has asserted that Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert requested the US to lead the bombing.²³ Dick Cheney, US Vice President, was the 'lone voice' amongst all advisors to Bush advocating the US to lead bombing.²⁴ Based on intelligence estimates, Bush refused to bomb the facility in Syria and said that "Israel did, what was best in their national interest. Olmert did not ask for a green light nor did the US give any green light."²⁵

As anticipated by the US and Israel, the subsequent events from Syrian side included initial denial followed by silence. Later on, Assad admitted that "Israeli aircrafts bombed a military construction site in Syria."²⁶ Having known Bashar Al Assad, Israelis had perhaps intelligently war-gamed the subject attack and realistically

anticipated that giving some space to Assad for face-saving by remaining silent would prevent him from retaliating. This case signposts the risk taken by Israel (whose own NPT and CWC record is questionable) in pre-empting the Syrian nuclear plant successfully. It can, however, be argued that the Syrian regime was extremely weak and incapable of responding both on physical and moral grounds.

Pre-emption vs Diplomacy – Partial Disarmament

Silence in the aftermath of the attack on Syria, Israeli as well as American sides reached the limits of non-cooperation with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). ElBaradei raised objections against many actions of both Israel and the US. These objections included non-provision of high-resolution imagery from satellites showing Syrian facilities, lack of cooperation between intelligence agencies and IAEA to stop the Syrian regime peacefully, repeated refusal on the provision of any worthwhile information regarding the existence of Syrian nuclear program before initiating the offensive strike against it. Resultantly, instead of strengthening the international regime, there was a smear campaign both in the US as well as Israeli media against ElBaradei.²⁷

Other problems faced by IAEA in ascertaining the validity of the presence of a nuclear facility at Dair Alzour included Syrian denial of such activity. Syria also refused to allow inspection of any site other than Dair Alzour insisting that those were conventional military weapon production facilities and remained outside NPT inspection mandate.²⁸ Finally, after a long delay, the inspectors were allowed and the environmental samples collected at the site later revealed that there were some traces of uranium on the site. Syrian denied any such activity and blamed the presence of such material due to bombing by Israel. Israel, on the other hand, refuted this claim.

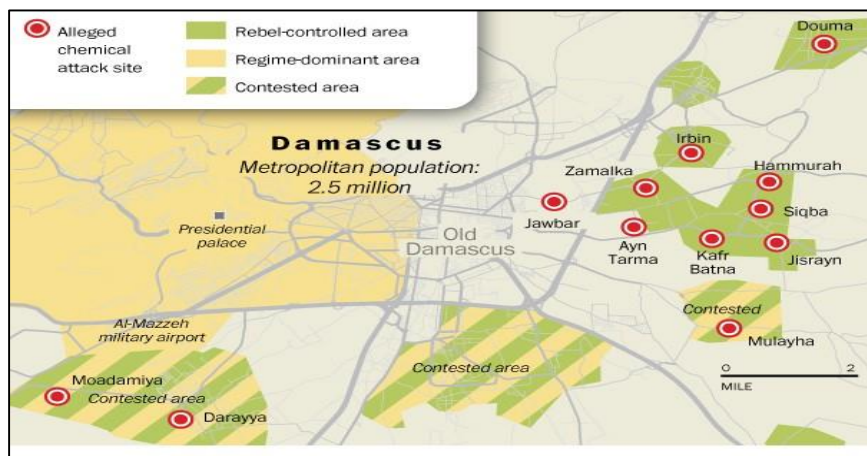
Such actions in international relations can be predicted to have serious consequences. The precedence was set and the use of force could be seen as a tolerable act by one country against another. Arguably, the US and Israel were unwilling to share information leading to such breach of NPT by Syria to IAEA, which meant that they did not trust it as an effective and efficient international organization. In the words of John Bolton, (US Representative to the UN): “The notion that Israel or the US would put their national security in the IAEA’s hands is just delusional.”²⁹ These kinds of statements are tantamount to weaken such regimes. Moreover, Israel besides being defiant on the repetition of such aggressive behavior probably calculated that any information sharing with IAEA could lead inspectors to go to Al Kibar facility in Dair Alzour, and after that, it would be very hard for them to takeover that facility by use of force. Also, the main motive for this one-sided belligerence by Israel against Syria was in direct continuation of Begin Doctrine, which says that “the best defense is forceful pre-emption.”³⁰ They had put this pre-emption doctrine to use in the Operation Opera with impunity during the 1981-attack and destruction of the Iraqi Nuclear facility outside Baghdad in Osirak.³¹ Ironically, as later events proved that Saddam Hussain only accelerated his quest for nuclear weapons after this particular attack which could be another unanticipated and undesirable fallout of this attack.

Despite best efforts, it took IAEA almost four years before they were able to muster enough evidence to declare the facility as a possible nuclear reactor. Syria had also been carrying out nuclear research just outside Damascus before this attack.³² Such unannounced acts are against the NPT clauses, thus, Syria carried out a violation of the treaty by doing this. It is still unknown if Syria continued with their program or abandoned it since they refused to allow IAEA inspectors to visit rubble dumping sites nor did they allow any other facility to be inspected. Since the US or any other country had not pushed for any further intrusive investigations on the matter, therefore, one can hope that Al Kibar was the only facility and that Syria has been completely disarmed on the nuclear front. The international community has very high stakes in enforcing nonproliferation agenda and maintaining its legitimacy and that can only be achieved through aggressive inspections and additional protocols. The bombing of Dair Alzour by Israel with possible knowledge of the US has been yet another risky incidence of aggressive unilateralism and ignorance of international law through the adoption of pre-emption.

Coercion – Chemical Weapons Fiasco

Amongst the countries who are signatories of CWC, Israel and Myanmar have signed the convention but have not yet ratified, whereas, Egypt, North Korea, and South Sudan have neither acceded nor signed the convention.³³ Egypt refuses to sign CWC on the pretext that their national security interest hinges on Israel signing NPT, while Israel refuses to sign NPT due to its national security concerns and declines to ratify CWC till all other states in the Middle East (including Egypt) agree to sign CWC. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is, thus, interlocked in a vicious circle of defiant states in the Middle East and fails to delink the chemical weapon issues from nuclear weapons.

On August 21, 2013, multiple chemical attacks occurred in the Ghouta area in the suburbs of Syrian capital, Damascus. The estimated number of fatalities caused by this Sarin gas attack on the civilian population was more than 1400.³⁴ Immediate and apparent blame was apportioned on Assad's regime by the international community. John Kerry, the then US Secretary of State, claimed in a press conference that "there was no doubt in my mind or in the mind of President Obama that Assad had ordered these chemical attack."³⁵ Before this attack, the Syrian government had been blamed multiple times for using chemical weapons on December 23, 2012, in the area of Homs and on March 19, 2013, in Khan al-Assel neighborhood of Aleppo and the Damascus suburb of al-Atebeh.³⁶ In these cases, the Syrian government denied any involvement in the use of chemical weapons despite the contrary evidence. However, in July 2012, Syria admitted possession of stockpiles of chemical weapons responded by President Obama with a metaphorical "Red Line" drawn against the use of such weapons.³⁷ Drawing this red line can be seen both as deterrence for Assad's regime, which in case of such use could have faced punitive military action from the US. Simultaneously, it provided anti-Assad regime elements operating inside Syria to use these weapons as the blame, in all likelihood, was to implicate the Assad regime.

Map-1: Syrian Chemical Attacks August 21, 2013

(Source: The Washington Post³⁸)

Within a short time, doubts were raised by multiple sources regarding the nature of chemical attacks in Ghouta blaming rebels sponsored by Syrian neighbors behind the attack. Such claimants pointed out that these were the efforts to remove Assad from the Syrian regime and orchestration of these attacks was foreign-sponsored.³⁹ Because of these contradictory claims implicating Syrian rebels and foreign hands behind these attacks, David Cameron, the then Prime Minister of the UK, tried his level best for punitive action against Syria but failed to take his parliament along. However, Russian efforts prevailed and Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov quickly got engaged in negotiations with the US over a diplomatic resolution of this issue. Russian stakes in Syria include arms sales coupled with their only warm water sea base in the Middle East located at Tartus in Syria. Lavrov proposed that Syria would place all its chemical weapons under the UN control for destruction and in return, the US would not opt for initiating military action against Syria. Resultantly, a formal request for accession to CWC from the Syrian side was received by the UN on September 12, 2013.⁴⁰

Technical Impediments

Destruction of chemical weapons is a highly technical process that is marred with multifarious difficulties including state willingness, availability of destruction facilities, involvement of high cost for destruction, and prevention of environmental and human losses as part of collateral damage, etc. It means that these weapons cannot be simply burned in open pits, buried underground nor can they be dumped under the sea. As a reference, the US spent \$28 billion in the destruction of their stockpiles and another \$10 billion was needed to complete the destruction.⁴¹

OPCW allows two technologies that are currently being used for the destruction of chemical stockpiles, i.e., high temperature “Incineration” and low temperature “Hydrolysis”.⁴² The first step in both processes is the separation of explosive material, chemical material, and the residual metal portion of the weapon.

After this, for Incineration, the chemicals are put into a furnace heated up to the temperature of 2700° F and for additional treatment into a second chamber that maintains 2000° F ensuring 99.999% destruction. The left-over oxides and gasses are removed by scrubbing and disposed-off like other industrial waste. The metal portion is decontaminated through thermal treatment and recycled.⁴³

Hot water is enough to neutralize certain chemicals like Mustard. However, for other chemical weapons combinations, multiple chemicals like hydroxides are used as reagents to dilute. This low temperature Hydrolysis process may take months for larger stockpiles to lose concentration and become waste called 'hydrolysate.' Resultant Mustard Hydrolysate or VX Hydrolysate is put through the second stage of bioremediation and micro-organisms are added which help degrade these Hydrolysates into metallic salt and water. Water is then evaporated and residual metallic salts are disposed-off much like other industrial waste. The metallic portion of the weapon in this process is decontaminated under 1000° F for 15 minutes and recycled.⁴⁴

Chemical Weapons and Syrian Dilemma

The civil war in Syria added multiple complexities to Syrian chemical weapons' destruction. First, the working environment was not conducive for OPCW or UN workers causing serious security concerns. Second, the success of the entire operation depended upon Assad's decision to abide by the treaty and give-up the entire stockpile along with deceleration of all storage as well as manufacturing facilities. Third, the possibility of chemical weapons or production facilities falling in the hands of rebels was very high exacerbating the problems in extermination. Fourth, the agreed time frame for destruction was too ambitious since storage and manufacturing sites were spread all over Syria and high dangers involved in moving these stocks to destruction sites compounded the situation. The agreed timeline given by OPCW for the destruction of production facilities was November 2013 and weapons inventory by mid of 2014.⁴⁵ The urgency in the destruction of chemical stockpiles and facilities became evident by the completion of the first of twelve-production facilities destruction in Syria by the OPCW by the end of January 2015. Fifth, the US estimated that if they were to get involved in the process of destruction, they would need 75000 troops for almost ten years to complete the process inside Syria.⁴⁶

It is worth noting that the biggest problem was that no nation was willing to allow these weapons to be transferred to their soil for destruction. By the end of 2013, the US Department of Defence prepared a specially designed ship named *Motor Vessel Cape Ray* with two chemical weapons destruction units and 45-men civilian crew aboard.⁴⁷ With the help of Danish shipping company and using Italian ports, Syrian chemical weapons were transferred onboard Cape Ray and the neutralization of 600 tons of Syrian chemical weapons was completed by the end of August 2014 with Cape Ray returning to the US on September 17, 2014.⁴⁸ For organizing a smooth operation and advancing the cause of international chemical disarmament, OPCW was awarded the 2013-Nobel Peace Prize.⁴⁹ Coercion worked in the case of chemical weapons as the US

has ordered its aircraft carrier to be moved to the Mediterranean in case Syria failed to comply with CWC.⁵⁰

Lessons Learnt

The Syrian case is unique in a way that the nation has been forced to go through the punishments including pre-emption and coercion by the international community on both nuclear as well as chemical weapons' fronts besides getting embroiled in a civil war. In the process, the international community has also learned multiple lessons that can be useful for future discourses of such political and military environments. First and the most important lesson is that diplomacy must always be given a chance. In the case of nuclear facility in Syria, the use of force was preferred by the US and Israeli policymakers. However, in the case of chemical weapons, Russian diplomatic efforts prevailed in creating a working space and achieving the aim of the destruction of weapons.

Secondly, a vital lesson is to improve effectiveness and intelligence provision to the international disarmament regimes by all the signatories. Efficacy of IAEA as an international organization, under the umbrella of the UN, can only be improved if all signatories assist IAEA in timely sharing of available information. Thirdly, while one nuclear facility has been destroyed in Syria, IAEA needs to increase its vigilance on the countries aspiring to obtain WMDs. Long-term monitoring and inspection plans are vital in ensuring that a country once implicated should not be able to proceed unobserved. Syria declined to allow IAEA inspectors to inspect any other facility insisting that those were conventional military arsenal production facilities. Finally, unilateral action by Israel with full knowledge of the US was a serious violation of International Law while international community's response was mostly muted. These points to a gap between the information sharing and utility of unilateral actions.

Conclusion

The second decade of the 21st century has been very challenging for the Assad's regime. Israel's unilateral action against the Al Kibar facility was a serious blow to the Syrian regime as they could neither admit the existence of the facility nor deny and resorted to silence. This event was followed by the initiation of the civil war in Syria, which destroyed the social fabric of the country. Whether it was Syrian army or foreign hands or the Syrian rebels involved in chemical attacks against the civilians, the unfortunate series of events resulted in more than 1400 fatalities. The situation in Syria has worsened since the disarmament. During his pre-election speeches and after assuming the office, President Trump's clear policy has been disengagement from Syria. Resultantly, the fight against the rebels, ISIS, and more than 200 other small and large organizations continue to be fought by Assad loyalists. In the entire process, millions of civilians have been displaced and have become refugees. Therefore, destruction of the chemical weapons could only be assured through diplomacy and persuasion.

References

- ¹ John Andreas Olsen, *Strategic Air Power in Desert Storm*, (Great Britain: Routledge Publishers, 2003), p. 36.
- ² See for example Mohamed ElBaradei, *The Age of Deception - Nuclear Diplomacy in Treacherous Times* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2011).
- ³ The authors are thankful to Professor Dr. Tughral Yamin from, Center for International Peace and Stability, National University of Sciences and Technology and to Professor Dr. Rizwana Abbasi of National Defence University, Islamabad, for their insight on the disarmament and on the Syrian issue.
- ⁴ Adopted from David E. Johnson, Karl P. Mueller, and William H. Taft, "Conventional Coercion across the Spectrum of Operations: The Utility of U.S. Military Forces in the Emerging Security Environment," (Santa Monica, CA RAND Corporation, 2003).
- ⁵ Walter B. Slocombe, "Force, Pre-Emption and Legitimacy," *Survival* 45, no. 1 (2003).
- ⁶ Robert S. Litwak, "The New Calculus of Pre-Emption," *ibid.* 44, no. 4 (2002).
- ⁷ Robert A. Pape, "Coercion and Military Strategy: Why Denial Works and Punishment Doesn't," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 15, no. 4 (1992); Branislav L. Slantchev, "Military Coercion in Interstate Crises," *American Political Science Review* 99, no. 4 (2005).
- ⁸ United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs, "Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons" *UN.org*, accessed on March 23, 2018, <http://disarmament.un.org/treaties/t/npt>.
- ⁹ Mohamed ElBaradei, *The Age of Deception - Nuclear Diplomacy in Treacherous Times*, (New York: Metropolitan Book Henry Holt and Co., 2011), pp. 194 – 218.
- ¹⁰ OPCW, "Genesis and Historical Development", *OPCW.org*, accessed on June 22, 2018, <http://www.opcw.org/chemical-weapons-convention/genesis-and-historical-development/>.
- ¹¹ *Ibid*
- ¹² *Ibid*
- ¹³ Arms Control Association, "Arms Control and Proliferation Profile: Syria," <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/syriaprofile>.
- ¹⁴ M. Zuhair Diab, "Syrian Security Requirements in a Peace Settlement with Israel," *Israel Affairs* 1, no. 4 (1995); Caren Kaplan, "Air Power's Visual Legacy: Operation Orchard and Aerial Reconnaissance Imagery as Ruses De Guerre," *Critical Military Studies* 1, no. 1 (2015).
- ¹⁵ "Air Power's Visual Legacy: Operation Orchard and Aerial Reconnaissance Imagery as Ruses De Guerre."
- ¹⁶ Erich Follath and Holger Stark, "Operation Orchard," *Der Spiegel* 45 (2009).
- ¹⁷ Mohamed, *Deception*, p.211.
- ¹⁸ David Makovsky, "The Silent Strike - How Israel Bombed a Syrian Nuclear Installation and Kept It Secret" *The New Yorker*, September 17, 2012 accessed on November 3, 2017, <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/09/17/the-silent-strike>.
- ¹⁹ David E. Sanger and Mark Mazzetti, "Israel Struck Syrian Nuclear Project, Analysts Say," *The New York Times*, Oct 14 2007.
- ²⁰ *Ibid*
- ²¹ Follath and Stark, "Operation Orchard."
- ²² Robert M. Gates, *Duty, Memoirs of a Secretary of War*, (New York: Random House, 2014), p. 172.
- ²³ George W. Bush, *Decision Points*, (New York: Random House, 2010), pp. 324 – 326.
- ²⁴ Richard B. Cheney, *In My Time, A Personal and Political Memoir*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011), p. 384.
- ²⁵ Bush, *Decision*, p. 324.
- ²⁶ Lyce Ducet, " Full Text of Interview Given by Bashar Al Assad to BBC", *BBC.com*, October 1, 2007, accessed on December, 7, 2017, http://www.presidentassad.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=127:president-assad-bbc-interview-october-1-2007&catid=9&Itemid=472.
- ²⁷ Mohamed, *Deception*, pp. 194 – 218.
- ²⁸ Peter Crail, "Syria Allows Uranium Plant Inspection," Arms Control Association, <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2011-04/syria-allows-uranium-plant-inspection>.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.* p.208.
- ³⁰ Dan Williams, "Insight: Has Iran ended Israel's Begin Doctrine?", *Reuters*, November 7, 2011, accessed on December 4, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/11/07/us-israel-militarydoctrine-idUSTRE7A61SA20111107>.
- ³¹ Amos Perlmutter, Michael I. Handel, Uri Bar-Joseph, *Two Minutes over Baghdad*. (UK: Vallentine Mitchell & Co Ltd, 1982).
- ³² Gregory L. Schulte (2010) Investigating The Rubble Of Syria's Secret Reactor, *The Non-proliferation Review*, Volume 17, Issue 2, June, 16, 2010, pp. 403-417, accessed on February 22, 2018, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10736700.2010.485437#.VTarAiGqqko>.
- ³³ OPCW, "Non Member States", *OPCW.Org*, accessed on March 22, 2018, <http://www.opcw.org/about-opcw/non-member-states/>.
- ³⁴ Martin Chulov, Mona Mahmood and Ian Sample, " Syria conflict: chemical weapons blamed as hundreds reported killed", *Guardian*, August 22, 2013, accessed on April 4, 2018, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/aug/21/syria-conflict-chemical-weapons-hundreds-killed>.
- ³⁵ Joby Warrick, "More than 1,400 killed in Syrian chemical weapons attack, U.S. says", *The Washington Post*, August 30, 2013, accessed on April 4, 2018, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/nearly-1500-killed-in-syrian-chemical-weapons-attack-us-says/2013/08/30/b2864662-1196-11e3-85b6-d27422650fd5_story.html.

- ³⁶ Daryl Kimball, "Timeline of Syrian Chemical Weapons Activity, 2012-2014", *Arms Control Association*, accessed on April 5, 2018, <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Timeline-of-Syrian-Chemical-Weapons-Activity>.
- ³⁷ Robert Farley, "Obama's Blurry Red Line", *FactCheck.org*, September 6, 2013, accessed on April 4, 2018, <http://www.factcheck.org/2013/09/obamas-blurry-red-line/>.
- ³⁸ The alleged chemical attack sites in Damascus, *The Washington Post*, available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/the-alleged-chemical-attack-sites-in-damascus/2013/08/30/9ec4a71e-11a4-11e3-b4cb-fd7ce041d814_graphic.html, accessed on November 3, 2018.
- ³⁹ Brad Plumer, "Everything you need to know about Syria's chemical weapons" September 5, 2013, accessed on April 3, 2018, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2013/09/05/everything-you-need-to-know-about-syrias-chemical-weapons/> also see Hannah Allam and Mark Seibel, "To Some US case for Syrian gas attack, strike has too many holes", *McClatchy DC*, September 2, 2013 accessed on March 29, 2018, <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2013/09/02/201027/to-some-us-case-for-syrian-gas.html#.Uinw-tJeaSo> , also see Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya, "Saudi Arabia's 'Chemical Bandar' behind the Syrian chemical attacks?", *RT.com*, September 05, 2013, accessed on March 29, 2018, <http://rt.com/op-edge/saudi-chemical-behind-syrian-attack-421/> , also see Christof Lehmann, "Top US and Saudi Officials responsible for Chemical Weapons in Syria", *nsnbc International*, October 7, 2015, accessed on March 29, 2018, <http://nsnbc.me/2013/10/07/top-us-and-saudi-officials-responsible-for-chemical-weapons-in-syria/>.
- and Dale Gavlak and Yahya Ababneh, "EXCLUSIVE: Syrians In Ghouta Claim Saudi-Supplied Rebels Behind Chemical Attack", August 29, 2013, *Mint Press News*, accessed on March 29, 2018, <http://www.mintpressnews.com/witnesses-of-gas-attack-say-saudis-supplied-rebels-with-chemical-weapons/168135/>
- ⁴⁰ Kimball, "Timeline".
- ⁴¹ James Lewis, "Fact Sheet: Chemical Weapons and Their Destruction", *The Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation*, accessed on April 5, 2018, http://armscontrolcenter.org/issues/biochem/fact_sheet_cw/.
- ⁴² Patrick Di Justo, "How to Destroy a Stockpile of Chemical Weapons", *The New Yorker*, November 13, 2013, accessed on April 5, 2018, <http://www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/how-to-destroy-a-stockpile-of-chemical-weapons>.
- ⁴³ National Research Council, "Review and Evaluation of Alternative Chemical Disposal Technologies", National Academy Press, Washington, D.C., 1996.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid.
- ⁴⁵ Julian Borger, "Syria given November deadline to destroy all chemical weapons facilities", *The Guardian*, September 27, 2013, accessed on April 5, 2018, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/27/syria-deadline-destroy-chemical-weapons-november>.
- ⁴⁶ Greg Myre, "Lessons From Libya On How To Destroy Chemical Weapons", *NPR.org*, September 11, 2013, accessed on April 5, 2018, <http://www.npr.org/blogs/parallels/2013/09/11/221337548/lessons-from-libya-on-how-to-destroy-chemical-weapons>.
- ⁴⁷ Cheryl Pellerin, "DoD Mobile Chemical-agent Destruction System Wins U.K. Award", *US Department of Defence*, December 12, 2014, accessed on April 5, 2018, <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=123825>.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid.
- ⁴⁹ "The Nobel Peace Prize 2013 - Press Release", *Nobelprize.org*, October 11, 2013, accessed on 5 Apr 2018, http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2013/press.html.
- ⁵⁰ BBC, "Us President Obama: 'No Decision yet' on Syria Strike," <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-23875121>.

US SINUSOID POLICIES TOWARDS PAKISTAN: INFLUENCING PAK-CHINA RELATIONS

*Ibtisam Butt and Safdar Ali Shirazi**

Abstract

Asia has been benefiting enormously from globalization but also encapsulates many of the world's problems. Pakistan being strategically positioned in Asia has become a lucrative platform for moulding economic and strategic gains on any corner, where the competition of becoming superpower has its own objectives and goals. China being influenced by a strong economic boost has a hard-hitting impact across the globe, thus, making market competitors worried about their investment. There are vital signs that this vibrant and diverse region can work together and rise to offer some of the solutions. The US being a global economic power cannot afford to lose its dominance and hegemony, particularly, in Asia; however, it finds imbalances in terms of trade, market competition, and enormous economic threat from China. There is a need of putting a rest situation in Kabul for which the US cannot wish away the geopolitical importance of Pakistan. This paper, therefore, looks deeply into the blending policies of the US towards Pakistan amid China's growing economic influence worldwide. It also highlights that Pakistan needs to create a balance by defining a formula for having a sound relationship internationally without compromising its national interest.

Keywords: Pakistan, China, CPEC, Economy, Globalization.

Introduction

The potential economic race between the US and China has made the South Asian region a lucrative platform for the series of investments in terms of diplomatic and trade relations. Pakistan being the 5th largest country in terms of population and strategically positioned in the subcontinent with a powerful army having nuclear capability, becomes significant for the US in terms of economic and diplomatic relations. Pakistan claims to be the US largest export hub, whereas, China is Pakistan's largest import partner. The US considers Pakistan as a favorable market place for various types of investment due to favorable demographics, low labor costs, and natural resources; however, mutual trust and real trade investment barriers are the signs which create a halt in terms of economic development into the Asian markets and growing businesses in Pakistan.

The Chinese economy in the last four decades has considerably shifted from agriculture to industrial power and showing an upward trend. With China's incredible economic development, average income has grown nine-fold since 1990 and around 800

*Dr. Ibtisam Butt is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Geography, University of the Punjab, Lahore. Dr. Safdar Ali Shirazi is the Chairman of Department of Geography, University of the Punjab, Lahore.

million people were taken out of poverty. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Chinese contribution to global growth will reach 28% by 2023.¹ This has become a reason for worries of competitors across the world as China has not only established a strong foothold in Asia but its market worth is also being acknowledged all over the international markets. Pakistan considers China her strong ally and it has proven on many occasions where China unilaterally supported Pakistan, especially, when Pakistan expecting more support from the rest of the world. In the context of close ties between Pakistan and China, US policies come up with the drastic shift as it may create a challenge for the US to cease their investment in the subcontinent.²

Since the last two decades, the relationship between the US and Pakistan has been on fixation and mismanagement mode. The basis of this mismanagement rooted in the incident of 9/11. Many occasions where the efforts of Pakistan for the fight against terrorism have been recognized by the US and suddenly abrupt change of statements came out from White House. The US must recognize that Pakistan has been seriously affected and facing security and economic challenges due to the Afghan war. The US Department of Trade 2018-statistics shows that the US-Pakistan trade reached out a long record of \$6.6 billion and this is an increase of about 4 percent as compared to previous years.³ In the past, when relations between Pakistan and the US worsened, the diplomatic dialogues between both countries kept moving. There is a need for the realization that the US policy is always in the best interest of no one except the US herself.

After the 9/11 incident, the US initiated a war against terrorism and used the land of Pakistan for administrative support to its armed forces stationed in Afghanistan.⁴ However, the relationship between Pakistan and the US became more complicated over time.⁵ The US frequent acknowledgment to fight against terrorism and sometimes do more policies created the destabilizing situation for Pakistan and tend Pakistan to realize that these ups and downs will be a constant factor unless there is a need to draw boundaries. China's close ties with Pakistan and initialization of various projects in Pakistan have become a source of worry for the US to revive her policy again, which is a sudden shift. Although there is a vast space in terms of Pak-US relations, this relationship cannot end. It is one of the complex relationships that occur bilaterally, regionally, and globally.

Trump Vision for South Asian Region

In August 2019, President Donald Trump described the US policy for South Asia which involved more US troops for Afghanistan while pressurizing Pakistan to “do more” or facing the consequences.⁶ The ultimate aim of this policy was to extricate NATO forces from Afghanistan but the US knew that it would create uncertainty in the region. India and Afghanistan welcomed the policy, however, it led Pakistan to be portrayed as a safe haven for terrorists and enhancing the role of India for the peace process in Afghanistan. India and Afghanistan have also signed various agreements of a strategic partnership with the assistance of the US which became a concern for Pak-US relations. The US put constant pressure on Pakistan through the United Nations

Security Council Resolutions for taking concrete measures against terrorism, whereas, Pakistan played a significant role in holding US-Taliban talks in Doha for the extrication of US troops and making Afghanistan free from terrorism. However, all these efforts of Pakistan bringing the Afghan Taliban on the negotiating table remained unacknowledged.

Indian Perspective in South Asian

On the other hand, India has become the arch-rival of Pakistan and left no way to ditch or let down Pakistan at any stage. The underlying bone of contention between India and Pakistan remains the dispute of Kashmir. On August 5, 2019, the Government of India abrogated Articles 370 and 35(A) in respect of the Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK). Article 35A of the Indian Constitution was to empower the Jammu and Kashmir state's legislature to define "permanent residents" of the state and provided special rights and privileges to them. This constitutional order (application to Jammu and Kashmir) was issued by the President of India on May 14, 1954 under Article 370. The state of Jammu and Kashmir defined these privileges to include the ability to purchase land and unmovable property, the ability to vote and contest elections, seeking government employment, and availing other state benefits, such as higher education and healthcare. Non-permanent residents of the state, even if they were Indian citizens, were not entitled to these privileges⁷. The abrogation of Article 370 heated the crisis between Pakistan and India. China also condemned the atrocities imposed on IOJK as it was against human rights.

India is more inclined towards the US policies, and thinks of becoming a regional power in Asia and for that matter US-India bilateral trade is quite sound than any other country in Asia. India feels to create dominance in the region by offering full support to the US irrespective it poses a threat to other countries. The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan, while giving an interview to Aljazeera TV channel said that if the dispute of Kashmir will not be resolved, it will end up in a devastating war between Pakistan and India.⁸ Pakistan ruled out the possibility of dialogues and downgraded the bilateral trade with India. The US role in this long-awaited dispute between Pakistan and India has always come up with passive posture in resolving the issue.

The US policies have been always hybrid in nature towards Pakistan. Pakistan proved to be one of the strongest allies for the US but the unknown mistrust from the US side always let India intervene for gaining trust and putting endeavor for spoiling Pakistan's reputation in the international community. The prime goal of Trump administration is that every policy should serve the interests of the US directly. The strategic partnership of the US and India poses a serious threat to Pakistan and China in the region and further leading to the polarization in the Middle East. The fact cannot be denied that Central Asia and South Asia is the continuous evolution of alliances. In terms of US invasion in Afghanistan, a series of alliances was made to protect sovereignty in Asia. Hence, the US assumes that the shift of economic supremacy is being inclined in the Asian continent.

CPEC- Strategic Ties between Pakistan and China

The US thinks of China as an emerging strategic stakeholder in the geopolitical environment of the world. Another alarming issue for the US is the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) agreement, which is opening the new economic doors not only for Pakistan but for the entire region in a considerable size. It has great economic potential for Pakistan regionally as far as globally. CPEC is a part of China's "One Belt, One Road" project and connection of two major economic corridors, the Silk Road Economic Belt and the Southeast Asian Maritime. It includes infrastructure development, energy projects, industrialization, and the extension and upturn of Gwadar Port.⁹

China and Pakistan have a significant relationship with each other, though, the national interest could not be denied. China is stepping up to stand with Pakistan in its rivalry of becoming an economic superpower. Therefore, CPEC is a megaproject that will make ease for both countries to trade. It is one of the most significant economic projects launched in Pakistan to hold the hegemony on the economy of the whole world. India being a rival of Pakistan has never intended to be a good well-wisher for this project and never appreciated this project. However, in the longer run, it will undoubtedly serve a good means of economic trade for India as well. India assumes that this project carries negative implications for her and the US, which is contributing a mere reason for Indo-US relations stronger at a considerable high rate. With the development of CPEC, India signed an agreement with Iran. On the other end, the US is also against the CPEC progression and claims that the area of CPEC is disputed. Russia is also in the favor of CPEC as Russians are endeavoring to enter the world stage for its national interest and overall security of the region. It is considered as a mere need of Pakistan to develop good relations with the international community but this cannot be done without any strong ally like China, the US and Russia. It is also a reality that the US and India are not in the favor of CPEC development. The US knows the fact that china's economy is growing day by day and Chinese products are capturing markets worldwide. CPEC is, therefore, an excellent opportunity for Pakistan's economic progression with overall regional development. The US government should realize that its acceptance to the CPEC project can transform this belt beneficial for all stakeholders and so on.

Threat of Foreign Intervention

China's rapid economic growth is increasing its competition with technology exporters across the globe but its domestic market has been acknowledged and reflected in the production of previously imported components. China also perceives a serious threat from India jeopardizing the CPEC project and senses the alignment of many extra-regional powers to target this project. Chinese believe that the foreign intervention in CPEC is only the intent of making this project impotent to finally create a deadlock for the progression of the Chinese fast-growing economy. The US is using World Bank and IMF as means to put its political hegemony and pressure on Pakistan, which has been a common practice of the US to put all on board with her terms and

conditions. The Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has cautioned against any IMF bailout for Pakistan that would pay off Chinese loans to Pakistan. Categorically, they instructed not to release funds that have any direct or indirect linkage with CPEC or with China.¹⁰ The US wants Pakistan to guarantee that there will not be any transfer of funds to China. The Pak-US relations always remain in hot water. Both countries remain cooperative and conflictive at the same time. The reason behind this uncertainty in bilateral relations could be a keen eye of Indian diplomats. However, the recent years have witnessed a better relationship between both countries as the US is looking at its policies toward Pakistan separately.¹¹

US Assistance to Pakistan

The end of the Cold War left terrorism as an aftershock and it was used as an instrument by non-state actors to achieve their objectives. The strategies of the US after the Cold War were aggressive instead of addressing the causes of frustration. In 2017, after a continuous failure to produce victory in Afghan crises, President Donald Trump gave remarks in his speech on the strategy in Afghanistan and South Asia that “our nation must seek an honorable and enduring outcome worthy of tremendous sacrifices that have been made especially sacrifices of lives deserve a plan of the victor to fight and win.”¹² The US delineated the strategy for Afghanistan and South Asia and gave a high-flying role to India putting Pakistan passive in all means and accusing Pakistan to let the terrorists play their game from the land of Pakistan.

A similar case is found regarding Pak-US relations as the main characteristic of bilateralism is to ensure the country’s national interest. The foremost things that take place in any bilateral relationship are economic alliances, security, industrial, and political matters but in the case of Pakistan, it has been denied full US-support despite backing US policies in the region. The US showed a dual face in many cases and this goes to worst now. The Center for Global Development shows that nearly \$67 billion were obligated to Pakistan from 1951 to 2011. This debt has shifted the geopolitical interests in the region. In the 1990s, the US stopped aid entirely and closed all the doors of USAID offices.

Financial aid by the US rose higher in three eras: first, it was after independence related to mutual defense agreement; second, during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan; and third, after 9/11 when it flew high with a \$ 1 billion debt relief. In between, when the US found Pakistan against the implementation of her policies, they exerted heavy pressure on Pakistan to move forward.¹³ In 2009, the US renewed the program of the enhanced partnership for Pakistan from military to civil reforms aid, which was known as the Kerry Lugar bill. This act was forwarded by the Obama administration to convince Congress to authorize \$ 7.5 billion over five years in order to improve Pakistan economic condition and invest in its people.¹⁴

According to a report published on January 2, 2018, the US Foreign Assistance to Pakistan had stood at \$ 653 million in 2013, \$ 630 million in 2014, \$ 691 million in 2015, \$ 687 million in 2016, \$ 392 million in 2017 and \$ 345 million in 2018.¹⁶ The US State Department report (2014) highlighted that Pakistan was only concerned about its

national security rather than focusing on Afghan crisis by targeting only those militants who are operating in Pakistan.¹⁷ The Salala incident was also a clear indication, which proved the widened gap between Pakistan and the US for not having on one page. Targeting of two Pakistani check posts by NATO forces created a deadlock between Pakistan and the US which outraged Pakistan for shutting down supply lines of NATO forces for a couple of months demanding an apology.¹⁸ There is an abrupt change of policies in the US. On one hand, the US assumes that Pakistan is equally responsible for terrorism and on the other, Pakistan is considered to be the most famous export country. However, Pakistan is a favorable market for US companies, though, there are investment barriers for US companies to enter Pakistani markets and grow their businesses. China is also Pakistan's largest import partner but due to the rapid economic growth of China in the region, the policies of the US seem to be hardened soon.¹⁹

US Stance on Kashmir Issue

It has been 72 years that the dispute of Kashmir is still unresolved. There is no importance of the Kashmir issue for the US but this issue involves two nations (Pakistan and India) having strategic interest for the US. This is not wrongly said that the US itself does not want to resolve this issue due to several reasons as US security policy fluctuated from time to time in the region.²⁰ In 1993, when Clinton became the President of the US, the US policy on Kashmir changed dramatically, which neglected the rights of Kashmiri people. During the Bush era, a more conservative approach towards the Kashmir issue was adopted. The policy of Trump administration on Kashmir is still hanging out. The Kashmir dispute has caused a serious deadlock between India and Pakistan which should be resolved as soon as possible. This issue needs to be raised consistently at international forums and requires an all-inclusive diplomatic approach. It must be addressed based on fundamental human rights. On July 22, 2019, President Trump offered to act as a mediator for the Kashmir dispute while meeting with the Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan in Washington. Pakistan must urge the US to actively play its part and resist India to seize the atrocities in Kashmir, which will surely bring peace into the region.

A controversial step taken by the Indian government on August 5, 2019, found significant changes in the Indian constitution regarding the status of IOJK.²¹ The BJP-led Indian government's decision of abrogating Articles 370 and 35(A) is not acceptable to Pakistan at any cost as this issue supersedes all the endeavors done in the past and will further heat the situation. There are certain responsibilities of the UN regarding this issue as Prime Minister Imran Khan highlighted during his speech at the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly and was acknowledged by millions all over the world. He addressed the issue of genocide in IOJK by showing the actual face of the Indian government and urged global leaders to stand up against the brutalities faced by the Kashmiris.²² It is assumed that the US has a dual policy in this case. At one end, the US involves Pakistan to bring the Afghan Taliban on the negotiating table for peace talks and pretends to mediate the Kashmir issue between Pakistan and India but on the other side, it encourages India to play its (dubious) role in Kashmir as well as in

Afghanistan which is unacceptable to regional players. The US, undoubtedly, has a good alliance with India and adapts a Hippocratic position in this matter.

Reasons for Freezing US Financial Aid

Pak-China close ties, especially in the economic outlook, have an impact on the Pak-US relationship. As a reaction, the US decided to stop the military financing to Pakistan for the reason that Pakistan is supporting the Afghan Taliban against NATO forces.²³ Furthermore, putting blame on the Pakistan that it has deep relations with different militant groups.²⁴ India, for that reason, got the opportunity to influence the western world by portraying Pakistan as a hub of terrorism. However, due to the need of time, both Pakistan and the US remain in a strategic alliance to attain national interest. Therefore, this strategic alliance is always used by the US as a carrot-and-stick policy without considering Pakistan's national interest. Whenever US political interest is higher within the South Asian region, they give military aid and other incentives to gain the support of Pakistan but in case of low political interest, they put sanctions and stop providing aid to Pakistan. This game of interest becomes a point of contention in the Pak-US relationship, which has become more complex after a reliable and friendly Pak-China relationship.

Another reason for US inconsistent policies towards Pakistan is the Pak-china military relationship. China is all set for the supply of modern weapons which includes advanced warship and fighter jets under the defense agreement between the two neighboring countries. Undoubtedly, it will improve Pakistan's naval defense and combat power of surface fleet. On the other hand, US media reported that Chinese are planning to build and develop fighter jets and other military hardware in Pakistan. Chinese Foreign Ministry has strongly denied these reports and clarified that the Belt and Road initiative is primarily focused on economic projects with peaceful intent.²⁵ With this denial, the China-Pakistan Joint Coordination Forum decided to expand the industrial support for various fields and handsome investment for specific economic zones. Hence, the military weapon deals with China is also the reason for suspension of US military aid which works anti-Pakistani rhetoric; this made the US unreliable for Pakistan and China as a dependable contact.

Another assumption, which is a sign of danger for the US and pushes it to implement a firm policy against Pakistan, is the support of China in the development of Pakistan's nuclear weapons. As explained above that the relationship between China and Pakistan becomes stronger after CPEC, which influences the Pak-US relationship negatively. This economic corridor not only strengthens economic ties with China but it has also reduced the dependency of Pakistan on US aid.²⁶ These deeper ties with China not only influenced Pakistan's economy but also threatens the US global leadership, which pushes the US to shift its carrot-and-stick policy to another side. Initially, China and the US-supplied military aid with almost equal proportions of 38 percent and 39 percent but now, there is a vast difference. China is supporting Pakistan more than the US. The figure for China shifts from 38 percent to 63 percent and US-support shifts

from 39 percent to 19 percent.²⁷ It shows a gap that has occurred in Pak-US relationship and also the reason for US hard policies.

In the context of US military operations in Afghanistan, this is a hardline fact that the US cannot win in Afghanistan without the help of Pakistan. Therefore, the US wants to preserve its relationship with Pakistan to gain support for winning the Afghan war and facing its nation with the justified victory. However, the military balance of power within the South Asian region is diverting towards China, which was earlier presumed by former President Obama against US policy for Asia. China is not only strengthening its relations with Pakistan but also targeting to improve relationships with other countries of the region. It shows a decline in the US influence in this region, politically as well as economically.

This article, therefore, explains the impact of Pak-China relationship on the US in its policy implementation and security trends. The first shift could be seen as the Pak-china relationship challenging global leadership of the US by looking at the insular view of Trump administration.²⁸ Moreover, China's economic initiatives in Pakistan seem like making it a global economic leader which will affect the US economic role globally. Secondly, the shift in Pakistan's policy from the US to China regarding military supplies will also distress the Pak-US relations with less US aid and assistance.

Pakistan's Position to Maintain Balance in the Region

The economic condition of any country depends on the working force of a country. Constant dependency on US assistance is not a positive indicator for Pakistan. Instead of assuming rigid policies of the US at a time when Pakistan is facing a serious economic crisis, an attempt should be made to save the sinking boat of the economy. Fortunately, Pakistan is a country which has almost 60 percent young population. Therefore, it is a need of time to take specific steps empowering Pakistani youth not only in terms of employing them but also equip them with highly technical skills so that they can contribute towards the economy. Further to this, natural resources must be utilized efficiently as Pakistan is rich in terms of its agricultural production. New ways of production must be introduced in the country and farmers must be given the appropriate knowledge about modern farming practices. Moreover, industries must produce sufficiently via skilled labor force to enhance and strengthen the economy of Pakistan. Still, there is no such industrial policy in the country which can prepare Pakistan to cop up with the progressing world.²⁹

The relations between the US and Pakistan cannot be neglected but this relationship must not be at the cost of national integrity or compromising national security. Trust must prevail on both sides and diplomacy should work efficiently to make the ties secure. Inviting US private investment for the development of economic zones and privatization programs will bring new technologies in Pakistan. There are many issues but Pakistan must address these issues up to the level of significance.³⁰ If Pakistan has to develop a sound relationship with the US, it needs to devise a policy to resist Indo-US military and financial pressure. Pakistan must overcome its fiscal accounts deficits while inclining towards China and Russia as supplementary

arrangements. It will help to improve the economic conditions of Pakistan as well as to reduce the overstretched dependency on the US.

Conclusion

The US policy towards Pakistan in the context of Pak-China relationship is at shifting paradigm depending upon US interests in the region. It can be observed that US relations with Pakistan since independence are based on US interests alone and paying less attention to Pakistan's national interest. If the US has some specific interest in the region, it appears as a trusted partner with Pakistan and after fulfilling that interest, the US holds the rule of the stick. On other hand, China has also certain interests in Pakistan yet it has always supported Pakistan's national interests at both national and international levels. China supports Pakistan not only at the time of crisis but also support Pakistan's stance regarding the Kashmir issue globally.³¹ Undoubtedly, this deepens the relationship between China and Pakistan politically, economically and militarily. However, the US perceives it as a threat to its economic expansion and in reaction, it adopts rigid policies against Pakistan by implementing sanctions and stopping financial aid. In short, due to Chinese consistent support and help, the influence of the US in Pakistan is becoming weaker and reducing Pakistan's dependency on the US.

References

- ¹ Huiyao, W. (2019, July 25). In 2020, Asian economies will become larger than the rest of the world combined - Here's how. *World Economic Forum*. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/07/the-dawn-of-the-asian-century/>.
- ² Morrison, W. E. (2019). *China's economic rise: History, trends, challenges, and Implications for the United States*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing. <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33534.pdf>.
- ³ Executive office of the President (2018). *US-Pak trade facts*, Office of the United States Trade Representative. Washington. <https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/south-central-asia/pakistan>.
- ⁴ Kronstadt, K. A. (2015). *Pakistan-US relations: Issues for the 114th Congress*. Congressional Research Service, Washington.
- ⁵ Kumar, A. (2006) *China-Pakistan economic relations*. Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, special report 30(66).
- ⁶ Kaura, V. (2017). *US-Pakistan relationship in the trump era setting the terms of engagement in Afghanistan*. Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi.
- ⁷ Khokhar, N. F. (2019, September 7). Abrogation of article 370 and 35A in India. *The News*. <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/523121-abrogation-of-article-370-and-35a-by-india>.
- ⁸ Aljazeera. (2019, September 14). *Imran Khan on 'genocide' in Kashmir and possible war with India*. <https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/talktojazeera/2019/09/imran-khan-genocide-kashmir-war-india-19091314545416.html>.
- ⁹ Irshad, M. S., Zin, Q., & Arshad H. (2015). One Belt and one road: Does China-Pakistan Economic Corridor benefit for Pakistan's economy? *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*, 6(24) 200-207. Khan, H. (2017). China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC): Benefits for Pakistan. (Unpublished master's thesis). Naval Post graduate School, California <https://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/56582>. Also, Saad, A., Xingping, G., & Ijaz, M. (2019). China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and its influence on perceived economic and social goals: Implications for social policy makers. *Sustainability*, 11(18) <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11184949>.
- ¹⁰ CPEC and the IMF Global Times. (2019, July 2) <http://www.cpecinfo.com/news/cpec-and-the-imf/NjMwNQ>.
- ¹¹ Kundi, M. A. (2009). US Pakistan's relations under Khan 1958-69: Impact on South Asia." *A Research Journal of South Asian Studies*, 24(2), 192-203.
- ¹² Armitage, R. L., Berger, S. R., & Markey, D. S. (2010). US strategy for Pakistan and Afghanistan. Independent task force report. No. 65. Council on Foreign Relations.
- ¹³ Kronstadt, K. A., & Akhtar, S. I. (2017). *US Overseas Loans and Grants: Obligations and Loan Authorizations*. Congressional Research Service, Washington.
- ¹⁴ Wilder, A. (2010). Aid and stability in Pakistan: Lessons from the 2005 earthquake response. *Disasters*, 34(1), 406-426.
- ¹⁵ Epstein, S. B., & Kronstadt, K. A. (2013). *Pakistan: U.S. foreign Assistance*. Congressional Research Service, Washington.
- ¹⁶ Shah, S. (2019, July 22). A peek into US aid to Pakistan between 1947, 2019. *The News*. <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/501752-a-peek-into-us-aid-to-pakistan-between-1947-2019>.
- ¹⁷ Kaura, V. (2017). *US-Pakistan relationship in the trump era setting the terms of engagement in Afghanistan*. Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi.
- ¹⁸ Dawn News. (2012, June 5). Militants attack on Salala check post. <https://www.dawn.com/news/724039>.
- ¹⁹ Rahman, M., & Sherajum, M. F. (2019, August 21). Rethinking development effectiveness: Insights from literature review. *Southern Voice*. <http://southernvoice.org/rethinking-development-effectiveness-insights-from-literature-review/>.
- ²⁰ Rajagopalan, R. P. (2002). Emerging US policy towards Pakistan. *Strategic Analysis*, 26(3), 370-379.
- ²¹ Aljazeera. (2019, September 4). India revokes Kashmir's special status. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/09/india-revokes-kashmir-special-status-190904143838166.html>.
- ²² Business Recorder. (2019, September 27). Full Transcript of Prime Minister Imran Khan's speech at the UNGA. <https://www.brecorder.com/2019/09/27/524851/full-transcript-of-prime-minister-imran-khans-speech-at-the-unga/>.
- ²³ Penttila, E. J. (2000). Vakivallanvuodet. *Foreign Policy* 118(2), 178-198.
- ²⁴ Kau, M. A. (2018, May, 30). China-Pakistan Relations: Challenging US global leadership. *The Diplomat*. <https://thediplomat.com/2018/05/china-pakistan-relations-challenging-us-global-leadership/>.
- ²⁵ Business standard. (2019, January 4). China clears major weapons deals for Pakistan. https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/china-clears-major-weapons-deal-for-pakistan-119010400847_1.html.
- ²⁶ Oualaalou, D. S. (2013). *United States' foreign policy toward the Middle East and transnational terrorism*. (Unpublished PhD thesis), Walden University, Minnesota.
- ²⁷ Kau, M. A. (2018, May, 30). China-Pakistan Relations: Challenging US global leadership. *The Diplomat*. <https://thediplomat.com/2018/05/china-pakistan-relations-challenging-us-global-leadership/>.
- ²⁸ Rahman, M., & Sherajum, M. F. (2019, August 21). Rethinking development effectiveness: Insights from literature review. *Southern Voice*. <http://southernvoice.org/rethinking-development-effectiveness-insights-from-literature-review/>.
- ²⁹ Wilder, A. (2010). Aid and stability in Pakistan: Lessons from the 2005 earthquake response. *Disasters*, 34(1), 406-426.
- ³⁰ Kundi, M. A. (2009). US Pakistan's relations under Khan 1958-69: Impact on South Asia." *A Research Journal of South Asian Studies*, 24(2), 192-203.
- ³¹ Khan, R. A. (1985). Pakistan-United States relations: An appraisal. *American Studies International*, 23(1), 83-102.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE US MEDIATING ROLE IN INDIA–PAKISTAN CONFLICT

*Azeem Gul and Riaz Ahmad**

Abstract

The US as a strategic partner of Pakistan used its political will, diplomacy and economic policies to make India agree for the resolution of the Kashmir conflict during the Cold War era. However, the US role in the post-Cold War era transformed from the conflict resolver to the crisis manager, such as de-escalating tension between the two rivals. US President, Donald Trump, has resumed that role and offered both Pakistan and India to resolve the long-standing conflict of Kashmir. Therefore, this paper finds that the US intention of mediation has changed due to the geopolitical and geostrategic interests in South Asia, for instance, the US-Soviet strategic rivalries during the Cold War and the US encircling of China in the post-Cold War era. This paper further analyzes how and why the US offered its mediation during the Cold War era and why its offer of mediation has not become successful. Moreover, how the US mediating role impacted India's policy towards Kashmir during the Cold War and the post-Cold War eras. Finally, this paper explores the major factors behind the US political will to resolve India-Pakistan conflict when Pakistan has already contributed towards the US-Taliban peace process in Afghanistan.

Keywords: Cold War, Kashmir, Mediation, Plebiscite, Good Offices.

Introduction

The indispensable role recently played by Pakistan towards peace agreement in Afghanistan and South Asia has made the Trump administration willing to offer mediation in India-Pakistan conflict on Kashmir. The US President in a two days official visit to India on February 25, 2020, reiterated his promise of mediation.¹ US President, Donald Trump while meeting with Prime Minister Imran Khan at the World Economic Forum on January 22, 2020, offered mediation on Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan.² Last year, on July 22, 2019, India was surprised by Trump's willingness to mediate on the Kashmir conflict and this continued when Imran Khan and Trump met at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in September 2019.³ Historically, the US has used a variety of approaches, such as unilateral initiatives, bilateral efforts (with the UK) and multilateral proposals under the UN auspices to resolve the India-Pakistan conflict on Kashmir. US government officials, policymakers, scholars, journalists, and private analysts have used intractable, the preferred adjective for the Kashmir dispute.⁴

*Azeem Gul is a Lecturer at the Department of International Relations and School of Business Studies, Bahria University Islamabad. Dr. Riaz Ahmad is a Post-doc Fellow at the School of Public Policy and Administration, Xi'an Jiaotong University, China.

A US diplomat, Henry F. Grady, said that the US ought to urge India and Pakistan to settle their differences. British leaders and diplomats, such as Noël Baker also encouraged the US to use its good offices to mediate the dispute of Kashmir. He pointed towards the good prestige of the US both in India and Pakistan to find a peaceful solution for the Kashmir issue.⁵ In the initial years of the Cold War, Indo-US relations were not frictional because of the Cold War, dollar diplomacy and anti-colonialism but deteriorated on the dispute of Kashmir. Initially, the US was not willing to involve in the issue of Kashmir. Even State Department officials were skeptical about the UN, would prove effective to resolve the dispute.⁶ However, US President Henry S. Truman on August 25, 1949, eventually urged Nehru to accept arbitration to break the impasse on the plebiscite.⁷ That said, the US began to play the role of mediator using the non-coercive intervention. That process of US intervention included pure mediation, conciliation, problem-solving and good offices.⁸

In the Cold War era, US diplomacy fluctuated resolving the issue of Kashmir from 1948 to 1989. After 1989, an insurgency in Kashmir began to change the role of the US from engagement to disengagement. It is because when both India and Pakistan openly confronted over Kashmir. The US dealt with crisis management rather than resolving the Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan during the George Bush era in the last years of the Cold War.⁹ In the post-Cold War era, the US closely sided India, and Pakistan was accused of harboring terrorism in Kashmir. With this, India became influential in Washington and moved the US out of Kashmir conflict as a third party with its mediatory role.¹⁰

The Clinton administration became involved in the 1990s, how to avert direct war between India and Pakistan. From Clinton to the beginning of Trump administration, the US role as a mediator overshadowed by direct wars, such as Kargil War between India and Pakistan and the issue, thus, lingered on.¹¹ Similarly, the Bush administration has also sided India due to the US strategic interest in New Delhi. The US making New Delhi as a strategic partner, President Bush pressurized Pakistan to hunt the terrorist organizations in Kashmir.¹² During the Obama administration talks on the Kashmir dispute continued to resolve the crisis between India and Pakistan. Obama appointed Richard Halbrook, a veteran diplomat, to bring India and Pakistan to dialogue over Kashmir conflict. However, India's strong lobby in Washington overshadowed the role of the US as a mediator on the Kashmir issue in the coming years. The Obama administration dismissed Pakistan's plea to resolve the Kashmir dispute in 2013.¹³

The Obama administration's role on the Kashmir issue was relegated to the margin. Similarly, the Trump administration was unwilling initially towards Pakistan. However, during Prime Minister Imran Khan visit to the US, while meeting with President Trump, the latter expressed to restore the US role on the Kashmir conflict as a mediator. When President Trump was asked about its administration's role on Kashmir began on July 22, 2019, with the Pakistani Prime Minister, he replied that Modi has had asked him to play the role of mediator.¹⁴

US Mediatory Role from President Truman to President Reagan

Truman administration was the first one to act in good faith for the resolution of Kashmir conflict. Both US President Truman and British Prime Minister Clement Atle asked Indian Prime Minister Nehru to accept arbitration and break the impasse on the plebiscite in August 1949. US President Truman and Secretary of State Dean Acheson continued its pressure on India when Nehru visited Washington in October 1949 on the issue of Kashmir. Before Nehru visited the US, Acheson met Indian Ambassador to the US, Vijay Lakshmi, on January 9, 1949, to accept the UN proposal. To these steps of the US mediatory role, India viewed it biased against New Delhi and in favor of Pakistan. Truman administration and officials in the UN disappointed by India's unwillingness. Within this context, the stalemate continued to the next administration of US President Eisenhower.¹⁵

Eisenhower's administration (1953-1961) also supported the idea of plebiscite or the partition of Kashmir. The US while using its good offices sent the head of Ford Foundation, Paul Hoffman, to break the impasse between India and Pakistan in 1953. John Foster Dulles, the Secretary of State, also visited Karachi and New Delhi to agree with Nehru and Pakistani Prime Minister Muhammad Ali Bogra on the partition of state. Pakistan was not willing to accept the partition of Kashmir and favored plebiscite, while Nehru was willing on the independence of Kashmir. Nehru agreed to name a plebiscite administrator by 1954. US good offices brought both Pakistan and India to agree for plebiscite in Kashmir, however, when Pakistan preferred an American plebiscite administrator, it was refused by Nehru. US defense ties with Pakistan were objected by India to forcefully accede Kashmir and, thus, foreclosed the prospects of plebiscite in the future. The US continued mediation to resolve the conflict and passed a Pakistan-sponsored resolution in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), however, it was vetoed by the former Soviet Union in 1957. President Eisenhower visited India in 1959 to convince Nehru but his good offices did not break the stalemate.¹⁶

During the Kennedy administration (1961-1963), the US meditation continued to resolve the conflict. President Kennedy sent Walt Rostow in 1963 to bring India and Pakistan on the negotiation table¹⁷ but his administration was too shy or frightened to influence India. Although President Kennedy assured President Ayyub that he would try to talk to Nehru during his visit to the US the same year, however, Nehru's visit turned out to be a disastrous both for India and the US on the issues of Gao, Vietnam and nuclear tests. Despite the uncooperative attitude of Nehru with Kennedy, both India and the US had to cooperate due to the fear of China.¹⁸

On the other side, the rift began in US-Pakistan relations due to the US supply of arms to India. Kennedy tried not losing the alliance with Pakistan and, therefore, sent a mission under the Assistant Secretary of State, W. Averell Harriman, in cooperation with a British delegation of Commonwealth Secretary, Duncan Sandys. The mission was given the task to make India and Pakistan agree on resolving the Kashmir issue.¹⁹ Despite the US' moderator role, India took an increasingly hardline to integrate Kashmir into India. India went to change Article 370 of its constitution to integrate

Kashmir.²⁰ US willingness to make India and Pakistan agree remained open for discussion during the newly elected President Lyndon B. Johnson era (1963-1969).

The US role as a conflict resolver favoring the UN resolutions and Pakistan's plea for plebiscite vanished at the peak of the Indo-Pak War (1965). The Economic Times has disclosed declassified documents of the Johnson era in August 2015 that Washington supported Delhi's stand that there should be no plebiscite in Kashmir. The US Ambassador to Pakistan, Walter Petrik McNaught, met President Ayyub and Johnson administration made efforts to make India and Pakistan agreed on a ceasefire.²¹ During the Vietnam war, the mediatory role between Pakistan and India was managed by the former Soviet Union due to the US growing commitments. The US did not seek to involve in the conflict resolution of Kashmir²² and its mediatory role in the coming years was becoming dormant.

US President Richard Nixon (1969-1974) although had close relations with Pakistan, however, Kissinger's client state philosophy caused Nixon to understand the nuances of Kashmir dispute.²³ The Anderson Papers has shown on the other side that Richard Nixon's tilt to Pakistan was symbolic. The Nixon policy was not to support Pakistan against India but only seem to be supportive of Pakistan so as not to lose credibility with the Chinese.²⁴ The issue of Kashmir was placed into the backburner. Both the US and Pakistan focused to oppose the former Soviet Union intervention in Afghanistan in 1979.

Subsequently, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan took away the attention of the US from Kashmir conflict resolution to oust the former from Afghanistan. Pakistan, the US and Saudi Arabia supported the Afghan resistance against the Soviets. CIA openly recruited people from Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Algeria. The US and its allies radicalized the locals and thousands of *Mujahideen* emerged in the region.²⁵ They were named 'Holy Warriors'. These warriors after defeating the Soviets in Afghanistan have turned to a captured large swath of Afghanistan and established the Taliban regime later in 1996. Along with the Afghan conflict, the Kashmiri freedom fighters also reported as anti-Indian rebellion in 1988. India started blaming the eruption of insurgency on Pakistan.²⁶ The role of US at that time was completely different as a mediator due to the lack of core interests in Pakistan.

US Mediatory Role in the Post-Cold War Era

The US reaction towards the conflict in the post-Cold War era was based on giving importance to the rights of Kashmiri people. In the early 1990s, a mass uprising in Kashmir brought the attention of the US back to the conflict. In March 1990, the US Secretary of State for Near East and South Asia urged India and Pakistan to settle the Kashmir dispute according to the Shimla Agreement and later US Ambassador to Pakistan, Robert Oakley, asked both countries to consider the needs of people of Kashmir. Observing the situation between Pakistan and India, the first Bush administration sent its National Security Advisor, Robert M. Gates, to Islamabad and New Delhi to reduce India and Pakistan tension. Senator Alan Cranston also visited both capitals and warned that war would prove catastrophic and it would not resolve

the Kashmir conflict. Consequently, the Gates mission thinned the war cloud between India and Pakistan.²⁷

The first administration of President Clinton (1993-2001) considered the rights of Kashmiri people and inclined towards a peaceful resolution of this intractable dispute. Clinton and his team noted the human rights violation and gave messages to India about its brutality. US President himself told the UNGA during the annual session that “as we marvel at this era's promise of new peace, we must also recognize the serious threats that remain.”²⁸ He observed bloody ethnic, religious and civil wars rage from Angola, Caucasus to Kashmir. Referring to the Indian criticism, Robin Raphael, the head of the South Asian Bureau, not only defended President's comments but also went a step ahead, saying: "It was meant to say, we see Kashmir on radar screen along with Yugoslavia and Somalia and lots of other places in the former Soviet Union, Georgia, where there is a civil conflict going on. We cannot easily overlook it, and there is a message in that.”²⁹ The US was observing closely the situation inside Kashmir. Robin Raphael revealed the US concerns regarding deaths in custody, extra-judicial killings, encounter killings and making people disappear. Raphael further said that Kashmir is a disputed territory and denied the instrument of accession.³⁰

During the second term of the Clinton administration, US diplomacy was changing in many ways on the Kashmir issue. For example, India and Pakistan increasing dependency on nuclear weapons, the eruption of Kargil War, India's liberalization of its economy and the rising power of China in Asia. Within this context, the US foreign policy began to change, for instance, India was given more importance at the strategic, political, economic, social and diplomatic levels.³¹ Secondly, the eruption of Kargil conflict between two nuclear powers, India and Pakistan, set out the alarm bells in Washington. India was gaining success in its diplomacy and turned Washington in its favor. India reacted with the use of military force against the Kashmiri freedom fighters in Kashmir. New Delhi labeled Kashmiri freedom fighters as insurgents and terrorists to the US and it became a turning point in Indo-US relations after the 9/11 incident.

When George W. Bush became US President, he used to deescalate the tension between the two rival states in the region. The Bush administration did not focus on playing the role as a mediator. By that time, the Bush administration urged India and Pakistan to resolve the issue of Kashmir bilaterally as suggested by the 1972-Shimla Accord. The Bush administration put its efforts to normalize the India-Pakistan relations rather than to mediate a dialogue between the two neighbors.³²

US Mediatory Role in the Post-9/11 Era

The US considered India to contain China as a strategic rival, therefore, Indo-US relations were improving and the gap in Pak-US relations was widening. While Indo-US relations were warming, many types of bloody episodes took place in Kashmir, such as the one on October 1, 2001. This event killed 38 people in Srinagar. India put the responsibility for this attack on Pakistan. This event followed by cross-border artillery duels. Meanwhile, another bloody event took place when the Indian Parliament House

was attacked on December 13, leaving 14 dead. These events and others brought both states face to face by deploying their troops on borders. India's deployment was aimed to induce the US to urge Islamabad to stop insurgency in Kashmir.³³ Washington agreed with India, consequently, the Bush administration began trusting India and India's strong influence on the Bush administration weakened the US role as a mediator on one hand, and on the other, its own national interests in the region.

The reaction of the Obama administration towards Kashmir was one of its options releasing tensions in South Asia.³⁴ President Obama assured that Washington would provide a peaceful resolution of Kashmir.³⁵ The US policymakers did try to advance a solution of Kashmir issue to bring peace to South Asia but as Bruce Riedel, Advisor to former US President, noted that American diplomats learned from years of failure that Kashmir was too difficult to deal with and, therefore, best ignored.³⁶ Obama showed commitments towards the Kashmir issue considering it as a critical task in 2008. His visit to India changed the US policy to please India. Obama expressed that the US would not intervene in Kashmir and support India's seat in the UNSC. However, President Obama ignored the human rights abuses committed by Indian occupied forces in Kashmir.³⁷

US Mediation during the Trump Administration

Donald Trump succeeded Obama as the 45th President of the US on January 20, 2017. The new President reshaped the goals of foreign policy at the domestic and international levels. President Trump, in its initial years, overlooked the situation despite increasing violence in the Kashmir valley. Observing the violent situation in Kashmir, the Trump administration issued an advisory to its citizens cautioned them against travelling to Jammu and Kashmir.³⁸ On the other hand, Pakistan's trusted friend, China, reacted through its Ambassador, Luo Zhuhai, to India and suggested trilateral cooperation between India, China and Pakistan under the aegis of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) to the Trump administration in June 2018; however, the US administration appeared to be dismissive of a third-party role in resolving the Kashmir dispute. A State Department spokesperson reiterated: "Our policy on Kashmir has not changed. We believe the pace, scope and character of any discussion on Kashmir are for the two sides to determine."³⁹

In June 2018, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights reported serious abuses in Indian occupied Kashmir. The State Department spokesperson responded that "we are aware of the OHCHR report." Meanwhile, the US and Pakistan state-to-state official meetings were held when the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan, and the US President Donald Trump met each other on July 22, 2019. President Trump reiterated the role of mediator and noted that the Kashmir dispute has remained unresolved for too long. The improvements in Pak-US relations, thus, increased anxiety in India.⁴⁰ On the other hand, India rejected third party intervention and declared that the Kashmir issue is a bilateral issue between Pakistan and India. New Delhi also denied Trump's claim that Modi had asked him to mediate in the dispute with Pakistan.⁴¹

Perhaps, India was worried due to the growing influence of Pakistan in Afghanistan's peace process, Washington's decision to resume repair and refurbishing F-16 fighter jets and the suggestion of General Milly, head of US armed forces, to make strong ties with Pakistan. Within this context, India, by responding to Pak-US ties, sent additional 25,000 troops to Indian occupied Kashmir and stripped out the special status of Kashmir with the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35(A) of its constitution.⁴² Moreover, India increased its violent activities in the Kashmir valley by using cluster ammunition. The Geneva Conventions prohibit the use of cluster ammunition because of its severe impacts on the non-combatants. According to the International Committee of the Red Cross, "Cluster munitions kill and injure large numbers of civilians and cause long-lasting socio-economic problems. The 2008-Convention on Cluster Munitions prohibits the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of cluster munitions and requires states to ensure that they claim no further victims."⁴³

Despite India's increasing military activities in Kashmir as well as denial of the Trump's offer of mediation to resolve the Kashmir dispute, the US State Department supported to mediate in Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan. US officials encouraged a constructive dialogue between Pakistan and India on the Kashmir issue.⁴⁴ Meanwhile, the tension between Pakistan and India escalated across the Line of Control (LoC). On August 5, 2019, the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, appealed to Pakistan and India to exercise maximum restraint. On the other hand, the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) also highlighted an increase in military activity at the LoC since August 2019.⁴⁵

Conclusion

The US role as a mediator was active while containing Communism with the help of Pakistan as a strategic partner during the Cold War era. From Harry S. Truman to Senior George W. Bush, India was pressurized to resolve the Kashmir conflict with Pakistan. However, the US transformed its policy after the ousting of Soviet forces from Afghanistan and improved its relation with India. In the post-Cold War era, the collapse of Communism changed the strategic dynamics of the US policy towards India and Pakistan. In the changed policy of the US, India became strategically important to balance out China's rising power in the Indo-pacific region. From President Clinton to the initial years of President Trump, the US mediating role was relegated to the margins and sidelined due to the pro-India lobby. However, Pakistan's role to protect US security interests in South Asia has made willing the Trump administration to use mediation as a political tool. It has given Pakistan a hope to internationalize the Kashmir dispute while India has reacted to it with criticism towards Washington. In 2019, the Trump-Imran meeting made the US realized its war strategy failing in Afghanistan to secure its security interests, therefore, President Trump offered its mediating role in India-Pakistan conflict. Consequently, Pakistan's geostrategic and geopolitical position in South Asia has changed the US mantra of mediation and finally, the US foreign policy itself has featured a strategic tit-for-tat both in the long-run as well as in the short-run that has impacted the peaceful resolution of Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan.

References

- ¹ Sameer Lalwani, Trump's India Trip did not Produce a Trade Deal. Here's what did Result. *The Washington Post*, February 27, 2020.
- ² U.S. Ready to 'Help' India, Pakistan on Kashmir: Trump, *The Hindu*, January 22, 2020.
- ³ Imran Khan to Meet Donald Trump at WEF in Davos, *The Hindu*, January 20, 2020.
- ⁴ Devin T. Hagert, US Policy and the Kashmir Dispute: Prospects for Resolution "In *Kashmir Question: Retrospects and Prospects* ed by Sumit Ganguly, (England: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003),72.
- ⁵ H.W. Brands, "India and Pakistan in American Strategic Planning, 1947-1954: The Commonwealth as Collaborator" *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* (July 2008):42
- ⁶ Denis Cox, *India and the United States: Estranged Democracies* (Washington DC: National Defense University Press, 1992), 57-60.
- ⁷ *Ibid*, 62.
- ⁸ Oliver Ramsbotham, etal, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution: The Prevention, Management and Transformation of Deadly Conflicts* (UK: Polity Press, 2005),19.
- ⁹ Howard B. Shaffer, The Limits of Influence: America's Role in Kashmir Reviewed by Robert M. Hathaway, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.89, No.2 (March-April 2010):173.
- ¹⁰ Farzana Shakoor, "Pakistan-US Relations: An Interpretation" *Pakistan Horizon*, Vol.54, No.1, (January 2001):26.
- ¹¹ Ershad Mahmud, "Post-Cold War US Kashmir policy" *Policy Perspective*, Vol. 2, No.1, (April 2005):83.
- ¹² Ahmed Ejaz, "U.S Policy on Kashmir Dispute in the Post-Cold War Period" *JPUHS*, Vol.29, No.1.(Jan-June 2016):27-28.
- ¹³ *Ibid*, 31-32.
- ¹⁴ "What Donald Trump and Imran Khan said on Kashmir before bilateral Meeting" *The Indian Express*, July23, 2019.
- ¹⁵ Rathnam Indurthy, "The Turns and the Shifts in the US Role in the Kashmir Conflict since 1047: Today's Propitious Time to Resolve it" *Asian Affairs*, Vol. 32, No. 1, (Spring, 2005):32-33.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid*, 34-35.
- ¹⁷ Dr. G. Serwar Khan, "Kashmir Dispute: A Historical Analysis" *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture*, Vol.25/1 (2004):97.
- ¹⁸ Yaqoob Khan Bangash, "Reassessing Pakistan-United States Relations during the Kennedy Administration" (1961-1963)" *Journal of the Punjab Historical Society*, Vol.31, No.1, (June 2018):250-251.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid*, 254.
- ²⁰ Timothy W. Crawford, Kennedy and Kashmir, 19962-1963: "The Perils of Pivotal Peacekeeping in South Asia" *India Review* (September 2007):28.
- ²¹ "Declassified Documents Indicate It Backed India on Kashmir in 1956 War" *The Economic Times*, August 27, 2015.
- ²² Sumit Ganguly, "Avoiding War in Kashmir" *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 69, No.5 (Winter 1990):61.
- ²³ Christopher Van Hollen, "The Tilt Policy Revisited: Nixon-Kissinger Geopolitics and South Asia" *Asian Survey*, Vol. 20, No.4, (Apr 1980):355.
- ²⁴ Rais A. Khan, "Pakistan-United States Relations: An appraisal" *American Studies International*, Vol. 23, No.1, (April 1985):92.
- ²⁵ Pervez Hoodbhoy, "Afghanistan and the Genesis of Global Jihad" *Canadian Mennonite University*, Vol. 37, No.1, (May 2005): 15.
- ²⁶ S. Paul Kapur and Sumit Ganguly, "The Jihad Paradox: Pakistan and Islamist Militancy in South Asia" *International Security* Vol. 37, No.1, (Summer 2012):126.
- ²⁷ Ershad Mahmud, "Post-Cold War US Kashmir policy" *Policy Perspective*, Vol. 2, No.1, (April 2005):85-86.
- ²⁸ "Kashmir issue a threat to peace warns Clinton" *Dawn*, Sept. 28,1993.
- ²⁹ Palit, Parama Sinha. "The Kashmir Policy of United States: A Study of the perceptions, conflicts and dilemmas" *Strategic Analysis*, IDSA Delhi, September 2001 (Vol. XXV, No. 6).
- ³⁰ Farzana Shakoor, "Kashmir Issue and US global objectives." *Pakistan horizon*, July 1994.
- ³¹ Sumit Ganguly and Rahul Mukerji, *India since 1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011),43.
- ³² Navnita Chadha Behera, Policy Brief#110: Kashmir Redefining the U.S Role, The Brookings Institution, October 2002.
- ³³ Devin T. Hagert, US Policy and the Kashmir Dispute: Prospects for Resolution" In *Kashmir Question: Retrospects and Prospects* ed by Sumit Ganguly, (England: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003),83.
- ³⁴ Dr. Sumaria Shafiq, "Pakistan's Policy Towards Kashmir Dispute" (200-1014):144.
- ³⁵ "Vishal Arora, Kashmir a Symptom, America a Part of the Problem" *The Guardian*, November 2010.
- ³⁶ Saman Zulfqar, "Kashmir: Nature and Dimensions of the Conflict" *Journal of Current Affairs*, Vol.1, No. 1&2, (November 2016): 64.
- ³⁷ Arunthadi Roy, Kashmir fruits of Discord, *The New York Times*, October 8, 2010.
- ³⁸ Fahad Shah, "Trump, Pakistan and Kashmir" *The Diplomat*, Feb 2018.
- ³⁹ "President Donald Trump's Administration Dismissive of Third-party Role on Kashmir" *The New Indian Express*, June 21, 2018.
- ⁴⁰ Anwar Iqbal, "Trump may have to mediate on Kashmir Sooner than he Expects: Observers", *Dawn*, August 05, 2019.
- ⁴¹ "US clarifies on Trump's 'mediation' offer; says Kashmir 'bilateral issue', Washington 'stands ready to assist', *The Indian Express*, July 23, 2019.
- ⁴² Anwar Iqbal, "Trump may have to mediate on Kashmir Sooner than he Expects: Observers", *Dawn*, August 05, 2019.
- ⁴³ "Indian army used cluster ammunition along LoC in violation of international laws: ISPR", *Dawn*, August 3, 2019.
- ⁴⁴ "US State Department Clarified President Donald Trump's Offer to Mediate in Kashmir Dispute", *Times of Islamabad*, August 2019.
- ⁴⁵ "UN Appeals to India, Pakistan to Exercise Restraint", *The Hindu*, August 5, 2019.

US FAILURE IN AFGHANISTAN: HALF-BAKED PLANNING OR PAKISTAN?

*Muhammad Hashim Zafar Wadhen, Shafei Moiz Hali and Adnan Jamil**

Abstract

The Global War on Terrorism, launched as a direct result of the heinous 9/11 attacks, has been waging on for almost two decades with no clear signs of victory for the US. The US on a strategic level has lost the war as the primary opponent, Taliban, holds more territory than ever. The US and NATO coalition not only planned to eradicate terrorism in the country but also had great ambitions to modernize and rebuild the country; however, little has been archived so far. Amidst these harsh realities, Pakistan being a major non-NATO ally is often blamed to sabotage the war efforts by playing a so-called double-game while supporting the Global War on Terrorism on one hand and helping the Taliban on the other. Therefore, this paper investigates the reasons for the US failure in Afghanistan on a macro-level and what role Pakistan has played. Other than the notion that Pakistan is to blame, factors, such as, the US has no real long-term objectives for the war, employing conventional methods of warfare, underestimating the opponent and the terrain, lack of coordination among the NATO member states and the sudden attention shift from Afghanistan to Iraq, played a significant role in the current outcome. After evaluating all the evidence from the last two decades, it is clear that half-baked US planning led to the eventual failure of the war effort.

Keywords: GWOT, Pakistan, Taliban, NATO, Terrorism.

Introduction

The Global War on Terror has waged on for 19 years without any clear signs of victory. Today, the Taliban control more territory than they controlled when the war started in 2001.¹ With 6,951 US military casualties² and almost trillion of dollars funneled into the graveyard of empires,³ this has been the longest war the US has ever fought. Many reasons have been attributed to US failure in Afghanistan. Most notably the accusation against Pakistan, sabotaging the war effort by playing a double-game; supporting the US and international coalition forces on one hand and facilitating the Afghan Taliban on the other.⁴ The reality on the ground is far more complex than this. The reason for the US failure in Afghanistan cannot be blamed on one of the several factors that played their part in the outcome of the war. Each factor must be considered

*Muhammad Hashim Zafar Wadhen is a Research Officer at the South Asian Strategic Stability Institute, Islamabad. Dr. Shafei Moiz Hali is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Government and Public Policy, Faculty of Contemporary Studies, National Defence University, Islamabad. Adnan Jamil is a Lecturer at the Department of Leadership and Management Studies, Faculty of Contemporary Studies, National Defence University, Islamabad.

and evaluated regarding the role it played in adding yet another misadventure in the US portfolio in combating a guerrilla force.

The US-led war in Afghanistan or commonly known as the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) was undoubtedly a virtuous move in response to the heinous crime against humanity, allegedly committed by Al Qaeda in 2001. However, it was destined to be another misadventure by the US from the very first battle of *Qilla-i-Jhangi*, where 500 prisoners revolted in an uprising, killing one CIA official and dozens of Northern Alliance soldiers; the revolt was not halted until the US used multiple airstrikes against the fighters.⁵ The initial phase of the operation saw the use of airstrikes followed by troops deployment. By 2002, there were some 5,200 troops deployed in Afghanistan (the number only increased with every fiscal year).⁶ The US continued to use airstrikes throughout the war with minimal long-term benefits as airstrikes are of no use if ground troops do not move in to secure the ground gained.

The US, initially, was able to push back the Taliban with superior conventional firepower and liberated Kabul within two weeks of the advancement. However, the US failed to identify and contextualize the type of opponent they were up against. This was not a conventional war but in its own right a revolutionary war. The US was not up against organized infantry or artillery regiments but radically indoctrinated Guerrilla warriors, who had recently brought about an Islamic revival of Afghanistan with the creation of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan under the Taliban in 1996 and were in no mood of giving up their fruitful struggle away. Many of them were battle-hardened and trained fighters, who had collaborated very closely with the US via Pakistan against the former USSR. This footnote in Afghan history must be kept in mind.

The War Machine just like any other mechanism has different parts that work together. Each performing a particular function; some trivial regarding the wider picture while others play a much more crucial role. Hence, when determining the reasons behind the US failure in Afghanistan, all aspects must be considered that worked together to bring the US to where it stands today. Apart from Pakistan's supposed role, other facets of the US war machine's effort are sudden attention shift from Afghanistan to Iraq that gave the Taliban and Al Qaeda a breathing space, the US outdated and irrelevant military strategy against the Taliban and Al Qaeda, topographical misunderstanding of the region, the vast and mismanaged Pak-Afghan border and the absence of any viable government in Afghanistan. The current US-backed Afghan government has proved to be ineffective and extremely corrupt. The United Office on Drugs and Crime found troubling trends in regards to rampant bribery in the public sector of the country that is stunting any chances of growth.⁷ The US attempt at rebuilding Afghanistan has not been successful at all and her attempt in training and properly equipping the Afghan Army and law enforcement have also met no commendable success. Henceforth, each factor must be independently evaluated, only then it can be determined what was the main reason for the US failure in Afghanistan.

The Combatants and Their Motives

The war in Afghanistan is unlike previous wars as it does not have primarily two opposing camps; here, the forces involved are the US-led international coalition, Al Qaeda forces and the Afghan Taliban. It is, therefore, different in the sense since each of the combatants regardless of their position in the two different camps are very individualistic when it comes to self-interest.

The United States of America

For the US, the War on Terror (WoT) formally began as a response to the September 11, 2001 incident, when President Bush addressed the American people and the world at large: “Our war on terror begins with Al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated.”⁸ The Bush administration pledged to eradicate terrorism internationally with Afghanistan and the Taliban regime at the forefront. The Taliban regime was ordered to hand over Osama bin Laden and all other aides residing in Afghanistan, release all foreign nationals unjustly detained, provide protection to diplomats, aid workers, and journalists, and close down all terrorist-training facilities. The US President made it clear that there would be severe repercussions for the Taliban regime if the demands were not met. In respect to the unfavorable response from the Taliban regime, who claimed that enough proof was not provided by the US administration regarding Osama bin Laden’s involvement in the September 11 attacks. The US along with Great Britain on October 7, 2001, initiated an “Operation Enduring Freedom” with a series of airstrikes targeting key strategic cities, like Kabul and Jalalabad, and the base of operations for the Taliban in Kandahar.⁹ The coalition forces with the assistance of local warlords were able to make swift progress and by mid-November, the Capital city of Kabul was liberated.

Notably, the US motive in this war was not as clear and apparent as it sounds. The President’s remarks at the Joint Session of Congress on the 20th of September were threatening when he addressed matters regarding human rights abuse committed by Taliban rightly so in the context of deadly attacks on 9/11; but it must be remembered that this was the same regime that supported the Taliban before 9/11 as some in Washington saw the Taliban regime as a catalyst for stability in Central Asia that would, in turn, facilitate the construction of oil and gas pipelines through the Central Asian states of Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan through Afghanistan and Pakistan to the Indian ocean.¹⁰ According to Guillaume Dasquie, co-author of “Bin Laden: The Forbidden Truth,” the Bush administration and the Taliban regime were in negotiation before the 9/11 attacks; the two even reached a point when the US representatives told the Taliban that “either you accept our offer of a carpet of gold, or we bury you under a carpet of bombs.”¹¹

Apart from the oil and gas pipeline, Afghanistan’s geographical location provided the US with a strategic advantage in countering both conventional and non-conventional threats.¹² The geopolitical interests of the US played a major role in this

war. Interviewing Brigadier Ishaq Khattak, an ex-military officer who served as Counsel General in Afghanistan, provided insight on US interests in joining the war. According to Brigadier Khattak, the sole US incentive to join the war was to have a presence in the region. This war, according to him, was never against terrorism, so why did the US army redirect itself to Baghdad so early.¹³

NATO and the International Coalition

In response to the US call for an international struggle against terrorism, allied countries poured in logistical and operational support for the WoT in Afghanistan. On September 12, 2001, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) met in an emergency session and for the first time in its history implemented Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, which stated that “an attack against one is an attack against all.” All member states of NATO provided support for the war. The international coalition had one main objective that was to facilitate the WoT in Afghanistan. An interesting insight provided by Nicholas Burns, a retired US diplomat, in an interview that the NATO member states were not on the same page when it came to what their specific objectives were. Unlike the US and the UK, many countries saw this as more of a peacekeeping mission, and before committing to any action, they presented a set of demands: What would they do and not do.¹⁴

The Northern Alliance

The Northern Alliance, also known as the United Islamic Front for Salvation of Afghanistan, was created to resist the Pashtun dominated Taliban regime in response to the discrimination faced by many ethnic minorities of Afghanistan, namely, Hazaras, Tajiks, and Uzbeks. The Alliance was loosely organized with local warlords, each maintaining his personal or local interest before the alliance. In the WoT and its antecedent Afghan war against the USSR, there is one major similarity with regard to the nature of guerrilla forces. Militarily speaking, they were alarmingly fractured, each faction down to the individual commanders had their own interests. It was because of this major flaw in the structure that the Northern Alliance was not very successful in fighting against the Taliban regime until the US and NATO forces came in with their superior firepower. Another parallel with the previous war was the way allied nations supported different commanders and different groups with respect to their own interests. The US supported Abdul Rashid Dostum, a Soviet General turned warlord, whereas, French supported Ahmed Shah Massoud. The Northern Alliance later dissolved into the Karzai regime and political spectrum of Afghanistan. Their fractured nature did not serve them well either. The Karzai regime and its successors proved to be ineffective in running the country with heavy corruption inside the establishment.

Pakistan

Pakistan entered the WoT as a non-NATO ally in 2001. It would be advantageous to note two realities here; first, Pakistan’s security agencies played a crucial role in creating Mujahidin movement in the Afghan war only decades earlier

with support not just from the western side of the Iron Curtain, but from the wider Muslim world as well. Thus, by virtue of this, many Taliban commanders were veterans of the war and some had close connections with elements in Pakistan's security apparatus. Second, the demographics of the region have to be kept in mind. The border that separates Pakistan and Afghanistan, previously known as the Durand line, does not separate different ethnicities; in fact, it cuts through a single one that being 'Pashtun'. As a result, ethnic connections are very strong across the border by virtue of the Pashtun tribal system.

Geopolitically, Pakistan had much to gain by siding with the US against the USSR. However, Pak-Afghan relations have not been stable at all due to territorial disputes along the Pak-Afghan border. Afghanistan, from the very beginning, has been hostile towards Pakistan and tension reached its zenith when Pashtun dominated Parcham Party promoted the idea of an independent Pashtunistan¹⁵ in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Although the narrative was not well received nor endorsed on either side, it left an everlasting effect on Pakistan. Since then Pakistan has a strong desire that a peaceful and friendly government holds office in Afghanistan. Due to the creation of Mujahidin force in Afghanistan during the war against the USSR, various religiopolitical elements in Pakistan became sympathetic to the Taliban regime and at that time, Pakistan had good relations with Afghanistan. As the WoT was declared, US-led coalition forces overwhelmed Taliban fighters and initially, the Taliban had to retreat. After the liberation of Kabul, the coalition forces pushed the Taliban into the eastern mountain region of Tora Bora. From there Taliban started to regroup and gather their strength. It is pertinent to understand here that the 2,430 km border at that time was not fenced; local tribes moved and settled with autonomy as they had been for long.

Taliban: A Revolutionary Movement or Insurgency

To understand the Afghan Taliban, it is necessary to investigate whether it falls under an insurgency or a revolutionary movement. Insurgency is defined by the US Counterinsurgency Guide as the "organized use of subversion and violence to seize, nullify, or challenge political control of a region."¹⁶ Insurgents primarily seek to displace a government and completely or partially control the resources and population of a region.¹⁷ A revolutionary movement, on the other hand, is much more organized and relies on the support of masses for its success. This support is gained by the moral alienation of masses from the existing government and ability to out-administer the existing government or regime; in a contrast, a revolutionary movement seeks to avoid any unnecessary use of force.¹⁸

The Afghan Taliban was founded by Mullah Muhammad Omar, a veteran of the Soviet-Afghan war. He had neither a tribal nor a religious pedigree and was simply seen as a pious frontrunner. The movement started or at least the legend goes with Mullah Omar ordering some of his key followers to arrest the local warlord who was accused of raping innocent girls. The small group numbering some 30 strong men with only 16 rifles saved the victims.¹⁹ Taliban emerged on the onslaught of the civil war in Afghanistan, a post-Soviet-Afghan war among scrabbling warlords for power. The aim of

the Afghan Taliban was to “restore peace, disarm the population, enforce *Sharia* law and defend the integrity and Islamic character of Afghanistan.”²⁰ The Taliban movement quickly gained popularity and they took over Afghanistan and declared it as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in 1996. The Taliban, although, considered by most as nothing but a terrorist organization, may very well fit into the category of a revolutionary force as it primarily relies on the masses for its support and has been successful in convincing the Afghan population towards its cause.

Pakistan’s Involvement in the War

Pakistan’s involvement in the GWOT was initiated with the Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). Overnight, Pakistan became a key ally; in fact, Pakistan became the US most important non-NATO ally. General Pervez Musharraf, who was already under enormous international pressure, joined the war with this hope that such a step would improve Pakistan’s reputation internationally, counter the rhetoric that Pakistan was sympathetic to terrorist elements and gain political benefits.²¹ Pakistan initially played a supportive role in the OEF and provided the US with vital intelligence information, air bases, and key strategic and vital supply routes. Pakistan also deployed 35,000 troops for internal security and provided operational support by allowing US warplanes to access its airspace.

Pakistan also collaborated with the US and coalition forces in capturing prominent Al Qaeda operatives. Another very important measure Pakistan took was to make an effort to seal or regulate the border in-between Pakistan and Afghanistan by deploying troops at the border.²² Pakistan also contributed diplomatically in the war with its sudden policy-shift against the Taliban. Initially, Pakistan only contributed to logistical level, however, on the insistence of the US, Pakistan launched both major and minor operations against terrorist elements inside Pakistan. These operations include Operation Al-Mizan (2002-2006), Operation Rah-e-Haq (2007), Operation Sher-e-Dil (2008), Operation Zalzala (2008-2009), Operation Sirat-e-Mustaqeem (2008) and Operation Rah-e-Rast (2009).²³ According to C. Christine Fair in her book titled “The Counterterror Coalitions: Cooperation with Pakistan and India,” most of the US officials in Pentagon and State Department have praised Islamabad for providing extensive access to the US, both in the context of OEF and in the post-OEF phase of operation. According to an unclassified CENTCOM LNO (Liaison Officer) briefing, “Pakistan has provided more support, captured more terrorists, and committed more troops than any other nation in the Global Counterterrorism Force.

In 2007, certain non-state actors emerged as a terrorist organization known as Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). It needs to be understood that the Pakistani Taliban are drastically different from the Afghan Taliban, both in terms of structure and primary agenda. According to both Brigadier Ishaq Khattak (retired) and Ambassador Ayaz Wazir (retired), the Afghan Taliban are a political force and their main aim has been resisting foreign occupation and bringing peace in Afghanistan. On the contrary, the TTP had anti-state agenda and tried to seek sympathy as *jihadis* by a wider population.²⁴

Compared to the Afghan Taliban, who were united under one ideology, the Pakistani Taliban under the umbrella of TTP just followed their own regional and local interests.²⁵

Is Pakistan to Blame?

Generally, Pakistan is blamed by the US to have played a role in the failure of OEF. US officials have publicly criticized Pakistan on many occasions; most notably, the current US President, in 2018, stated in a tweet that the aid to Pakistan had only given “nothing but lies and deceit” in return.²⁶ To begin with, Pakistan is blamed to have played a double-game in Afghanistan from the very start; although Pakistan formally in cooperation with the US and the NATO coalition forces, it kept on supporting the Afghan Taliban and its close affiliates primarily by providing them with secure passages in and out of the country.²⁷ It was believed that many Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters fled to Pakistan during the OEF and received medical treatment. Furthermore, as a result of mounting pressure by the US, Pakistan did launch military operations against terrorists in Pakistan. These operations were waged to target those terrorists, who were considered anti-Pakistan.

Addressing the accusations against Pakistan to have purposely facilitated the Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters coming into the country, senior journalist, Shafeeq Ahmed, in an interview elaborated how it was practically impossible to effectively guard the border. He argued that the ground realities have to be considered when talking about the issue. The Pak-Afghan border has no natural or artificial barriers; in fact, it is a virtual line separating both countries. The people too are not different on both sides. Most of them are Pashtun tribesmen separated by a virtual line only and historically had been moving in the area freely. There are villages that are on maps divided in-between Afghanistan and Pakistan, thus, monitoring and stopping the inflow is virtually impossible.²⁸ This argument was further supported by Dr. Saima Ashraf Kayani, who in her research paper titled “Global War on Terror: the Cost Pakistan is Paying” argued that the Northern Western belt of Pakistan has tribes with historical, ethnic, cultural, political, religious, and linguistic ties with the people on the other side of the border. As a result, the people of Pakistan generally did not support the WoT.²⁹

The behavior of Pakistan in this war was and still seems to be unpredictable to many; however, if one looks at the ground realities of the war and how Pakistan became involved, one can easily predict and comprehend Pakistan’s behavior. For starters, Pakistan did not join for clear self-interest but had to do so in the context of the international outraged rhetoric against terrorism.³⁰ As elaborated earlier that Pakistan had very close ties with the Afghan Taliban, it was the first country which recognized the Taliban government in Afghanistan. Pakistan had been trying to achieve and maintain peace in Afghanistan for decades and had invested heavily in treasure and blood. Thus, Pakistan was always hesitant in directly combating the Afghan Taliban owing to their past relations and this hesitancy was perceived by the coalition forces as a double-game. Pakistan was rightly hesitant because of the ever-increasing pressure from the US to “do more”. However, the fact remains that Pakistan launched several

military operations against terrorists which resulted in many casualties and economic losses.

Pakistan's hesitancy promoted notions of Pakistan's double-game, which led the US to bring in Indian contractors in Afghanistan for reconstruction and rehabilitation projects. Under the guise of Indian civilian contractors, the RAW operatives came in and established some 14 complexes of operation across the Pak-Afghan border. On the other hand, TTP was supported by RAW elements in Afghanistan³¹ which led to strengthening it in Pakistan and wreaked havoc across the country. Given the ground realities, Pakistan's initial response can be seen as more of an instinctive reflex than a deliberate attempt. The argument that Pakistan played a major role in the failure of OEF, thus, does not hold merit. To better understand the scenario at hand, the scope of this paper extends to other factors that contributed to misadventure.

US Attention Shift from Kabul to Baghdad

The initial success in combating the Afghan Taliban certainly boosted US morale and confidence. Al Qaeda forces were virtually wiped out within the first few months of the war and the Taliban went into hiding.³² This gave the US a false hope that they were winning, thus, shifted their attention to Baghdad and on March 19, 2003, the US along with the coalition forces invaded Iraq. The US forces ignorantly dismissed the reality that gorillas and revolutionary forces are not defeated until and unless their ideology is delegitimized. The invasion of Iraq diverted the supply line from Kabul to Baghdad giving the Taliban breathing space and time to reemerge.³³

The Iraq war helped Al Qaeda and Taliban forces, primarily, in two ways; firstly, the Iraq campaign increased the cost and expenses of war exponentially, and secondly, the war in Iraq broadened the battlefield physically.³⁴ A war that was initially waged in Afghanistan now stretched to Iraq. This, in turn, stretched the resources allocated to fight Al Qaeda and Taliban units, such as Delta Force and Navy Seals Team Six as well as aerial surveillance platforms like the Predator had to be shifted into Iraq.³⁵ While the surge continued in Iraq, the Taliban and Al Qaeda forces used this period to adapt and rethink their battle strategies. Most importantly, the invasion of Iraq had long-term consequences; firstly, it further legitimized Bin Laden's narrative against the West, thus, attracted more recruits to Al Qaeda. Secondly, the Iraq war left the country crippled politically and economically and this state of unrest acted as a breeding ground for new terrorist groups, such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).³⁶

US Strategic Failures in Afghanistan

History seldom repeats itself that too in a single lifetime. What US Generals experienced in Afghanistan; it drew parallels from Vietnam. Their arrogance and confidence were elaborated by Lieutenant General Daniel P. Bolger, who commanded US forces in both Iraq and Afghanistan. He stated that "myself and other commanders thought this time we are going to fight Vietnam and get it right."³⁷ But, the reality was

that the US did not learn from their past mistakes. They fought a non-conventional war in a conventional way. This was their first strategic mistake. Further, the General in his book titled "Why We Lost" writes that US armed forces are designed, manned, and equipped for short, decisive, and conventional conflicts.³⁸ The US did not send in enough troops to effectively regulate law and order in the country and troops were not able to stop insurgents from crossing the porous border into Pakistan.³⁹ The US forces did not improvise their strategies according to the ground realities. These were still conventional and based on controlling the capital and major cities.⁴⁰ This approach has been much more fruitful in developed countries where a crux of the population lives in urban areas.

In Afghanistan, 72% of the population resides in rural areas⁴¹ and whosoever is dominant in rural areas has real power. The US army has been targeting insurgent strongholds in villages with aerial bombardment. Aerial bombardment as safe as it is for the US soldiers carries a huge risk of civilian casualties. In 2017, the Bureau of Investigative Journalism reported that out of 852-1445 people killed as a result of airstrikes 13-149 were civilians.⁴² The US is over-reliant on mechanized forces to destroy enemy strongholds. Afghanistan does not have plane fields and paved roads on which mechanized forces can easily maneuver. This incapability at times became an obstacle for US soldiers, who preferred staying in their Humvees over trekking the Afghan countryside.

Further, the US forces deployed soldiers of the Afghan National Army (ANA) to hold the areas liberated. The ANA, although, equipped and trained by the US and coalition forces proved to be highly incapable of fighting and also had high levels of desertion cases.⁴³ The recent declassified Afghanistan papers by the State Department also shed light on several other factors that contributed to the failed war effort. General David Richards, former Chief of Defense Staff, in a declassified interview, highlighted that there was no long-term strategy involved in Afghanistan. The US had long tours, but force-rotations changed the strategy and forced everything to be short-term. Every time, there was a rotation, the momentum built by the last commander was broken.⁴⁴ The General regenerates what a retired US Diplomat, Nicholas Burns, stated in regards to NATO. Every nation had its priorities and commanders ended up listening to their respective capitals.⁴⁵

Lastly, the most intriguing aspect of the US war effort is how badly they lacked intelligence. General Daniel P. Bolger mentions this in his book, referred earlier, however, referencing one of the countless testimonies of US war veterans translates to the severity of it. Jonathan Rosario, an Infantryman deployed at Kandahar province in 2009-2010, stated that "they were telling us to go into the villages and ask them, where is the Taliban? And the first time we asked the question, they were like, 'Oh yes, I'm Taliban.' And we were like, 'Uh, do we shoot this guy? He just admitted he's Taliban.' So, we asked [interpreter] and he said Taliban means student. They are all students out here! So that was confusing."⁴⁶

Underestimation of the Opponent and Terrain

A fundamental mistake, the US made, was the underestimation of the unforgiving terrain of Afghanistan. Afghanistan is a mountainous country with deep valleys and gorges. The mountains of Afghanistan are ideal for hit and run guerilla tactics and Afghans have over time mastered this art. Everyone, from Alexander to the Britishers, had their noses rubbed in Afghan soil.⁴⁷ The inhospitable terrain, constant invasions, and regional rivalries have turned Afghans into a warrior race. Winston Churchill, while serving as a young officer fighting the Pashtuns in the 19th century, wrote: “Every inhabitant is a soldier from the first day he is old enough to hurl a stone till the last day he has the strength to pull a trigger.”⁴⁸ Afghans knew their ground and were well set in it. They, just like any other guerilla force, were well camouflaged into the society at large. The greatest challenge, the US faced, was determining who is an insurgent and who is not.⁴⁹

Inefficient Afghan Government

The alternative, the US gave to the people of Afghanistan over the Taliban government, was the democratically elected Karzai regime. The Karzai regime, although, democratic but proved to be highly corrupt and incompetent. Billions of dollars were funneled into Afghanistan. This aid instead of rebuilding Afghanistan found its way to the sticky hands of the Afghan political elite.⁵⁰ According to the Transparency International’s Corruption Perception 2017-Index, Afghanistan ranked 177 out of the 180 countries.⁵¹ The Kabul Bank scandal was another example, where the Afghan elite exploited not just poor Afghans who had trusted it with their savings but indirectly the US taxpayers as well; it is known as the biggest per capita fraud in history.⁵² Presently, Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah, both are struggling to hold the power corridors in Kabul without realizing that the Afghan Taliban have already forced the US-led coalition forces to leave the country.

Conclusion

The US efforts in Afghanistan were doomed from the very start as they failed to do their homework before waging a war in the graveyard of empires. Their military strategies were outmoded and irrelevant to the battlefield. They did not take into account the geopolitical and geostrategic interests of the country; they named their primary non-NATO ally. Furthermore, the internal dynamics of Afghanistan were not taken into account when paving a path forward, thus, one may reasonably argue that it was the US half-baked planning that untimely sealed the country’s fate.

References

- ¹ Dilanian, Ken. "Taliban Control of Afghanistan Highest Since U.S. Invasion." *NBCNews.com*, NBCUniversal News Group, 29 Jan. 2016, www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/taliban-control-afghanistan-highest-u-s-invasion-n507031.
- ² Crawford, Neta C. "Human Cost of the Post-9/11 Wars: Lethality and the Need for Transparency." Rep. *Human Cost of the Post-9/11 Wars: Lethality and the Need for Transparency*, 2018.
- ³ Westcott, Ben. "Afghanistan: 16 Years, Thousands Dead and No Clear End in Sight." CNN. Cable News Network, November 1, 2017. <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/08/21/asia/afghanistan-war-explainer/index.html>.
- ⁴ "Double Game: Why Pakistan Supports Militants and Resists U.S. Pressure to Stop." Cato Institute, September 25, 2018. <https://www.cato.org/publications/policy-analysis/double-game-why-pakistan-supports-militants-resists-us-pressure-stop>.
- ⁵ Sennott, Charles M. "The First Battle of the 21st Century." *The Atlantic*. Atlantic Media Company, May 5, 2015. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/05/war-afghanistan-spann-qa-i-jangi/392402/>.
- ⁶ Specialist in U.S. Defense Policy and Budget, and Amy Belasco. Troop Levels in the Afghan and Iraq Wars, FY2001-FY2012: Cost and Other Potential Issues, Troop Levels in the Afghan and Iraq Wars, FY2001-FY2012: Cost and Other Potential Issues § (2009).
- ⁷ Chawla, Sandeep, and Jean-Luc Lemahieu. "CORRUPTION IN AFGHANISTAN: RECENT PATTERNS AND TRENDS. Summary Findings." Rep. *CORRUPTION IN AFGHANISTAN: RECENT PATTERNS AND TRENDS. Summary Findings*, 2012.
- ⁸ "Text: President Bush Addresses the Nation." *The Washington Post*. WP Company, September 20, 2001. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/specials/attacked/transcripts/bushaddress_092001.html.
- ⁹ Wheeler, Heather Y. "War on Terror 2001 - Present Day." *Totally Timelines*, March 28, 2020. <http://www.totallytimelines.com/war-on-terror-2001/>.
- ¹⁰ Meacher, Michael. "Michael Meacher: This War on Terrorism Is Bogus." *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media, September 6, 2003. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2003/sep/06/september11.iraq>.
- ¹¹ Godoy, Julio. "POLITICS: U.S. Policy towards Taliban Influenced by Oil – Authors." *POLITICS: U.S. Policy towards Taliban Influenced by Oil – authors* | Inter Press Service, November 15, 2001. <http://www.ipsnews.net/2001/11/politics-us-policy-towards-taliban-influenced-by-oil-authors/>.
- ¹² Mishra, Manoj Kumar. "Geopolitics Behind the War on Terror." *International Policy Digest*, November 23, 2017. <https://intpolicydigest.org/2015/12/12/geopolitics-behind-the-war-on-terror/>.
- ¹³ Zafar, Muhamad Hashim, and Brig Ishaq khattak. Personal interview with Brigadier General Ishaq khattak. Personal, March 14, 2018.
- ¹⁴ "The Afghanistan Papers: Read the Confidential Documents That Reveal a Secret History of the War in Afghanistan." *The Washington Post*. WP Company, December 9, 2019. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/investigations/afghanistan-papers/documents-database/?document>.
- ¹⁵ Synovitz, Ron. "Pashtunistan' Issues Linger Behind Row." *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*. Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty, February 2, 2012. <https://www.rferl.org/a/1067048.html>.
- ¹⁶ Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, David Kilcullen, and Colonel (Ret.) Carlos Burgos. U.S. Government counterinsurgency guide , U.S. Government counterinsurgency guide § (2009).
- ¹⁷ *Ibid*.
- ¹⁸ Ahmad, Eqbal. *Revolutionary Warfare: How to Tell When the Rebels have Won*. 1965., 1965, Box: 3. Mayer Collection of Fat Liberation, 1990-0057. Archives and Special Collections, University of Connecticut Library. https://archivesssearch.lib.uconn.edu/repositories/2/archival_objects/80786 Accessed May 01, 2020.
- ¹⁹ Tristam, Pierre. "What Is the Taliban and What Does It Want?" *ThoughtCo*. ThoughtCo, January 24, 2018. <https://www.thoughtco.com/history-of-the-taliban-who-they-are-what-they-want-2352797>.
- ²⁰ *Ibid*.
- ²¹ Kayani, Dr. Saima Ashraf. "GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR: THE COST PAKISTAN IS PAYING." *Margalla Papers*, 2011.
- ²² Fair, C. Christine. "THE COUNTERTERROR COALITIONS Cooperation with Pakistan and India." Rep. *THE COUNTERTERROR COALITIONS Cooperation with Pakistan and India*. RAND Corporation Monograph Series. RAND Corporation, 2004.
- ²³ Khan, Z. A. (2012) Military operation in FATA and PATA: implications for Pakistan. *Strategic Studies XXXI-XXXII*(4 & 1)
- ²⁴ Zafar, Muhamad Hashim, and Brig Ishaq khattak. Personal interview with Brigadier General Ishaq khattak. Personal, March 14, 2018.
- ²⁵ Brumfield, Ben, and Naomi Ng. "Who Are the Pakistani Taliban?" *CNN*. Cable News Network, December 17, 2014. <https://edition.cnn.com/2014/12/17/world/asia/pakistan-taliban-explainer/index.html>.
- ²⁶ Khan, Sahar. "Double Game: Why Pakistan Supports Militants and Resists U.S. Pressure to Stop." Cato Institute, September 25, 2018. <https://www.cato.org/publications/policy-analysis/double-game-why-pakistan-supports-militants-resists-us-pressure-stop>.
- ²⁷ Katz, Mark N. "Pakistan and the 'War on Terror.'" *Pakistan and the "War on Terror"* | Middle East Policy Council. Accessed May 30, 2020. <http://www.mepc.org/commentary/pakistan-and-war-terror>.
- ²⁸ Zafar, Muhamad Hashim, and Shafeeq Ahmed. Personal interview with Shafeeq Ahmed. Personal, March 12, 2018.
- ²⁹ Kayani, Dr. Saima Ashraf. "GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR: THE COST PAKISTAN IS PAYING." *Margalla Papers*, 2011.
- ³⁰ "Bush Threatened to Bomb Pakistan, Says Musharraf." *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media, September 22, 2006. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/sep/22/pakistan.usa>.

- ³¹ Kiran, Afifa. "INDIAN QUEST FOR STRATEGIC INGRESS IN AFGHANISTAN AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR PAKISTAN." *ISSRA Papers*, 2009.
- ³² Zafar, Muhamad Hashim, and Brig Ishaq khattak. Personal interview with Brigadier General Ishaq Khattak. Personal, March 14, 2018.
- ³³ Why We Lost: Retired U.S. General Calls for Public Inquiry into Failures of Iraq, Afghan Wars. Democracy Now! 2014. https://www.democracynow.org/2014/11/12/why_we_lost_retired_us_general.
- ³⁴ Ross, Daveed Gartenstein. "Why Did It Take So Long to Find Bin Laden?" *The New York Times*. The New York Times, May 27, 2015. <https://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2011/05/03/why-did-it-take-so-long-to-find-osama-bin-laden/the-iraq-war-helped-bin-laden>.
- ³⁵ Ibid.
- ³⁶ Cole, Juan. "How the United States Helped Create the Islamic State." *The Washington Post*. WP Company, November 23, 2015. https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/11/23/how-the-united-states-helped-create-the-islamic-state/?utm_term=.bea6b47f6d56.
- ³⁷ Why We Lost: Retired U.S. General Calls for Public Inquiry into Failures of Iraq, Afghan Wars. Democracy Now! 2014. https://www.democracynow.org/2014/11/12/why_we_lost_retired_us_general.
- ³⁸ Bolger, Daniel P. *Why We Lost: A General's Inside Account of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars*, 2014.
- ³⁹ Malik, Saleem Akhtar. "Why Will US Military Continue to Fail in Afghanistan?" *Global Village Space*, May 12, 2019. <https://www.globalvillagespace.com/why-will-us-military-continue-to-fail-in-afghanistan/>.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid.
- ⁴¹ "Afghanistan - Rural Population." *Afghanistan - Rural Population - 1960-2018 Data | 2020 Forecast*. Accessed May 30, 2020. <https://tradingeconomics.com/afghanistan/rural-population-percent-of-total-population-wb-data.html>.
- ⁴² Purkiss, Jessica, Jessica, Jack Serle, Jack, and Bureau. "Afghanistan: Reported US Covert Actions 2017." *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism*, December 31, 2017. <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/drone-war/data/get-the-data-a-list-of-us-air-and-drone-strikes-afghanistan-2017>.
- ⁴³ Associated Press. "Desertion, Retention Plague Afghan Army." *Military.com*, October 17, 2012. <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2012/10/17/desertion-retention-plague-afghan-army.html>.
- ⁴⁴ "A Secret History of the War - Washington Post." Accessed May 30, 2020. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/investigations/afghanistan-papers/documents-database/>.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid.
- ⁴⁶ "We Were Right': Veterans React to Revelations in The Afghanistan Papers." *The Washington Post*. WP Company, December 17, 2019. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/investigations/afghanistan-papers/veterans-reaction/>.
- ⁴⁷ Today Show. "In Afghan Fight, Geography Is Key." *TODAY.com*, October 16, 2003. <https://www.today.com/news/afghan-fight-geography-key-wbna3226085>.
- ⁴⁸ Ahmed, Eqbal. *The Selected Writings of Eqbal Ahmed*. Karachi: Aameena Saiyid, Oxford University Press, 2006.
- ⁴⁹ Why We Lost: Retired U.S. General Calls for Public Inquiry into Failures of Iraq, Afghan Wars. Democracy Now! 2014. https://www.democracynow.org/2014/11/12/why_we_lost_retired_us_general.
- ⁵⁰ Danish, Jamil. "Afghanistan's Corruption Epidemic Is Wasting Billions in Aid." *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media, November 3, 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2016/nov/03/afghanistans-corruption-epidemic-is-wasting-billions-in-aid>.
- ⁵¹ "Corruption Perceptions Index 2017 - News." *Transparency.org*, 2018. https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2017.
- ⁵² Boone, Jon. "The Financial Scandal That Broke Afghanistan's Kabul Bank." *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media, June 16, 2011. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/jun/16/kabul-bank-afghanistan-financial-scandal>.

OPERATION ZARB-E-AZB: RETROSPECTIVE VIEW IN THE CONTEXT OF US RESPONSE

Nasir Naveed*

Abstract

For more than 19 years, Pakistan has been in a state of war against terrorism. It has launched many military operations in different areas based on different strategic and tactical considerations. The geographic limits, priority, and timing of these operations were carefully planned and executed. Credible intelligence revealed that after operation Rah-e-Nejat (2009), some of the militant groups shifted to Afghanistan while the remaining took refuge in the North Waziristan Agency. There was a requirement to eliminate these hideouts, thus, Pakistan decided to launch a military operation Zarb-e-Azb. As a result, the overall security situation in Pakistan has improved. The US appreciated the successes of operation Zarb-e-Azb but despite these military actions and other practical steps, Pakistan-US relations could not improve as such. There is a consistent divergence of interests between Pakistan and the US in the war against terror that impact seriously on bilateral relations. This paper, therefore, professes that unless this divergence of interest is understood, no ground action irrespective of the dimension and outcome can restore peace and stability within Pakistan and the region.

Keywords: War against Terrorism, Military Operation, Pakistan, US, Counterterrorism.

Introduction

After 9/11, Pakistan played a significant role in the war against terrorism. Pakistan's counterterrorism approach was highly focused on anti-state terrorist elements, whereas, it was accused of having soft spot for the Afghan Taliban. Since 2002, Pakistan's counterterrorism operations have met with mixed results. It was alleged that the Pakistan Army targeted only those terrorist groups that challenged the Pakistan's writ, whereby, the Afghan Taliban and Haqqani Network enjoyed safe havens in the North Waziristan Agency (NWA).

According to an Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) press release, militants were using NWA as a base for conducting their operations inside Pakistan. It was indicated by the ISPR that terrorists were disturbing the life of common citizens of Pakistan in all of its dimensions. Insurgents based in NWA created serious problems for the innocent people, who wanted to live a peaceful life in their respective areas.¹ From 2010 to 2014, Pakistan faced some deadly terrorist attacks by the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) including Mehran base, Kamra Air Base and Jinnah International Airport which radically changed Pakistani perspective on counterterrorism operations and it

*Nasir Naveed is the Director Program and Planning at INDUS, a Washington based think-tank, USA.

was decided to clear militant groups from NWA.² The Pakistan Army launched a military operation against local and foreign militants in NWA on June 15, 2014, fully backed by the government as well as the civil society. The operation was given a well thought out title, 'Zarb-e-Azb', after the name of the sword of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).³

The basic objective of the NWA military campaign was to obliterate safe havens of the militants and non-state actors in the region and to clear the area from all types of terrorists including locals and foreigners so as to bring long-term peace in the area. For some time, the US complained about the role of militants based in the NWA. The US has always been of the view that militants in NWA were involved in attacking NATO troops in Afghanistan and continued to pressurize Pakistan to launch operations against them. It was also viewed by the US that NWA, once cleared, would help in countering insurgency in Afghanistan and also bring stability in Pakistan. Finally, when the time was ripe enough for this campaign on June 16, 2014, Pakistani Parliament passed a unanimous resolution in support of the Operation 'Zarb-e-Azb', which reads:⁴

This house expresses its fullest support with the decision of the Government of Pakistan to launch the military operation by our valiant armed forces against militants in tribal areas who are using the sacred soil of this country for their nefarious ends including attacks on security forces and law enforcement agencies and public and private properties, resulting in tragic deaths and injuries to thousands of military personnel's and innocent civilians and colossal damage to the economy of the country. This house resolves to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with armed forces till final victory.

The law enforcement agencies expressed that NWA operation was unique in its nature because it targeted the so-called good and bad Taliban. It was decided that the security officials would only spare those militants, who would unconditionally surrender. Otherwise, action was taken against all militants.⁵ Although the military campaign launched by Pakistan in NWA enhanced the credibility of this operation internationally, the US, however, continued to believe that Pakistan has not taken concrete actions against the Haqqani network in NWA. The US held the Haqqani network responsible for many lethal terrorist attacks in the eastern and southeastern parts of Afghanistan.⁶ Nevertheless, it is believed that the Haqqani network had shifted into Afghanistan, long time back, much before the start of the operation. Meanwhile, their bases have been dismantled in NWA.

The US Senator John McCain visited Islamabad and acknowledged the Pakistan Army's efforts in the war against terror.⁷ Other senior US officials have also acknowledged that Pakistan has played an important role in containing the Haqqani network and disrupted their ability to carry out terrorist activities in Afghanistan.⁸ But despite all these efforts by the Pakistan Army, there is always a trust deficit between Pakistani leadership and the US administration and Afghan authorities, which is most likely due to diverging interests. They look at each other with suspicion and doubt. President Trump's statements against Pakistan are a case in point.⁹ But as a matter of fact, if we analyze the situation in Afghanistan, the military mission and Afghan security

forces have been unable to defeat the Afghan Taliban. The Afghan Taliban are now undeniable, established force in Afghanistan and exercise influence if not control over a huge swath of territory, which enabled them to establish, within the county, their safe havens, training camps and command and control structures.

The Taliban's enhanced capacity has enabled them to carry out activities with greater impunity. It was predicted that on the drawdown of the ISAF, the Taliban would come back with renewed power because the Afghan armed forces would be unable to defeat them in the absence of US forces. It was forecasted that Afghan forces would soon melt away under Taliban pressure because they do not have the capacity to work in isolation under sustained pressure. In addition, the Afghan armed forces have many other problem areas that make them quite weak in the face of hardened Taliban.¹⁰

In this backdrop, this paper is aimed at analyzing the outcome of Operation Zarb-e-Azb in the context of the Pak-US relations. Despite conducting the US desired military operation at a high cost of losing valuable human lives and property, Pakistan could not please its allies in the war against terrorism. There is much more to be seen bellow and beyond the spectrum of military operations. This paper looks into the overall conditions and environment that enabled the conduct of operation Zarb-e-Azb and the complementary operations, Khyber-I, II, and III. It highlights the formulation of the National Action Plan that ultimately cleared the way for the operation Zarb-e-Azb. Finally, the paper examines the US response to this operation and its impact on Pak-US relations.

Background of Operation Zarb-e-Azb

The decision to launch an operation against terrorist groups in NWA was widely discussed in and outside of Pakistan. During 2010, it was realized that without a major operation in NWA, peace across the country could not be established. Based on the recommendations of field commanders and intelligence reports collected from the area, senior military leadership was in favor of the operation being launched in 2010. Field commanders were of the view that since various terrorist groups had gathered in North Waziristan and, therefore, without a major military operation, peace would not be restored in the country.¹¹

In an interview, Major General Athar Abbas (retired) expressed that in 2010, military leadership was in support of launching a military campaign in North Waziristan but could not be materialized.¹² There were several compelling reasons for the hesitation to launch an operation in NWA including uncertainty regarding the possible collaboration coming across Afghanistan border. Despite the willingness to launch an operation, the possibility of achieving success was questioned because of the presence of other hostile forces around NWA. It was expected that once the North Waziristan front was opened, terrorists sponsored by India might put intense pressure in Balochistan. Fighting on two fronts was thought to be too much of a challenge for Pakistan's armed forces. There were certain apprehensions that media and civil society might not support this initiative. Hence, in the absence of complete backing from these

factions and the nation as a whole, it was decided not to make an isolated decision to launch an operation in NWA.

Continuous pressure from the Obama administration for launching an operation also made it difficult for the decision makers in Pakistan to submit to US pressure. Although launching the operation in NWA was in the national interest, it was difficult to convince the nation that the Pakistan Army did not take dictation from the US. Additionally, it had to take into consideration the issue related to the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) as a big challenge for any military campaign against militants. Therefore, it was realized that in the absence of national support if Pakistan fails to treat IDPs well, they could reflect badly on this operation. Taking all these factors together, it can be concluded that despite all the criticisms, Pakistan was probably right in delaying the process.

Prelude to Operation Zarb-e-Azb

Before the start of operation Zarb-e-Azb, the Government of Pakistan planned to resolve the issue through peaceful means and decided to engage the TTP. To begin with, the two sides agreed to observe the ceasefire for one month. The TTP spokesman, Shahidullah Shahid, stated that “all comrades to respect the decision and refrain from any activity during the ceasefire period.” The government also stopped surgical strikes against the TTP hideouts in a hope of ending more than six years of violence in the country. Meanwhile, both sides nominated three individuals each for talks. The government team was led by Irfan Siddique. Other members were Rahimullah Yousafzai and Rustam Shah Mohmand. The TTP committee was headed by Maulana Samiul Haq and other members were Professor Ibrahim and Maulana Abdul Aziz, the former cleric of the Red Mosque.¹³

The TTP put forward two conditions for the negotiations: One, the creation of a peace zone in FATA where militants can move freely, and second, the release of non-combatant militants from prison. As a goodwill gesture, the government set free 12 low-profile inmates but declined the demand of a peace zone. Militants did not observe the ceasefire arguing that the government did not meet all their demands and continued terrorist activities. Some of the major attacks which compelled the government to reconsider its plan of solving the issue through peaceful means were an attack at the Islamabad High Court which killed 11 persons including a judge. Moreover, twenty-three people were killed in a bomb explosion in a vegetable market in Islamabad. Finally, militants declared that they were ending the truce in April 2014, thus, ending the hope for a peaceful solution to the problem.¹⁴

Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan, stated in his address to the National Assembly that his government had sincerely tried to ensure that the peace talks succeed but the militants preferred to carry on terrorist attacks. He stated that terrorism and peace talks cannot go along side-by-side. The terrorist group considered the government’s peaceful effort as a weakness and behaved arrogantly. Following the terrorist attack at Jinnah International Airport in Karachi, the

government finally decided to use force to root out the terrorists from NWA by launching operation Zarb-e-Azb.¹⁵

Karachi Airport Attack and the Tragic Episode of the Army Public School

As mentioned earlier, the Pakistan Army had planned to launch an operation against militants in North Waziristan since 2010 but delayed its action for a number of reasons. In the aftermath of a terrorist attack on Jinnah International Airport on the night of 8/9 June 2014, the peace process immediately collapsed. TTP claimed the responsibility for the attack which left 28 people dead including 10 terrorists.¹⁶ The Pakistan Army was then determined to take the decision to launch its action against terrorist hideouts in NWA carrying the code name operation 'Zarb-e-Azb', which means the 'strike of the sword of the Holy Prophet (PBUH)' used in Badr and Uhud.¹⁷ The operation was launched on June 15, 2014, and was aimed at flushing out the terrorist network consisting of various local and foreign banned organizations.¹⁸

Afterward, TTP terrorists launched a brutal attack on the Army Public School (APS), Peshawar on December 16, 2014, killing over 147 innocent children including 8 teachers.¹⁹ On this occasion, the TTP spokesperson stated that "it is just the beginning, we have taken revenge for one (Mehsud) by taking revenge on hundreds. He said that this attack and the one carried out on Karachi airport are meant to send a message to the Pakistani government."²⁰ Their violent act obligated all stakeholders to unite and bring a major shift in Pakistan's determination to fight terrorism. Accordingly, a national consensus was developed to pass the 21st Amendment in the Constitution to provide a legal base for the parliamentary enacted the National Action Plan (NAP).²¹

The National Action Plan

After the tragic incident of APS, the political leadership of Pakistan presented the twenty-point National Action Program on December 24, 2014.²² This comprehensive plan suggested a list of steps for the elimination of extremism and terrorism from the country. Pakistan lifted the moratorium on death penalties. As a result, 176 convicted-individuals were subsequently hanged in Pakistan. Military courts were constituted within weeks after NAP backed by the constitutional and legal cover was finalized. The objective of the military courts was to deliver quick justice to the militants arrested under the charges of terrorism.

In some areas, the government performed well. It succeeded in registering mobile phone SIM cards nationwide which would help track militants, who are using cellular services.²³ But despite the urgency, there has been limited progress in number of areas, including registration of Madaris and tracking their funding sources. The National Counter-Terrorism Authority (NACTA) though existed on papers but had yet not been fully operational. NACTA was initially conceived and organized during 2009 as the highest body to coordinate intelligence sharing by 26 spy agencies in order to curb terrorism in the country.²⁴ However, in the aftermath of the APS Peshawar episode, NACTA was revived with the NACTA Act-2013 as necessary to curb the menace of

terrorism.²⁵ Subsequently, law enforcement agencies conducted intelligence-based operations across the country and arrested a large number of people on various charges. The security agencies also succeeded in foiling terrorist attacks by the insurgents.²⁶ Moreover, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan formulated an Apex Committee to monitor the success of NAP.

Outcome of Operation Zarb-e-Azb

The operation Zarb-e-Azb played a significant role in eliminating terrorist safe havens, command and control centers of the TTP and other affiliated groups hiding in NWA. It improved the overall security situation in Pakistan. The militants were dislodged from their dens in NWA and Tirah valley of Khyber Agency. Later, Pakistan's security forces launched combing operations throughout Pakistan to eliminate militant sleeper cells in urban centers.²⁷ The terrorists from foreign countries were also the main target of the operation Zarb-e-Azb as they were supporting TTP in its terrorist activities. During this campaign, Pakistan did not discriminate among the terrorist groups.²⁸ While speaking about operation Zarb-e-Azb at the United Nations forum, the former Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif said:

*Our operation Zarb-e-Azb is the largest anti-terrorism campaign against terrorists anywhere, involving over 180,000 of our security forces ... and will conclude only when our objective has been accomplished. This is complemented by an all-inclusive National Action Plan. It encompasses police and security actions, political and legal measures and social and economic policy packages, aimed at countering violent extremism.*²⁹

It was in Pakistan's best national interest to take the battle against militants in NWA. One year after operation Zarb-e-Azb, the law enforcement agencies accomplished most of the objectives against militants in NWA. The former DG ISPR, Lieutenant General Asim Saleem Bajwa shared one-year progress of the operation and pointed out that 2763 terrorists had been killed, 837 hideouts demolished and 253 ton of explosive recovered from the insurgents, enough to make IEDs for at least 15 years. He further stated that the modern weapons recovered from militants were stolen from NATO forces.³⁰ However, despite challenges, in just over two years the law enforcement agencies of Pakistan succeeded in eliminating the terrorists. The Pakistan Army achieved tremendous success against the terrorists and insurgents in the tribal agency, the place which was once considered as a hub of all kinds of militants as well as the graveyard for the invading forces. The Pakistan Army made it possible to eliminate the hardened and well-entrenched terrorists from the entire NWA.³¹

The operation Zarb-e-Azb has yielded its desired results. Pakistan is more stable and peaceful than it was before the launch of this operation. Success can be verified with the help of facts and figures. The number of terrorist attacks across the country has significantly declined.³² According to the data retrieved from the South Asia Terrorism Portal, the fatalities of civilians from terrorist violence had declined. Civilian fatalities have dropped 40 percent in 2014, 65 percent in 2015 and 74 percent in 2016.³³ Despite the progress, we are still far away from the ultimate goal of achieving long term

peace in the region due to many regional and extra-regional factors affecting the region as a whole. However, the peace deal signed between the US and Taliban in Doha, Qatar gave hope that the reign of terror and violence will eventually end soon.³⁴

The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Nawaz Sharif, while lauding the operation Zarb-e-Azb stated that the whole nation along with the Pakistan Army and other law enforcement agencies played a significant role in its determination to eradicate the menace of terrorism from the country. He further remarked that “the past two years of Zarb-e-Azb as an everlasting tale of human determination, courage, fortitude, bravery and sacrifice, which will continue to shine in the pages of our history and would be a source of guidance for the new generation.”³⁵ The former Army Chief, General Raheel Sharif, opined that “the way Pakistan Army conducted this operation, there is no match to be found in the history anywhere in the world.”³⁶

However, the shifting of IDPs from NWA and their resettlement was a serious challenge for Pakistan. Despite difficulties, the Pakistan Army managed to shift the civilians from NWA to save their lives and property. The registered number of IDPs who left the war zone was around one million. The FATA Disaster Management Authority (FDMA) registered IDPs and they were dispersed in different districts of KP. On clearing major areas of NWA from militants, the repatriation of IDPs was permitted after December 2014. Although it was a daunting task to resettle the IDPs, the Pakistan Army took extraordinary steps and made sure that its plan to resettle IDPs implemented in letter and spirit without delay. The Government of Pakistan introduced various uplift programs and activities under military supervision for the development and rehabilitation of the area.³⁷ Nevertheless, Lieutenant General Talat Masood (retired) opined that “the military gains will only be a part of the exercise. The complete success of the operation depends on the rehabilitation of the displaced people and development in the tribal region.”³⁸

US Response to Operation Zarb-e-Azb

As discussed earlier, Pakistan launched a full-fledged military campaign in NWA after due deliberation. Jen Psaki from the State Department expressed that this is solely Pakistan-led operation and the US supports Pakistan’s efforts to protect its sovereignty and create stability.³⁹ Although the US has appreciated Pakistan’s efforts to destroy the terrorist networks in NWA, at the same time, it has failed to recognize the sacrifices that Pakistan has made in reducing the menace of terrorism from the region. The operation Zarb-e-Azb continued for over two years. This military campaign fractured the backbone of the terrorist organizations but in return, Pakistan had to pay a heavy price. Hundreds of soldiers including officers embraced the sacred status of martyrdom and many valiant Ghazis were wounded.⁴⁰

When the Pakistan Army started this operation, the US appreciated the move in a hope that it would help in minimizing the dangers of terrorism. The US State Department explained in a report that it puts “Pakistan at the top of the list of countries that observed a decrease in terror attacks and acknowledged the military operation as a major factor in that drop.”⁴¹ In a talk at the Atlantic Council in Washington D.C. in 2017,

a former US special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Richard Olson, expressed how during 2014 many terrorist attacks and mass killings by militants had occurred in Pakistan. He was of the view that the operation Zarb-e-Azb has turned out to be a game-changer for Pakistan. Due to this successful campaign against the terrorists, violence in Pakistan has decreased significantly.⁴² Lieutenant General John Nicholson, who succeeded General John F. Campbell in Afghanistan, said in a written response to a question by the US Senate Armed Services Committee that the military operation being carried out by Pakistan Army in the tribal region is critical to defeating terrorism.⁴³

On the other hand, the former US Secretary of State John Kerry stated during his visit to India that "Pakistan has work to do in order to push harder against indigenous groups that are engaged in extremist terrorist activities."⁴⁴ The real problem was a trust deficit between Pakistan and the US. In spite of tremendous sacrifices, the US did not give enough credit to Pakistan for undertaking the challenging task of operation Zarb-e-Azb. Pakistan's position and stance were vindicated by the fact that it has played a positive role in bringing the Taliban on the negotiating table to start peace talks with the US and US President Donald Trump had to praise Pakistan publicly during his official visit to India.⁴⁵

Conclusion

Throughout the 1980s, Pakistan was caught up in a war in Afghanistan. Since then, the tribal areas of Pakistan have become exposed to large-scale presence and influence of militants from Afghanistan and other parts of the world. In the aftermath of 9/11 and US military intervention in Afghanistan, the terrorists started acting inside Afghanistan and within the border areas of Pakistan. The security situation across Pakistan finally compelled Islamabad to launch a decisive military operation in NWA to root out the terrorists from their safe havens. Therefore, the operation Zarb-e-Azb seriously degraded terrorist groups and brought a positive effect on Pakistan's security, stability, and progress.

As an outcome of the operation Zarb-e-Azb, the confidence of the nation that was shattered by terrorism during the past few years has been restored. On the other hand, this operation has convinced all stakeholders about Pakistan's sincerity in fighting the menace of terrorism, thus, received praises worldwide. Whereas, the US found it easier to blame Pakistan just for its own failures in Afghanistan. The US has never recognized that the large-scale presence of Indian intelligence agencies in Afghanistan and their nefarious actions against Pakistan are not in the US interest. Since the US-led coalition forces are unable to claim tangible victory against the Afghan Taliban, it is, therefore, advisable that the US must focus on the reconciliation and peace process with the Taliban for having permanent peace in Afghanistan. They should also keep this in mind that the road to peace in Afghanistan passes through Pakistan, not through India.

References

- ¹ Zahir Shah Sherazi, "Zarb-e-Azb operation: 120 suspected militants killed in N Waziristan", *DAWN*, June 16, 2014.
- ² "Gunmen kill 13 at Karachi's Jinnah International Airport", *BBC News*, June 9, 2014; Yaqoob Malik, "Terrorists attack Kamra Airbase: • Nine attackers dead • Plane damaged", *Dawn*, August 16, 2012; and "Terrorists attack Navy airbase in Karachi, destroy three aircraft", *Dawn*, May 22, 2011.
- ³ Zahir Shah Sherazi, Zarb-e-Azb operation: 120 suspected militants killed in N Waziristan.
- ⁴ The House expresses its full support for the military operation in Tribal Areas, National Assembly of Pakistan, Resolution, June 16, 2016, http://www.na.gov.pk/en/resolution_detail.php?id=172 accessed May 15, 2016
- ⁵ Muhammad Munir, "Zarb-e-Azb for Peace", *IPRI Building Consensus*, July 2, 2014, 2.
- ⁶ Anwar Iqbal | Baqir Sajjad Syed, US calls for tough action against Haqqani network, *DAWN*, August 31, 2015.
- ⁷ Mateen Haider, "McCain lauds Pakistan's anti-terror efforts", *Dawn*, July 03, 2016, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1268846>, accessed September 5, 2017.
- ⁸ "Operation Zarb-i-Azb disrupted Haqqani network: US general" *Dawn*, November 06, 2014, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1142664>, accessed September 5, 2017.
- ⁹ Saba Aziz, "Pakistan-US war of words over Donald Trump's tweet", *Aljazeera*, 2 Jan 2018, www.aljazeera.com/.../pakistan-war-words-donald-trump-tweet-18010205709366.htm, accessed January 16, 2018.
- ¹⁰ Khurshid Khan & Afifa Kiran, *Afghan National Security Force: A catch 22 in Afghanistan 2014- the Decision Point* ed. Maria Sultan, Aamir Hashmi and Manzoor Abbasi (Islamabad: National Defence University SASSI, 2013), 186,187, 190, 194.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² "Kayani was reluctant to launch N Waziristan operation", *DAWN*, June 30, 2014.
- ¹³ Nida Hameed, "Struggling IDPs of North Waziristan in the Wake of Operation Zarb-e-Azb", *NDU Journal*, 2015, 97.
- ¹⁴ Ibid., 98.
- ¹⁵ "Gunmen kill 13 at Karachi's Jinnah International Airport", *BBC News*, June 9, 2014; and Munir, "Zarb-e-Azb for Peace."
- ¹⁶ "TTP Claims Attack on Karachi Airport", *DAWN*, June 8, 2014.
- ¹⁷ Farhan Zahid, "The Successes and Failures of Pakistan's Operation Zarb-e-Azb", *The Jamestown Foundation-Terrorism Monitor*, Volume: 13 Issue: 14, July 10, 2015, www.jamestown.org/programs/.../single/?..., accessed April 17, 2016; Umbreen Javid, "Operation Zarb-e-Azb: A Successful Initiative to Curtail Terrorism", *South Asian Studies-A Research Journal of South Asian Studies*, Vol. 30, No.2, July - December 2015, 44, 45; and "Has Pakistan's Zarb-e-Azb military operation failed?", www.dw.com/en/has-pakistans-zarb-e-azb-military-operation-failed/a-19523083, accessed September, 2017.
- ¹⁸ Javid, "Operation Zarb-e-Azb", 43; and Al-Qaeda and the TTP have a network of Islamist militant groups based in inclusive of all provinces and Islamabad Capital Territory, commonly known as "Punjabi Taliban". These groups are proscribed organizations under Pakistani laws, but still manage to operate under different names. Some of these include Harkat-ul-Jihad-e-Islami, Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), Jaysh-e-Muhammad (JeM) and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).
- ¹⁹ Javid, "Operation Zarb-e-Azb", 45.
- ²⁰ TTP Claims Attack on Karachi Airport, *DAWN*, June 9, 2014.
- ²¹ "Parliament passes 21st Constitutional Amendment, Army Act Amendment", *Dawn*, January 06, 2015, www.dawn.com/news/1155271, accessed April 19, 2016.
- ²² Raza Rumi, "Charting Pakistan's Internal Security Policy, Special Report-368", *United States Institute of Peace*, May, 2015, 8; Anup Kaple, "Pakistan announces a national plan to fight terrorism, says terrorists' days are numbered", *The Washington Post*, December 24, 2014, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/.../pakistan-announc...>, accessed April 3, 2016; and Gen (r) Mirza Aslam Beg, "The National Action Plan", *The Nation*, January 12, 2015, nation.com.pk/columns/12-Jan-2015/the-national-action-plan, accessed April 3, 2016.
- ²³ Zeeshan Salahuddin, 20 Points to Pakistan? *Foreign Policy*, June 29, 2015 (page No).
- ²⁴ Azam Khan, "Billions for counter-terrorism, nothing for Nacta", *The Express Tribune*, June 7, 2015.
- ²⁵ National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), www.nacta.gov.pk/, accessed September 18, 2017; and Ahmad Saffee, "Issue Brief-Pakistan's Counter-Terrorism Policy", *Institute of Strategic Studies*, October 07, 2015.
- ²⁶ Salahuddin, "20 Points to Pakistan?"
- ²⁷ ISPR Press Release No PR 138/2016.
- ²⁸ Ibid. 183.
- ²⁹ Extract from Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's speech at the 70th Session of United Nations General Assembly.
- ³⁰ News Desk, 490 soldiers, 3,500 militants killed in Operation Zarb-e-Azb so far: DG ISPR, *The Express Tribune*, June 15, 2016; and Ghazanfar, "Operation Zarb-e-Azb: Two years of success".
- ³¹ Ghazanfar, "Operation Zarb-e-Azb: Two years of success".
- ³² Editorial, The Operation Two Years On, *DAWN*, June 16, 2016; and Ghazanfar, "Operation Zarb-e-Azb: Two years of success".
- ³³ Ghazanfar, "Operation Zarb-e-Azb: Two years of success".
- ³⁴ Mujib Mashal, "Taliban and U.S. Strike Deal to Withdraw American Troops from Afghanistan", *The New York Times*, March 1, 2020.
- ³⁵ Ibid.
- ³⁶ Ghazanfar, "Operation Zarb-e-Azb: Two years of success".
- ³⁷ Ghazanfar, "Operation Zarb-e-Azb: Two years of success".
- ³⁸ Ibid., 49.
- ³⁹ Shahid Javed Barki et. al., *Afghanistan: The Next Phase*, (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2014), 181.
- ⁴⁰ Ghazanfar, "Operation Zarb-e-Azb: Two years of success".
- ⁴¹ Zeeshan Salahuddin, 20 Points to Pakistan? *Foreign Policy*, June 29, 2015.
- ⁴² Richard Olson, International Commitment to Afghanistan: A Conversation with SRAP Ambassador Richard Olson, Conversation, *Atlantic Council*, Washington D.C. June 21, 2016.
- ⁴³ "Zarb-e-Azb has reduced militants' ability to use Pakistan soil: US commander", *The Express Tribune*, January 31, 2016.
- ⁴⁴ "Has Pakistan's Zarb-e-Azb military operation failed?"
- ⁴⁵ "World now recognises Pakistan as part of the solution, says FM Qureshi on US-Taliban talks", *DAWN*, February 26, 2020.

TRIBAL IDENTITY DYNAMICS: A CASE STUDY OF US-HAQQANIS RELATIONSHIP

*Rashid Ahmed, Anum Babur and Qaim Raza Jaffry**

Abstract

The rise of the Haqqani group to eminence was amplified by US-support during the Afghan jihad against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. However, with the consolidation of Taliban supremacy in the post-Soviet era, the Haqqanis were marginally side-lined for being non-Kandaharis. Owing to this identity-clash with the Taliban, they were eager to switch sides. The focus of this article is, therefore, retrospective as it presents an empirically-grounded analysis of the US-Haqqanis relationship to argue that identity and prestige have always been the core concerns for Haqqanis. The US was unable to recognize Haqqanis' potential as a local partner due to the lack of knowledge about the complex tribal identity dynamics of Afghanistan. Taking Haqqanis on board would have augmented the stability and legitimacy of the Afghan government in the post-2001 era. This also has implications for the current Afghan peace process as the backing of Haqqanis for the US-Taliban deal has ensured a wider support-base for the deal. Hence, the US needs to be cognizant of the tribal identity landscape of Afghanistan for lasting peace in the region.

Keywords: Afghanistan, Taliban, Haqqani Group, Peace Process, US.

Introduction

This paper seeks to highlight the understudied connection between the US and Haqqani group during the era of Soviet invasion of Afghanistan until the onset of the War on Terror and subsequent dynamics of their relationship to date. The paper strives to answer questions, such as why the US supported Jalaluddin Haqqani and his network during the Soviet-Afghan war and what was the impact of such support on military capability, political clout and evolution of the identity of this group from fighting with the Soviet forces to the Taliban regime after Soviet withdrawal and up to the post-2001 era. The paper also explores why this group joined the Afghan Taliban in 1995 then decided to switch sides after 2001 and why it could not join the US-supported Afghan government. Finally, this paper studies the implications of this retrospective analysis to the current Afghan peace process.

The paper engages in a detailed account starting from Jalaluddin Haqqani's group coming into the limelight while revolting against the Daud regime to its

*Dr. Rashid Ahmed is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, National Defence University, Islamabad. Ms. Anum Babur is a Lecturer at the Department of International Relations, National Defence University, Islamabad. Dr. Qaim Raza Jaffry is a former Deputy Director Libraries and Information Services at National Defence University, Islamabad.

patronization by the CIA during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The US provided Jalaluddin Haqqani a great deal of money and war materials during the Soviet-Afghan war. The US officials were so charmed that the former congressman Charlie Wilson once called him goodness personified.¹ Conversely, after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, US weapons supply to Haqqani's group was reduced. However, the heavy US-support during 1979-1989 converted this group into a cohesive militia as "CIA's support of money and material gave Haqqani's group a tremendous amount of influence within Afghanistan's *mujahidin* community and underpinned their capacity for assembling coalitions of commanders from various parties."² The US aid also enabled Haqqanis to "broker arms deals with other field commanders... and their willingness to equip Arab volunteers was, no doubt, a factor in their unique relationship with foreign fighters during the early years of the conflict."³

The flow of resources to the Haqqani group by the US during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan not only increased its military capability and political leverage in the region but also made it arrogant and identity conscious. The sense of identity and prestige influenced the subsequent trajectory of the US-Haqqanis relationship and is key to understand their fallout.

After 9/11, US short-sightedness coupled with a lack of understanding of Afghanistan's tribal politics resulted in the mishandling of the Haqqani group. In 2001, the Haqqani group was even ready to switch sides in favor of the US due to identity friction with the Taliban but the US let this opportunity pass by. Mathew Snow argues that "had America listened to Pakistan not only could their relationship have perhaps fostered into a true alliance but the next decade of military involvement could have been drastically different. Jalaluddin could have stabilized the Afghan border region early in the conflict and Pakistan could have become a greater partner in the War on Terrorism, clearing and reinforcing the border from their side of the country."⁴ This statement is supported by the demonstrated control of Haqqanis of the Afghan border-regions, inhabited by the Zadran tribe to which Haqqanis themselves belonged and among whom they enjoyed popular support as well as the political clout and linkages Haqqanis developed in the hey-day of their power.

Since identity and prestige have been the main factors in determining the affiliations of Haqqanis, the US missed the opportunity of brokering a more stable regime in Afghanistan post-2001 by ignoring the complex tribal identity dynamics of Afghanistan and not taking the Haqqanis on board. The US would be well-advised to keep the Haqqanis engaged along with the Taliban in the current Afghan peace process and be mindful of the fact that whether alone or with the Taliban, Haqqanis pride themselves on their separate sense of identity and their incorporation in the peace process would ensure a wider support-base for more lasting peace in Afghanistan.

Haqqani Network and Its Roots

Scholars note that the Haqqani network was pioneered by Maulvi Jalaluddin Haqqani, a Pashtun cleric from Afghanistan's southeastern Khost province. He belonged to the Zadran tribe in Afghanistan but his career as a competent and recognized

mujahideen commander enabled him to forge links exceeding his country's medley of tribal and ethnic groups.⁵ The Zadran Pashtuns' home area straddles the Pak-Afghan border.⁶ In Afghanistan, Zadrans mostly inhabit the hills of Suleman Range between Khost and Zurmut.⁷ This southeastern part of the country is also known as Loya Paktia (Greater Paktia). Most of the tribes in this region are different from their ethnic kin in the East and the South. Except for Ahmadzai, Kharoti and Sulemankhel tribes, all other tribes do not belong to the famous Pashtun tribal confederation, i.e., Ghilzai and Durrani. Yet, minor tribes that inhabit the Khost basin are sometimes grouped under the same monolithic label as Khostwal.⁸ Therefore, Zadrans are included in the Khostwal Pashtuns.⁹ Since the 19th century, there has been a conflict between Spur Khel and Mazaey Khel clans within the Zadran tribe.¹⁰ Generally, Haqqanis trace their lineage to the Mazaey while their rivals, such as Bacha Khan Zadran belong to the Spur.¹¹

Jalaluddin Haqqani revolted against the Daud regime after toppling King Zahir Shah's monarchy in 1973.¹² Regrettably, this campaign received no people-support and was suppressed in 1975.¹³ These individuals remained members of the apex committee of Hizb-i-Islami from the year 1976 to 1979. In 1979, Khalis developed differences with Hekmatyar, thus, gathered his supporters in their group, Hizb-i-Islami-Khalis. In the same year, a Jirga (traditional assembly) of Paktia tribes placed Hizb-i-Islami-Khalis under Haqqani command. From 1981 to 1984, Haqqani's role in Hizb-i-Islami-Khalis grew significantly which increased his influence in Zadran and beyond.¹⁴ After defeating the state forces in 1983 and capturing Khost and Urgan, Haqqani further expanded his power in Paktia. During the military operation against the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) forces, Haqqani led his militia besides coordinating with other Zadrans. He even engaged other tribes to launch large-scale offensives against the Soviets.¹⁵

Jalaluddin Haqqani's Connections with the US

The relevant literature reveals that among the anti-Soviet resistance groups being supported by the US, it was Haqqani's militia that was armed the most. US support to Haqqani's group was because "it had established a close association with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) during the mid-1980s. CIA allocated large sums of war resources to the Haqqani group to gain supremacy over the USSR. Such a strategy was followed by the US due to a CIA handlers' observation that [Haqqani] could kill Russians like you wouldn't believe."¹⁶ Peter Tomsen's admission of the US promising more arms to Haqqani to fight against the Najibullah regime further strengthens this contention.¹⁷ As it turned out, the Haqqani network benefitted from various patrons to develop into a powerful force as "different nations handled Jalaluddin Haqqani to achieve their vested interests."¹⁸

Nevertheless, out of all the other states involved with Haqqani, the US held the primary position. Ambassador Tomsen asserts that it was CIA that increased Haqqani's capacity to wage war.¹⁹ During these years, "CIA provided cash directly to the resistance commanders ... The Haqqani family would use that money in business ... It published magazines and run a radio station as well."²⁰ CIA also provided construction materials

and logistic support to Haqqanis. After 1986, the US strategy in Afghanistan transformed with Haqqani becoming a “unilateral asset of CIA – a term used by the American intelligence officers themselves.”²¹ During those days, Haqqani frequently met CIA officers to pick up supplies.²² Thus, the Haqqani network acquired the prestigious role of being a facilitator and a conduit for local and foreign elements.

Here the question arises, why CIA and other state agencies were supporting Haqqani separately. The answer to this question lies in the fact that a number of characteristics possessed by the Haqqani militia made it the most favored recipient of CIA and others’ funding. These included “Haqqanis’ advantageous strategic location and well-developed capacity for mobilizing tribes for war.”²³ Both factors helped the US strengthen its position in Afghanistan and to counter the Soviet advances in 1979. The Haqqanis’ position was consolidated throughout the 1980s. According to a CIA official, who was in charge of the provision of American assistance to Afghan *mujahidin*, “60,000 tons of materiel were shipped across the border every year. Out of this supply for various resistance parties, twenty percent were routed directly to Haqqanis.”²⁴ This implies that Haqqanis were at least supplied 12,000 tons of war materiel every year during the 1980s.

As the Haqqani network gradually augmented its strength and operations, its international reputation grew. The “Haqqanis’ strategically important position and growing reputation for effectiveness increased their influence in the CIA and intelligence agencies of other resistance-supporting states.”²⁵ The Haqqani group, under Jalaluddin Haqqani, acquired the status of a reliable US partner as “Haqqani was seen by CIA officers perhaps the most impressive Pashtun battlefield commander in the war. These impressions translated into direct financial and military support as well.”²⁶

Haqqani and the Taliban (1994-2001)

As discussed earlier, Jalaluddin Haqqani, founder of the Haqqani network, belonged to Loya Paktia. The tribes in the southeast (Loya Paktia) have always been left autonomous by the rulers of Afghanistan due to their remote location which also made them difficult to coerce. Similarly, there was some advantage in leaving them autonomous due to their ability to mobilize against external enemies.²⁷ History reveals that they have been loyal to the royalty and because they supported the Afghan monarchy, they used to consider themselves as king-makers in Afghanistan. Their loyalty was officially recognized “as a reward for their service to the kings, [and] the tribes of Loya Paktia were exempted from paying taxes and conscription by the central government for over a hundred years and also remained free from most forms of state influence. This feeling of power had contributed to an extreme sense of independence and self-confidence among the Loya Paktia Pashtuns.”²⁸

Keeping that in perspective, one can understand why Haqqanis have always guarded their tribal and regional identity during every peaceful and troubled period, starting from Daud’s era and the Soviet invasion (1979-1989) to the civil war years of 1992-1994 when they did not side with any warring-group and consolidated their power

base. Even being part of the Taliban regime, they kept their distinct identity alive. This sense of identity and prestige came to play a great role in the subsequent US-Haqqanis relationship and its falling apart.

The Taliban leadership belonged to Kandahar, therefore, they kept Haqqanis at arm's length. Most of the authors are in agreement that Haqqani never wanted to join the Taliban. Brown and Rassler claim that "Haqqani was opposed to joining the Taliban but due to their popularity among the population in the greater Paktia area and among his fighters, he was pushed to form an alliance."²⁹ Similarly, Dressler also believes that Jalaluddin Haqqani joined the Taliban in 1995 after the Taliban seized his power-base in Loya Paktia.³⁰ It is also argued that "bin Laden played a role in the deal brokered between Haqqani and the Taliban."³¹ However, one finds this argument as doubtful since bin Laden came to Afghanistan in 1996.

Once Haqqanis joined the Taliban, they helped them attain an edge over the Northern Alliance. Such a triumph was of immense importance in the face of defeat suffered by the Taliban during battles in the outskirts of Kabul, Shindand, and Herat in 1995, after which analysts started predicting the Taliban's decline.³² As a consequence of the aforementioned developments, "Haqqani and the Khost Taliban commander, Ehsanullah, raised a force of 2,000 to be sent to Kandahar and Kabul to add to the Taliban's might."³³ However, the alliance did not prove to be fruitful in the long-run as Kandahari commanders alienated Haqqani's fighters due to which large numbers of Haqqani recruits started deserting their ranks. This had the unwanted consequence that "by the end of two months, only 300 men were left. Later on, in 1999 and 2000, the Haqqani linked tribes and the Taliban came to loggerheads once again. Neither did the Haqqanis approve of the Taliban's ban on children playing games nor did they appreciate the continued appointment of Kandaharis to influential positions in the Taliban's government."³⁴ As a consequence of such moves, the rift between the two deepened.

Similarly, though Jalaluddin was allotted an unimportant Ministry during the Taliban rule, i.e., Borders and Tribal Affairs, yet in practice, Haqqani and his men remained an independent ally of the Taliban regime as they did not fully accept their authority, especially over Loya Paktiya. In the northern areas of Kabul, Haqqani's forces proved to be of immense importance to the Taliban's military campaign in their struggle against the Northern Alliance.³⁵ Haqqani, while being a minister in the Taliban government, was never part of Omar's Kandahari decision-making circles.³⁶

Haqqani's group had played an instrumental role in defeating the Soviets and because of this he disliked the arrogance of the Kandahari Taliban. Moreover, as narrated by Maulvi Saadullah, a Haqqani's confidant during the 1990s, "Haqqani favored an Islamic republic,"³⁷ as opposed to the Taliban, who favored Islamic Emirate. Eventually, relations between the two groups further deteriorated after the Taliban suffered losses at the hands of Massoud's fighters in Mazar-e-Sharif. After 9/11, Haqqani was given charge of all Taliban forces to wage the war of resistance against the looming US invasion.³⁸

US Mishandling of Haqqanis after 9/11

There were many reasons which forced Haqqani to join the resistance against the occupation forces. As mentioned earlier, Haqqanis and the Taliban were not natural allies. During the Taliban regime, Haqqanis were never treated like Kandaharis because of which they started considering a shift in their alliance. After the end of the Taliban government in 2001, the US proposed to Haqqanis “an unconditional surrender. In Loya Paktia, Bacha Khan Zadran became an important US ally as he helped the US forces to liquidate the Taliban and Al Qaeda members. However, Bacha Khan “tended to exaggerate the presence of Al Qaeda and Taliban members in [Paktia], in order to eliminate his own political rivals.”³⁹

Subsequently, Haqqani leaders made advances to the Afghan government in the early years but these offerings were snubbed; however, by that time, Haqqani’s political rivals had gained strong positions in the new system. Consequently, he joined the Afghan Taliban. Joining the Taliban gave a sense of legitimacy to his actions. Jalaluddin’s group is still recognized as an autonomous entity within the Taliban and its leadership is primarily bound together by tribal lineage and family membership. Jalaluddin’s son, Sirajuddin, had already taken over much of the day-to-day operational concerns even before Jalaluddin’s demise on September 3, 2018.⁴⁰

In October 2001, Haqqani paid a visit to Islamabad to hold meetings with US officials which failed due to US demand for a kind of unconditional surrender. Thereafter, Haqqani departed saying “we will retreat to the mountains and begin a long guerrilla war to claim our pure land from infidels and free our country as we did against the Soviets.”⁴¹ More light is shed on this turn of events by Thomas Ruttig, who expounds that:

*Between 9/11 and the Bonn conference on Afghanistan that started in late November 2001, several attempts were made to encourage a moderate faction of Taliban to break away from the mainstream movement and to become part of the following political movement. It was reported that the US and British agencies saw Haqqani as the possible leader of such a group and offered him a leading role in future Afghan government. Possibly it was a case of lack of coordination between different authorities: one report indicates that Haqqani’s brother Ibrahim Omari was arrested by the military while other US agencies negotiated with him.*⁴²

As to the matter of Ibrahim Omari’s arrest and torture when the Taliban government was toppled and replaced by the Karzai regime, he was sent by Haqqani to indicate a willingness for negotiation with the Afghan and American authorities. He was successful in establishing contact with CIA in 2002 at Gardez.⁴³ As recorded by Coll, “a senior officer named Mike in Afghanistan was trying to persuade Ibrahim to arrange a meeting with Jalaluddin in the United Arab Emirates. Mike wanted to propose to the Haqqanis to help CIA locating Osama bin Laden. At the Ariana, speaking through a Pashtu translator, Mike warned Ibrahim that the US would track down and kill his brother if he did not cooperate.”⁴⁴

It so happened that while Ibrahim Haqqani was engaged in talks and negotiations with a team of CIA agents, a special unit stationed in Kabul earmarked him as a viable target for arrest. The chief of CIA at Kabul station was aware that Ibrahim was a possible target but Mike and his fellows were not. Thus, Ibrahim was arrested on May 4, 2003 and “ended up in the custody of the National Directorate of Security (NDS) and later in the US military custody.”⁴⁵ The US also made several other slips in their dealings with the Haqqani network. Instead of inviting Jalaluddin Haqqani to the Bonn Conference as a relevant voice in the Afghan conflict, the US invited Bacha Khan Zadran from the rival Zadran tribe, a sworn enemy of Haqqani.⁴⁶ Amanullah Zadran, Bacha Khan’s brother was entrusted with the Ministry of Tribal and Border Affairs, a position previously occupied by Haqqani during the Taliban regime. The interim government formed under President Hamid Karzai further served to sideline the Haqqani network from Afghan political circles and processes.

Later on, the US contacted the Haqqani group once more while they were searching for a moderate faction to make the new Afghan government more broad-based.⁴⁷ However, this attempt bore no fruit as owing to “lack of coordination between the various US authorities, thus, the initiative failed. Consequently, Haqqani dismissed the plan of joining the new Afghan government.”⁴⁸ However, all political ties had not been severed yet: Haqqani’s followers among the Zadran tribe still maintained contacts with the Kabul-based UN team in 2002. Haji Abdul Rahman Zadran, Jalaluddin Haqqani’s cousin and also holding the command of Haqqani network’s operations branch, was part of an April 2002 delegation of elders from Loya Paktia region who met high ranking officials of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) to register their protest against US attacks on their villages. Thereafter, the Haqqani network became engaged in a full-fledge campaign against the US⁴⁹ which was launched in Paktika province.⁵⁰

In June 2003, Haqqani was made a member of the new Taliban Supreme Council. One month later in Khost, the Taliban, the Haqqani network, and Hezb divided their operation bases in Loya Paktia⁵¹ and in 2004, this network started small hit-and-run attacks on the US.⁵² However, by April 2006, Haqqanis had expanded their operational network to a broader area. Taliban recruitment in the Zadran areas also increased.⁵³ The Haqqani network started moving openly in this area and even attacked the US base in Laka Tika. Haqqanis carried out some high-profile attacks during that time.⁵⁴ Meanwhile, the Haqqani network kept on trying to develop communications with the US authorities, and in 2010, they were successful in developing this connection through Barnett Rubin (a Senior Adviser to the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan in the US Department of State). Rubin reported that:

In 2010, a non-US national, employed by him at the Center on International Cooperation, New York University, held a series of meetings with Ibrahim Haqqani; first in Rawalpindi and then in Dubai with the support of a European government. All of these meetings were reported to US Special Representative for Af-Pak Richard Holbrooke and Marc Grossman. The US refused any official engagement, despite requests from Ibrahim Haqqani. Finally, a meeting took place in Dubai in August 2011. However, these

contacts were broken off after the attack on the US embassy in Kabul in September 2011. The suspected organizer of this attack was Badruddin Haqqani. The contacts continue and led to the opening of a channel to Badruddin, who sent a letter meant for Secretary of State Hilary Clinton. Unfortunately, the letter arrived at the same time as the news of Badruddin Haqqani's death in a drone attack. The courier who had helped contact Badruddin was subsequently assassinated in a very professional manner by a team of armed men in Khost.⁵⁵

Steve Coll agrees with Rubin that on August 10, 2011, a meeting took place between Frank Ruggiero (Acting Assistant Secretary for Political Affairs), Jeff Hayes (Staff Member of US Security Council), and Ibrahim Haqqani in a hotel in Dubai.⁵⁶ Frank Ruggiero met Ibrahim Haqqani for exploratory conversations after President Obama realized that unlike Al Qaeda, Haqqanis were natives to the region and could not be completely uprooted.⁵⁷ A meeting was held in Doha between Marc Grossman and Tayeb Agha, who wanted to get the Taliban recognized as a legitimate movement by opening an office in Doha and get five Taliban leaders freed from prison in return for US Sergeant Bowe Bergdahl held by the Haqqanis since 2009.⁵⁸

In view of the above-mentioned record of the dealings between the US and Haqqani network, the US authorities miscalculated the importance of Pashtun culture in deciding Haqqani's fate. The Haqqani group assiduously took up the cause of resistance against the US and other occupying forces as "Haqqani's son, Sirajuddin, shortly after his father was insulted, experienced a religious awakening and grasped the reigns of the Haqqani Network as they began to slacken in Jalaluddin's aging grip. From 2002 to 2006, Sirajuddin reconstituted the network and rekindled the Taliban's might through arduous fundraising and solicitation of foreign manpower."⁵⁹

On July 7, 2015, Pakistan helped bring about a round of dialogue between the Afghan government and the Taliban. The US and the Afghan government did not oppose Haqqani's representatives in that meeting.⁶⁰ In August 2016, Sirajuddin Haqqani became deputy to the new Taliban leader Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada. In 2018, the peace efforts between the Taliban and the US were intensified and finally, a peace accord was signed on February 29, 2020. The agreement was welcomed by the Afghan political elites and there were calls for an early intra-Afghan dialogue, proposed to commence from March 10, 2020. However, "the date and modalities of a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire including joint implementation mechanisms ... would be announced along with the completion and agreement over the future political roadmap of Afghanistan."⁶¹ Though intra-Afghan dialogue failed to take place earlier due to disputed presidential election of 2019 and failure to reach an agreement over prisoner exchange between the Taliban after the Afghan government released 3000 Taliban prisoners till May 2020,⁶² the details started appearing in the news that the first high-level intra-Afghan meeting was scheduled to be held in recent future.

The support of Sirajuddin Haqqani, the head of Haqqani Network and Deputy Head of Taliban for this peace deal seemed extraordinary. He shared his views nine days before the signing of the US-Taliban Peace deal in an op-ed published in the *New York Times* stating that "my fellow Afghans will soon celebrate this historic agreement. Once

it is entirely fulfilled, Afghans will see the departure of all foreign troops.”⁶³ Now, it is for the US to ensure that the Taliban as well as Haqqanis remain engaged in the peace process and a successful intra-Afghan dialogue takes place involving all parties.

Conclusion

The above-mentioned record explains that it is the identity and social prestige for which Jalaluddin Haqqani and his followers have been fighting since the 1970s. Haqqani rebelled against the Daud regime because he was pro-monarchy. Their loyalty to the royalty was because the monarchy had given the people of Loya Paktia a special status in Afghanistan. That is why they used to consider themselves as king-makers. Similarly, during the Soviet invasion, Haqqani was given special status by the US. The US direct aid and enormous supply of war material increased Haqqani's military and political influence in Afghanistan and transformed his militia into a powerful war machine. The CIA support gave Haqqanis a feeling of superiority amongst other Afghans.

The resultant friction between the Kandahari and non-Kandahari identities within the greater fabric of the Taliban never let Haqqanis fully own the organization during the Taliban's war against the Northern Alliance before 2001. Though the Taliban used Haqqani's men and firepower resources, yet, they kept his group at arm's length. Nevertheless, US authorities' lack of knowledge of the Afghan tribal society made them choose the wrong allies in Afghanistan. The Afghan allies of the US administration and CIA used the superpower's military and political influence in Afghanistan to settle their scores. President Karzai and the US forces mishandled Jalaluddin Haqqani while he was willing to switch sides. His brother Ibrahim Omari was picked up by one section of CIA while he was cooperating with another section of the same intelligence agency. Similarly, CIA's threatening behavior and their demand for an unconditional surrender from Jalaluddin Haqqani pushed him into a corner. Consequently, he was left with no choice but to revolt.

After the death of Jalaluddin Haqqani when his son Sirajuddin Haqqani became the head of Haqqani Network, this group carried out further ruthless operations against the US and Afghan forces that earned them prestige among the Taliban, therefore, Sirajuddin Haqqani was made the Deputy Head of the Taliban. Thus, Haqqani's decision to revolt against the occupation forces post-2001 was taken very rationally. Jalaluddin Haqqani, rather than raising the flag of rebellion against the Afghan government and the occupation forces all by himself, joined the Taliban ranks to legitimize their resistance. This decision brought a large number of recruits from other tribes as well. Taking the Haqqanis onboard in the US-Taliban deal ensured wider acceptability of the peace accord and bodes well for peace in Afghanistan in the future provided that the Afghan government and the Taliban can iron out their differences.

References

- ¹ Tomgram: Anand Gopal, Making Sense of the Taliban, accessed on April 21, 2018, http://www.tomdispatch.com/post/175010/anand_gopal_making_sense_of_the_taliban
- ² Wahid Brown and Don Rassler, *Fountainhead of Jihad: The Haqqani Nexus 1973-2012* (London: Hurst, 2013), 68-69.
- ³ Ibid.
- ⁴ Mathew Snow, American Frankenstein: The Haqqani network, *Foreign Policy*, March 17, 2013, 2.
- ⁵ Rahimullah Yusufzai, Jinnah Institute, The Haqqani Question, 2018, accessed on June 3, 2018, <http://jinnah-institute.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/The-Afghanistan-Essays-Rahimullah-6.pdf>
- ⁶ The Pashtun trace their ancestry to Qais the assumed common progenitor of them. Qais had three sons Sarban, Baitan, Ghurghusht and an adopted son Karlan of uncertain origin. Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 24.
- ⁷ Haroon Rashid, *History of the Pathans, The Karani Tribes, Volume 4* (Islamabad: Printo Graphic), 2011, 493-494.
- ⁸ Thomas Ruttig, "Loya Paktia's Insurgency: The Haqqani Network as an Autonomous Entity," in Antonio Giustozzi, ed., *Decoding the New Taliban: Insight from The Afghan Field* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 57-8.
- ⁹ Ludwig W. Adamec, *Historical Dictionary of Afghanistan* (Lanham, MD: Scare Crow, 2012), 188.
- ¹⁰ Rashid, *History of the Pathans*, 495.
- ¹¹ Jeffrey A. Dressler, "The Haqqani Network: From Pakistan to Afghanistan", *Afghanistan Report* 6, October 2010, 8.
- ¹² Mawlawi Aziz Khan, "The First Jihadi Operation in Afghanistan, and the Rise of the Ulema against the Communists," *Manba al-Jihad* (Pashto), 1: 4-5 (October-November 1989).
- ¹³ Amin Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan: A History of Struggle and Survival* (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2004), 174-175.
- ¹⁴ Dressler, the Haqqani Network.
- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ Dressler quoted in Mathew Snow, "American Frankenstein."
- ¹⁷ Peter Tomsen, *The War of Afghanistan: Messianic Terrorism, Tribal Conflict and the Failure of Great Powers* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011), 299-300.
- ¹⁸ Dressler quoted in Mathew Snow, "American Frankenstein."
- ¹⁹ Peter Tomsen, "Return of the Taliban Interview, Frontline," PBS, July 20, 2006; Robert M. Gates, *Duty: Memoirs of Secretary at War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), 199.
- ²⁰ Steve Coll, *Directorate S: The CIA and America's Secret Wars in Afghanistan and Pakistan, 2001-2016* (London: Penguin Random House UK, 2018), 156.
- ²¹ Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History CIA, Afghanistan, and bin Laden, from Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004), 202.
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ Mohammad Yusuf and Mark Adkin, *Afghanistan the Bear Trap: The Defeat of a Super Power* (Havertown, Pa.: Casemate, 2001), 77.
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ Crile, 473.
- ²⁶ Brown and Rassler, 68-69.
- ²⁷ Antonio Giustozzi, "If Only There Were Leaders: Fixing the Pashtun Tribes," in B. D. Hopkins, M. Marsden, ed., *Beyond Swat: History, Society and Economy Along the Afghanistan-Pakistan Frontier* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 241.
- ²⁸ Thomas Ruttig, Loya Paktia's Insurgency, 58.
- ²⁹ Ibid.
- ³⁰ Dressler, The Haqqani Network.
- ³¹ Anand Gopal quoted in Linschoten and Kuehn, *An Enemy We Created*, 137.
- ³² Anthony Davis, How the Taliban became a Military Force, in William Maley, *Fundamentalism Reborn? Afghanistan and the Taliban* (New York: NYU Press, 1998), 60.
- ³³ Dressler, the Haqqani Network.
- ³⁴ Ibid.
- ³⁵ Anand Gopal, Mansur Khan Mahsud, and Brian Fishman, "The Taliban in North Waziristan," in Peter Bergen with Katherine Tiedemann, ed., *Talibanistan: Negotiating the Borders Between Terror, Politics and Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 134.
- ³⁶ Dressler, the Haqqani Network.
- ³⁷ Anand Gopal, "the Deadliest US foe in Afghanistan," *Christian Science Monitor*, June 1, 2009
- ³⁸ Thomas Ruttig, Loya Paktia's Insurgency, 66.
- ³⁹ Ibid.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid.
- ⁴¹ Ibid.
- ⁴² Tomas Ruttig, Loya Paktia's Insurgency, 66.
- ⁴³ Steve Coll, *Directorate S*, 157.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid, 158-159.
- ⁴⁶ James Fergusson, *Taliban: The True Story of the World's Most Feared Guerrilla Fighters* (London: Bantam Press, 2010), 225.

-
- ⁴⁷ John F. Burns, "A Nation Challenged: The Aftermath; Taliban Army Chief Scoffs At Report Of Peace Talks", *New York Times*, 21 Oct. 2001, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9B07E4DD1E3EF932A15753C1A9679C8B63>, accessed on April 7, 2020.
- ⁴⁸ Thomas Ruttig, "Loya Paktia's Insurgency: The Haqqani Network As An Autonomous Entity", in: Antonio Giustozzi (ed.) *Decoding the New Taliban. Insights from the Afghan Field* (Columbia: Hurst, 2009), 66.
- ⁴⁹ Steve Coll, Directorate S, 66-67.
- ⁵⁰ Robert D. Crews, "Moderate Taliban?", in Robert D. Crews and Amin Tarzi, eds, *The Taliban and the Crisis of Afghanistan*, Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2008, 283.
- ⁵¹ Ruttig 67-68.
- ⁵² Ibid.
- ⁵³ Ruttig, 69.
- ⁵⁴ Anand Gopal, Mansur Khan Mahsud and Brian Fishman, "The Taliban in North Waziristan", In Peter Bergen *Talibanistan: Negotiating Borders Between Terror, Politics and Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 144-145.
- ⁵⁵ Email Message of Barnett Rubin to the author dated April, 8, 2020. Rubin is Associate Director and Senior Fellow of Centre of International Cooperation, New York University. From April 2009 until October 2013, Rubin was the Senior Adviser to the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan in the U.S. Department of State. In November-December 2001 Rubin served as special advisor to the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General for Afghanistan, during the negotiations that produced the Bonn Agreement.
- ⁵⁶ Andrew Quinn, Chris Allbritton, Clinton says U.S. officials have met with Haqqanis, Reuters, October 11, 2011, accessed on April, 9, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-pakistan-clinton/clinton-says-u-s-officials-have-met-with-haqqanis-idUSTRE79KoVW2011022>
- ⁵⁷ Steve Coll, Directorate S, 566.
- ⁵⁸ Directorate S, 573-574, Chris Zambelis, *Negotiating an Endgame in Afghanistan: Qatar Hosts the Taliban* Publication: *Terrorism Monitor* Volume: 10 Issue: 4, February 23, 2012, accessed on April 9, 2020, <https://jamestown.org/program/negotiating-an-endgame-in-afghanistan-qatar-hosts-the-taliban/#!>
- ⁵⁹ Ibid.
- ⁶⁰ Rahimullah Yusufzai, *Breaking the Ice in Muree*, *The Daily News*, July 19, 2015, accessed on April 9, 2020, <https://www.thenews.com.pk/tns/detail/559044-breaking-ice-in-murree>
- ⁶¹ Ali Yawar Adili and Khadija Hossaini, "Looking ahead to Intra-Afghan Negotiations: A Scrutiny to Different Political Groups Plan for Peace", *Afghan Analyst*, accessed on May 13, 2020, <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/war-and-peace/intra-afghan-negotiations-a-look-at-various-afghan-peace-plans/>
- ⁶² Ibid.
- ⁶³ Sirajuddin Haqqani, *What We, the Taliban, Want*, *New York Times*, February 20, 2020, accessed on May 13, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/20/opinion/taliban-afghanistan-war-haqqani.html>

ROLE OF CORE STATE IN A REGIONAL ORGANIZATION: A CASE STUDY OF IRAN VIS-À-VIS ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANIZATION

*Muhammad Ajmal Abbasi and Muhammad Khan**

Abstract

In the international arena, cooperation among nation-states is facilitated when they share interests and common-vision for a collective good. The attainment of desired objectives through regional organizations is inextricably linked with the patronizing role of a core state. A core state is envisioned to be more dominant geopolitically, economically, and strategically as compared to other member states and may also have played a vital role in the creation of the initiative. The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and its predecessor Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) have been among the older inter-governmental organizations involving the nations of southern, western, and central Asian regions at various stages. Similar to the erstwhile RCD, Iran assumes the role of core state among ECO member states, which has yet to prosper despite numerous commonalities and shared interests in the region. This paper, therefore, highlights that economic cooperation in the RCD-ECO territory has been hostage to regional conflicts, non-conducive global strategic environments, and lack of will on the part of key members. Hence, the quest for regionalization among the ECO member states is unlikely to take off given their existing lukewarm attitude and the current standoff between the core state Iran and global hegemon the US.

Keywords: Regional Cooperation, Development, Interdependence, Economic Integration, ECO.

Introduction

The phenomenon of international and regional organizations has emerged as one of the vital components of the present global system. At the core of these initiatives, there is a shared quest among the member states for enhancing mutual cooperation and interdependence. These cooperation fora have been largely professed as the rational instruments of pursuing shared economic interests, providing opportunities to promote trade, connectivity, and eventually, regionalism. Regionalism is a state(s)-led project, which aims at rearranging a specific regional space along defined economic and political lines for the mutual gains especially in the economic sphere and consistently evolves by the collective human action.¹ Historically, regionalism emphasized the trade liberalization among the geographically proximate states towards the late 1950s,

*Muhammad Ajmal Abbasi is a PhD Scholar at International Islamic University, Islamabad. Dr. Muhammad Khan is a Professor of Politics and International Relations at the Department of Politics and International Relations, International Islamic University, Islamabad.

intending to enhance shared commercial gains by intra-regional trade, while seeking to decrease the risk of inter-state conflicts.²

Regionalism has been pursued in varying structures ranging from loose to strong alliances, such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), a flexible body, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a strong military and political alliance.³ However, the global arena after the Cold War witnessed a declining trend of forging military alliances among the states for security interests with a rising proclivity towards the establishment of regional economic mechanisms. The successful regional cooperation mechanisms have displayed the tendency to pursue mutual benefits and yield desired results if a member state assumes the role of a core state in supervising the regional affairs and steering it away from the controversies or dormancy by consistently pursuing other member states. Generally, a state proposing the creation of a regional cooperation mechanism, especially when it has a comparatively bigger status in terms of its historical, cultural, geopolitical, geographical, economic, and strategic attributes, has been envisaged as a core state of the organization.

It is also presumed that the core state can be one of the member states in a regional cooperation mechanism or alternatively, even two influential participants of an organization with large membership or where rivalries among bigger members exist can assume such role. Hence, for understanding the concept of core state in a regional organization, it can be assumed that South Africa in the African Union, Malaysia and Indonesia in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), China and Russia in case of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Russia in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Saudi Arabia in the functioning of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Brazil and Argentina in the MERCOSUR, officially Southern Common Market, Germany and France in the European Union (EU) while India and Pakistan with regards to the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), apparently play such a role.

In the case of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Iran seems a natural candidate for assuming the role of core state as it was not only the proponent of the regional economic cooperation involving Pakistan and Turkey from RCD forum but also played a proactive role in the establishment of the ECO. This paper, therefore, aims at highlighting the impact of external factors (especially the perpetual US-Iran rivalry) as well as the internal controversies among the ECO member states, especially the erstwhile RCD countries on the functioning of the regional economic cooperation initiative. The focus of this research would be on the role of Iran in the ECO as a core state and the factors limiting its administrative capacity. While the ECO as a regional economic cooperation initiative may not appear a game-changer or a successful experience, however, academically it does appear as a thought-provoking case study for evaluating the prospects of similar initiatives, particularly, when the core state is unable to play its envisaged role. Another relevant study can be of the SAARC, where the divergence of interests between two larger members, India and Pakistan, both of whom can be assumed as core states of the organization, has undermined the organization. Hence, according to the contention of this research, the progress of regional economic

cooperation mechanisms is significantly linked with the successful role of core state(s) among member states.

Initial Cooperation Mechanism – The RCD

During the Cold War era, Iran, Turkey, and Pakistan launched a mutually conceived cooperation mechanism with the name of Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) in 1964.⁴ All the three RCD member states were firmly aligned with the anti-Soviet camp and regarded to be the vital components of the western strategy with apparently no appetite to forge any new strategic alliance in the region. Consequently, Turkey had been of the view from the outset that the tripartite discussions on RCD were related to economic, technical, and cultural cooperation alone and had no political or military significance.⁵ The RCD member states were inspired by the global experiences in regionalism, the spirit of mutual cooperation and the aspiration of the third world to evade the risk of underdevelopment.⁶

Tehran's status of being the core state of RCD was adequately substantiated by its power potential, economic viability, energy reserves, and geographical placement. It started functioning in 1965 with a permanent secretariat at Tehran, another indication that unequivocally manifested Iran's stature of being the core state of the organization.⁷ However, RCD appeared well short of being an ideal forum which could facilitate regional cooperation and was, thus, found lagging in terms of attention, staffing, resources, and follow-through.⁸

Immediately after coming into existence, RCD had been reasonably persuasive in articulating several initiatives among the member states displaying a proactive posture and ambitious intent. Towards the latter part of the 1970s, American-Soviet détente and RCD member states' internal evolution led a revitalized focus toward the forum which has been reflected in the RCD Summit Conference held on April 21-28, 1976 in Ýzmir.⁹ The interactive Session at Ýzmir facilitated in revisiting the desired goals by suggesting new amendments that included the establishment of an RCD Free Trade Area within a period of ten years.¹⁰ However, all the three-member states faced domestic political-turmoil of varying magnitudes; resultantly, RCD had been virtually dormant until 1984 because of the uncertainties prevailing in the region as well as in the international arena.¹¹

Establishment of ECO

RCD was revived in January 1985 under a new name, the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), nevertheless, it became apparent that the cooperation forum would continue to lack the momentum, like its predecessor, without political and legal backing from member states.¹² Consequently, in 1990, Iran suggested to reactivate the process and the result was the amendment to the Treaty of Izmir, leading to the operationalization of ECO on January 11, 1991, with its headquarters in Tehran.¹³ The initiative of creating ECO appeared to have attracted newly independent Central Asian

and Caucasian states resulting in the membership of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in November 1992.¹⁴

ECO as a regional cooperation mechanism has been envisaged to achieve: “enhancement of intra-regional trade, removal of impediments blocking transit trade and transport problems, increasing integration of the landlocked countries with global markets and improvement of regional cooperation in agriculture, energy, drug control, minerals exploitation, and intra-regional tourism.”¹⁵ While underlining the connections between economic cooperation and regional security, the Iranian President Hashmi Rafsanjani in November 1989 stated that “... the policy approach that we recommend for governing the region is one that requires countries to cooperate and help solve each other’s problems in an atmosphere of friendship and mutual understanding. Help one another in areas where they are deficient and utilize the resources and riches of the Persian Gulf together.”¹⁶

Prospects of ECO as Regional Cooperation Mechanism

The ECO’s broadened scope and size implied that the forum now contained 325 million people spread almost eight million square kilometers in a territory regarded to be strategically vital and fiercely contested by the dominant players.¹⁷ The prospects of economic integration and cooperation in the ECO region with physical contiguity, ease of trade relations, and diversity of natural resources, appeared more viable with a potentially greater likelihood of success. However, in essence, “cooperation occurs when actors adjust their behavior to the actual or anticipated preferences of others through a process of policy coordination.”¹⁸

The establishment of an initiative like ECO with a broader involvement of members possessing diversified natural resources offered numerous exciting commercial opportunities to each stakeholder. The diversity of natural resources between the participating states of ECO assured minimal intra-regional rivalry and plentiful opportunities for mutual interdependence and shared gains. While the geographical proximity as well as religious and cultural harmony served as an adhesiveness amongst ECO member states, the shared commercial interests also offered an ideal opportunity to complement each other’s economic markets.

With regard to mutual interdependence, the energy-rich Turkmenistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan seem capable of meeting the requirement of energy scarce member states of the ECO. Likewise, the hydroelectric capacity of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan could augment the overall energy profile of the ECO region. Although the enlargement of ECO extended the reach of the organization in a geographical landmass of seven million square kilometers with a population of nearly 300 million; however, despite the enormous commercial potential, the region depended on massive assistance from financial institutions like the World Bank and other similar international bodies.¹⁹

The ECO territory is strategically one of the vital as well as contested regions due to its direct access to major sea routes including Persian Gulf, Oman Sea, Indian

Ocean, Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea, and Caspian Lake.²⁰ However, the predominant consideration towards the establishment of ECO has not been strategic as it was influenced by commercial interests with the growth of intra-regional trade being the prime agenda. The commercial potential of the ECO region, besides the possibility of enhanced mutual trade exchange among the members of the cooperation initiative, has the potential of raising the economic clout of the organization.

Iran's External Orientation vis-à-vis Role as Core State

Iran has historically been enjoying a focal status in the region owing to its central geographical position, size, economic stature, and military potential assuming a dominant role in most of the regional configurations.²¹ The creation of regional cooperation mechanisms in the erstwhile RCD area and later in the ECO territory have primarily been Iranian initiated proposals. At the time of the establishment of RCD in the middle of the sixties during peak times of the Cold War, Shah-led Iran was an influential regional player, very much proactive in the international arena, while relishing complete western political, economic and military support.

Iran traditionally pursued its strategic agenda in the region which was essentially aimed at assuming a leading role in the Central Eurasian territory by resorting to mechanisms of regionalism. The clergy-led Iranian regime continued to seek an economic and political presence in the region while downplaying the ideological dimensions of its policy despite numerous adversities amid reservations over its revolutionary motives and enmity with the US.²² Consequently, post-revolution Tehran had to safeguard its interests against the intimidating US patronized western policy by aligning with neighbors and regional forums.²³

Iranian foreign policy orientation after the Islamic revolution has been primarily influenced by its concerns with the US policies and ideological obsessions of the clergy-led regime. Mesbahi (2004) identifies strategic concerns impacting Tehran's external posture as:

"...first is the strategic loneliness of Iran in the international system and regional sub-system and second, the securitization of Iran's identity; the impact of ideology and the perception of others which made the assessment of Iran's intentions, capability, threat to be largely driven not by Iran's material capability and power projection but by its intentions, message, identity, and ideas."²⁴

Iran has been under severe pressure with a crippling economy due to the Iraq war in the decade of 1980-90 and earlier predilection of the regime towards an isolationist or non-aligned posture in the bipolar world. Hence, the economic frailty of the state compelled previously unwavering leadership to give in on its external orientation and get engaged with the outside world even during the lifetime of Imam Khomeini, though without conceding much of the revolutionary commitments. After the demise of Imam Khomeini in 1989, Iranian policy was reformed to accommodate the initiative of an equidistant approach to the East and the West allowing economic

relations and balancing the hegemonic powers of the democratic West and the Soviet East.²⁵

Tehran's cognizance of the strategic environment and penchant of undertaking pragmatic policies ensured that despite the systemic difficulties and domestic constraints, the country succeeded in evading confrontational policies with the newly independent neighbors and established an economic and political presence in the region.²⁶ Owing to the growing international isolation, the clergy-led regime at Tehran desperately wanted some kind of receptivity in the region, especially after the end of the war with Iraq in 1988. Hence, a proactive role as a core state towards reviving economic cooperation with old allies and neighbors seemed the most viable initiative to Iranians for returning to the international fold.

The expansion of ECO has been Iran's vision, contemplating a regional economic alignment on the basis of common religion, a motivation engraved in the revolutionary Islamic ideology of the country. Apparently, Tehran has been keen at promoting the Islamic character of groupings, such as ECO but perhaps more for the sake of a domestic audience than an international one.²⁷ Moreover, Iranian strategy in the ECO region, especially in the Caucasus-Caspian states, has not only been influenced by its domestic economic and political compulsions but with the interests and confrontations beyond the region including that with the US as well.²⁸

Revolutionary Iran's constitutional categorization ranks the significance of other countries prioritizing, immediate neighbors, Muslim countries, underdeveloped countries, and countries that serve the economic, political, social, and military needs of Iran.²⁹ Among the three ECO countries, Iran projected itself as a state which was appropriately placed to influence the regional environment in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Consequently, during Tehran's relentless efforts at roping in the newly emerging independent states in the Central Asian region at the May 1992-summit meeting, President Rafsanjani referred to Iran as the "conduit and outlet, the geographic center of regional economic expansion."³⁰

Domestically, post-revolutionary Iran has been confronted with an internal divide between conservatives and pragmatists on the external policy direction of the country as the former adheres to the initial revolutionary principles while latter argue for an evolutionary revolution.³¹ Realists or moderates among the Iranian leadership, like incumbent President Hassan Rouhani and former President Muhammad Khatami, backed pragmatic policies. Notwithstanding internal disagreement, the international isolation and the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) compelled the clergy leadership at Tehran to revisit its external orientation and seek regional integration at the start of the 1990s, ending its decade-long seclusion.³²

While in the hindsight, Iranian policies were mainly formulated on the dictates of revolutionary Islamic ideology, however, pragmatism remained the key feature of Tehran's regional posture. In the post-Soviet era, Iran adopted a rationalistic orientation towards the energy-rich Caucasus-Caspian region which had attracted the attention of international powers and transnational oil companies as well and sought to engage

these states bilaterally as well as through multilateral forums including ECO.³³ The region, extending along Iran's eastern flank from Moscow to Kabul, has been identified by Tehran as an area with the capacity to serve as a natural counterweight to the West because of shared geopolitical interests and historical linkages.³⁴

Internal Factors: Divergence of Iran with other ECO Member States

Iran's geographical status offered it a pivotal role in the Persian Gulf, Central Asia, and the Caspian Basin among others.³⁵ Hence, Tehran's regionalism quest envisaged a dominant role in maximizing its economic gains and capitalize on the geographically vital standing in the process. Presumably, Tehran disregarded or unintentionally overlooked the interests of other members of the organization. President Rafsanjani's following statement on Iran's potential in the ECO region amply reflects the Iranian mindset:

"As you can see on the map, Iran links the ECO [Economic Cooperation Organization] member states with one another. For links between the north and south, the east and west, these countries and Europe, Europe and Asia, everything should cross Iran - oil and gas pipelines, railways, communication routes, and international airports."³⁶

The larger part of the ECO territory that includes Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, and Turkmenistan is landlocked and likely to benefit from seaports of other member states, especially Iran and Pakistan, thus, promoting mutual interdependence. While accessibility to seaports assumes vital significance for the landlocked ECO states, it has also initiated a competition among the members located along the coastline. Thus, the ensuing rivalry to emerge as the most viable transit option for the Central Asian region between Iran and Pakistan due to their seaports of Chabahar and Gwadar respectively proved detrimental to ECO's prospects.

The ECO initiative appeared a disparate grouping despite territorial homogeneity among the members since the greater inclination of Turkey and Azerbaijan with Europe, divergences over territorial aspects of Caspian Sea, and conflicting political ideology implicating Iran, Afghanistan, and Turkey being the forces of disintegration, spoiled the internal cohesion of the initiative.³⁷ Amongst the key ECO member states, Ankara has been projecting itself to be the 'gateway to the West' while Tehran claimed to be the 'gateway to the Gulf and the Far East' in order to acquire dominant status.³⁸

At the culmination of the Cold War, Iran was facing international isolation due to the animosity with the US, hence, any potential commercial initiative through Afghanistan and Pakistan was likely to instigate rivalry between Tehran and Islamabad. Regionally, India has been backing Tehran's quest to become the transportation hub linking the Persian Gulf to Central Asia by building a transport corridor and modernizing the Chabahar port.³⁹ On the other hand, Beijing financed connectivity project, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), from the Chinese city of

Kashgar to the port of Gwadar appeared as a rival to Iran's International North-South Trade Corridor (INSTC) evolving into a potential strategic game-changer in the region.⁴⁰

ECO could not bring about a perceptible change in the regional financial standing due to the lack of any noteworthy economic cooperation venture among the member states. Strategic competition between the founding members, Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey, appeared at the heart of many controversies in ECO. In one such incident, Iranian efforts to organize May 1992-Ashkhabad Summit of Central Asian states while excluding Islamabad and Ankara was resisted by both resulting in its conduct under the auspices of ECO.⁴¹ The Turkish pre-summit maneuvering in Central Asia with pledges of US \$ 1.2 billion tempted Iranian President to remark that: "There is competition everywhere in the world ... But we are of the view that this competition should be honest and healthy."⁴²

ECO came into being as the successor organization of the erstwhile RCD but failed to assume center-stage in the regional arena presumably owing to somewhat a reluctant response of Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey. Iran's preoccupation with the Iraq war and Pakistan's involvement in the Afghan conflict at the time of reviving the regional mechanism resulted in little focus on ECO. While the emergence of energy-rich autonomous Central Asian-Caucasian states offered an ideal opportunity for regional economic integration, the divergence of interests among the ECO states, especially the core state Iran and other key members, Pakistan and Turkey, reduced prospects of meaningful cooperation.

Iran's strategic reorientation commencing in the heydays of Shah-regime contemplated India as a strategic partner in the region. Tehran's quest for becoming a regional commercial pivot led it to construct an International North-South Railway Corridor with Indian and Russian backing.⁴³ Furthermore, Iran actively pursued the Ashgabat Agreement that was concluded in the year-2011 and the contemplated development of railway corridor for linking the Caspian regional states with the Persian Gulf and Oman.⁴⁴

Consequently, the Iranian capacity of playing a meaningful role in ECO has been curtailed due to disparate strategic orientations of Islamabad and Tehran. Iran has been pursuing greater cooperation with India in the military domain and sought Indian assistance for developing its defense production and maintenance base.⁴⁵ Tehran's efforts to win over New Delhi were not possible without some political bargain which would have apparently been at the cost of Islamabad's interests. Hence, Iran had to revisit its pro-Pakistan Kashmir policy besides seeking Indian collaboration to ensure the territorial integrity of Afghanistan and foster stability in Central Asia.⁴⁶

Impact of External Factors on Regional Cooperation and Iran-US Animosity

In the mid-1960s, the former RCD was not only an Iranian conception but the country served as the core state of the organization as well by assuming a lead role in its functioning. However, the highly polarized international as well as regional strategic

dynamics, greater leaning of the three members towards anti-Soviet organizations, domestic political environments, and financial status of the three-member states did not allow RCD to flourish. Notwithstanding the ambitious agenda of the initiative for promoting mutual economic cooperation besides a broader politico-strategic consensus between Iran, Turkey, and Pakistan on regional dynamics, RCD could not produce anything of notice. Presumably, the regional initiative failed to take-off since the three-member states were preoccupied with their commitments as participants of the pro-US and West alliances against the Soviet Union.

With the Iranian Islamic revolution and overthrow of the Shah government, Tehran's external orientation as well as strategic alignment went through a major transformation. Consequently, the Iranian revolutionary regime decided to not only abandon the pro-US policies but also distanced itself from regional groupings, such as RCD which was identified as an alignment by West-supported states. Iran's predisposition towards shaping its policies according to the ideological parameters and the anti-US posture had caused serious concerns among the mainly West aligned region, hence, Iranian role as the core state among the RCD member states and the future of the organization was also in jeopardy.

The ravages of the war with Iraq and crippling economic losses compelled Tehran to reevaluate its policy from the ideological obsession of exporting revolutionary Islam to internal political consolidation and economic reconstruction.⁴⁷ Notwithstanding occasional thaw and strategic consensus on some issues between the two rivals, generally, the conflict of interests influenced the US-Iran relations. Although the post-Khamenei government sought international engagement by revitalizing the regional cooperation with the creation of ECO, Tehran's continued rivalry and a deteriorating relationship with the US seriously eroded the prospects of regional cooperation involving Iran.

The emerging Eurasian dynamics at the end of the Cold War necessitated a change in the regional policies of the three ECO states due to their geographical proximity and commonality of religious, cultural, and ethnic norms with newly independent states of the Caucasus and Central Asia. Consequently, the post-Khamenei Iran has been looking for markets for non-oil exports, partners in energy development, help in integrating into the global economic system and infrastructure to allow it to take advantage of its strategic location.⁴⁸ However, US hostility towards the revolutionary regime and bracketing of Iran with selected few identified as rogues, dangerous proliferators, sponsors of terrorism, and the axis of evil, posed serious challenges to Tehran in political, economic as well as strategic domains.⁴⁹

As the revolutionary regime in Iran was confronted with unfavorable external challenges, it looked to escape US sanctions, isolation, and containment by pursuing enhanced cooperation with neighbors and organizations like ECO.⁵⁰ Therefore, on Iran's proposal, the membership of ECO was extended to seven new states included five Central Asian countries, Azerbaijan and Afghanistan. While Iranian engagement with the former Soviet satellite states was not limited to one odd initiative, ECO appeared to be the most viable mechanism. Nonetheless, it was a time when Iran was facing the

aftermath of the Islamic revolution, animosity with the US and an elongated conflict with Iraq seriously undermining its potential as the core state of regional cooperation.

Iranian interface within the region, especially in the post-revolution era, has largely been shaped up by Islamic orientation and is intermingled with the vacillating dimensions of political versus financial considerations. Hence, Tehran's regional strategy and relations lie at a crossroads where politics and economics merge and sometimes collide and where ideological obsession makes room for strategic gains.⁵¹ Tehran's proactive role towards the enlargement of ECO in the strategically vital Eurasian landmass raised many eyebrows. Consequently, Washington reoriented its policy towards former Soviet space and decided to limit Iranian strategic advances. The Secretary of the State, James Baker, visited the region in February 1992 for the opening of US embassies while some US aid was also flown in."⁵²

The establishment of ECO with a proactive Iranian role intended to promote trade, transportation, financial institutions, communication, industrial infrastructure, and social development between the member countries.⁵³ However, Iran's proclivity towards utilizing the platform of a multinational cooperation mechanism for launching anti-US polemic did alienate the participating states. During the 1996-summit of ECO, Uzbekistan threatened to abandon the forum in case Tehran continued politicizing it.⁵⁴ Tehran's preference for employing regional organizations aimed at politico-strategic gains against the US has mostly been non-yielding and detrimental to the prospects of economic cooperation.

Tehran's strategic ambitions in the region faced stern challenges due to its international isolation amid a continued standoff with the US and sanctions regime. Ostensibly, the Iranian leadership has been aware of the potential caveats in its quest for an influential role in the region and, therefore, pursued national objectives through various multilateral cooperation mechanisms including ECO. Iranian strategic aspirations in the region have been opposed by the US since the end of the Cold War, however, the emerging dynamics of the Middle East after the killing of General Qasem Soleimani, the commander of Iranian Al-Quds force has further reduced prospects of any meaningful role by Tehran in the near future.

Findings

In comparison to some of the well-established and successful regional cooperation mechanisms in the world, ECO can be regarded as an initiative yet at an elementary stage. The organization has been coping with several politico-economic constraints, both internal as well as external, and appeared to be an ineffectual forum. Hence, the functioning of the organization has stayed well-below the desired threshold, rendering it near dormant. Without an earnest and devoted commitment by all the members, especially the founding states, ECO is unlikely to function as per its conceived potential.

The ECO region has been swarming with various regional groupings and cooperation mechanisms with several members sponsoring other sub-regional

initiatives that are mutually competitive.⁵⁵ Despite being a potentially yielding mechanism, ECO has been confronted with several competing cooperation organizations in the region, thus, substantially undermining the initiative. Other competitive forums in the ECO territory are the Confederation of Independent States, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Zone (includes Armenia and Azerbaijan), the Eurasian Economic Unit (includes Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan), and the nascent GUUAM Group (comprising Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and Moldova).⁵⁶

There have been numerous and reasonably influential drivers of conflict and dissonance shaping the strategic undercurrents of the ECO region. The Caspian-Caucasus region sought to broaden its external interactions through forums like ECO; Tehran and Ankara kept pursuing a mixed-motive game of simultaneous cooperation and conflict while Islamabad and Tehran have been embroiled in a strategic contest over post-Soviet Afghanistan.⁵⁷ The intra-ECO states rivalries and trust deficit have, thus, critically undermined the prospects of the cooperation mechanism which is unlikely to flourish without a fervent and shared quest by all the members.

The success of cooperation structures for achieving regional economic integration is adequately reflected by the mutual trade statistics of the member states. Growing trade activities among the members of a region are an indication of rising cooperation and interdependence. However, the intra-ECO region trade has been on the lower side and in some instances, well below the potential while displaying negative trends. Whereas, lower trade statistics in the region are a serious concern. The influence of international strategic dynamics, especially the impact of the US-Iran animosity, is irrefutable.

The ECO goals have been identified as ambitious and far wide-ranging compared to the actual potential of the organization. On the other hand, the ECO states have globally limited strategic clout vis-à-vis their geographical status and potential. Presumably, in the absence of an influential member with a prominent role in the contemporary international order, ECO seems too fragile alignment for pursuing an independent and self-rewarding design. In the hindsight, the agreement on the Iranian nuclear program raised an expectation that the country would play its role as the core state of ECO effectively but that aura has been replaced with the newest strategic anxieties due to existing US-Iran standoff.

Conclusion

While reviving regional cooperation mechanisms seemed a viable strategy, Tehran was, nonetheless, aware of the potential caveats in crafting the 'ECO-area;' it could not, however, deviate Iranian leaders from backing the regional cooperation for collective gains.⁵⁸ Besides political rivalries, technological deficiencies and financial incapacities, the antagonistic relations with the western governments seriously undermined the Iranian potential of playing a meaningful role in the regional integration of ECO territory.⁵⁹ Thus, Tehran's strategic ambitions in the region faced stern challenges due to its international isolation amid a continued standoff with the US and crippling economy due to stringent enforcement of the sanction regime.

ECO was initiated with huge expectations, containing ambitious and aggressive objectives intended targets warranted concurrence of members on the proposals of encompassing many industries and the significant portion of each member's economy.⁶⁰ Resultantly, the overriding causes, which decisively contributed in the negligible progress on regional economic integration among the members of ECO, can be summarized as:

“.....ineffective management at all levels, an inability to coordinate members' economic and political discourse, diversity of member nations, the similarity of economic resources of members, pressure and interference from some developed countries, lack of sensible diplomacy, lack of financial capital, aggressive objectives, lack of democratic governments and free-market experience in most member nations.”⁶¹

In the hindsight, the initiative of ECO seemed attractive, however, its practical manifestation in an economically fragile, politically divided, and strategically volatile region was always susceptible. The diverging interests of the member states and their disparate strategic alignments, especially between the founding members, i.e., Iran, Pakistan and Turkey, did not help the cause of regional economic cooperation in the ECO region. Besides economic considerations and internal disharmony among the member states, the strategic dynamics of the region, especially the core state's external orientation, also had a vital share in the dormancy of ECO. It can, therefore, be assumed that without a dominant, proactive, non-controversial, and consensually accepted core state, a regional economic cooperation organization may not thrive.

References

- ¹ Andrew Gamble and Anthony Payne, eds., *Regionalism and world order*, (London: Macmillan, 1996), 17.
- ² Van L. Langenhove, "Regionalizing human security in Africa," *UNU-CRIS Occasional Papers 0-2004/8* (2004): 7, accessed April 25th, 2020, <http://www.cris.unu.edu/fileadmin/workingpapers/OP%20Regionalising%20Human%20Security%20in%20Africa.pdf>.
- ³ Ernst B. Haas, "Regionalism, functionalism, and universal international organization," *World Politics* 8, no. 2 (1956): 239, accessed April 25th, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2008973>.
- ⁴ Kemal Behçet Yeşilbursa, "The Formation of RCD: Regional Cooperation for Development," *Middle Eastern Studies* 45, no. 4 (2009): 657, accessed 7th April, 2020, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40262694>.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, 642.
- ⁶ Mark J. Gasiorowski, *US foreign policy and the Shah: Building a client state in Iran*, Cornell Univ Pr, 1991.
- ⁷ Selim Ikin, "The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO)," *Journal of Economic Cooperation among Islamic Countries* 15, no. 3-4 (1994), accessed November 27th, 2016, <http://www.sesric.org/files/article/32.pdf>.
- ⁸ Kaveh L. Afrasiabi, and Yadollah Pour Jalali, "The Economic Cooperation Council: Regionalization in a Competitive Context," *Mediterranean Quarterly* 12, no. 4 (2001): 65, accessed November 16th, 2016, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/20848>.
- ⁹ Afrasiabi & Jalali, "Economic Cooperation Council," 2001, 65.
- ¹⁰ Ikin, "The ECO," 32.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹² *Ibid.*, 33.
- ¹³ Mahmood S. Bahaee, and Mabmoud Saremi. "Assessing Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Performance: 1992-1997," *International Journal of Commerce and Management* 12, no. 3/4 (2002): 15, accessed June 27th, 2016, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/ebo47451>.
- ¹⁴ Richard Pomfret, "The economic cooperation organization: Current status and future prospects," *Europe-Asia Studies* 49, no. 4 (1997): 658, accessed September 28th, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/153718>.
- ¹⁵ Edmund Herzig, "Regionalism, Iran and Central Asia," *International Affairs* 80, no. 3 (2004): 513, accessed August 18th, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2346.2004.00395.x>.
- ¹⁶ John Calabrese, *Revolutionary horizons: regional foreign policy in post-Khomeini Iran*, (Springer, 2016), 32.
- ¹⁷ Pomfret, "Current status and future prospects," 658.
- ¹⁸ Helen Milner, "International theories of cooperation among nations: Strengths and weaknesses," *World politics* 44, no. 3 (1992): 467, accessed February 7th, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2010546>.
- ¹⁹ Adam Tarock, "Iran's policy in Central Asia," *Central Asian Survey* 16, no. 2 (1997): 187, accessed August 18th, 2019, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02634939708400983>.
- ²⁰ Farhang Morady, "Iran ambitious for regional supremacy: the great powers, geopolitics and energy resources," *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region* 7, no. 1 (2011): 89, accessed August 18th, 2019, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19480881.2011.587332>.
- ²¹ Calabrese, "Revolutionary Horizons," 99.
- ²² Shireen Hunter, "Iran's pragmatic regional policy," *Journal of International Affairs* (2003): 142, accessed August 18th, 2019, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24357722>.
- ²³ Reuel Hanks, "Iran in Eurasia: Geopolitical Patterns and Regional Relationships' Editor's Introduction," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 14, no. 3 (2012): 314, accessed August 18th, 2019, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19448953.2012.720766>.
- ²⁴ Mohiaddin Mesbahi, "Iran and Central Asia: paradigm and policy," *Central Asian Survey* 23, no. 2 (2004): 110, accessed July 29th, 2013, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02634930410001310508>.
- ²⁵ Houman A. Sadri, "Iran and the Caucasus states in the 21st century: A study of foreign policy goals and means," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 14, no. 3 (2012): 384, accessed August 18th, 2019, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19448953.2012.720787>.
- ²⁶ Hunter, "Iran's pragmatic policy," 138.
- ²⁷ Herzig, "Regionalism, Iran," 511.
- ²⁸ Elaheh Koolae, and Mohammad Hossein Hafezian, "The Islamic Republic of Iran and the South Caucasus Republics," *Iranian Studies* 43, no. 3 (2010): 408, accessed August 18th, 2019, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00210861003693935>.
- ²⁹ Sadri, "Iran and the Caucasus," 383.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, 99.
- ³¹ Sanam Vakil, "Iran: Balancing east against west," *Washington Quarterly* 29, no. 4 (2006): 53, accessed August 18th, 2019, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1162/wash.2006.29.4.51>.
- ³² Vakil, "Iran: Balancing east," 52.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, 386.
- ³⁴ Hanks, "Iran in Eurasia," 313.
- ³⁵ Herzig, "Regionalism, Iran," 506.
- ³⁶ Calabrese, "Revolutionary Horizons," 80.
- ³⁷ Bahaee & Saremi, "Assessing ECO Performance," 25.
- ³⁸ Calabrese, "Revolutionary Horizons," 107.
- ³⁹ Vakil, "Iran: Balancing east," 60.

-
- ⁴⁰ Muhammad Daim. Fazil, "The China-Pakistan economic corridor: Potential and vulnerabilities," *The Diplomat*, 2015, accessed August 2nd, 2019, <http://thediplomat.com/2015/05/the-china-pakistan-economic-corridor-potential-and-vulnerabilities/>.
- ⁴¹ Calabrese, "Revolutionary Horizons," 99.
- ⁴² Ibid.
- ⁴³ United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia, and the Pacific, "*Development of the Trans-Asian Railway*," (2001), accessed November 16th, 2018 http://www.unescap.org/ttdw/Publications/TIS_pubs/pub_2182/tarnsfulltext.pdf.
- ⁴⁴ Onur Uysal, "Ashgabat Agreement to reawake," *Rail Turkey News*, February 17th, 2015, accessed August 2nd, 2019, <http://news.railturkey.org/2015/02/17/ashgabat-agreement-to-reawake/>.
- ⁴⁵ Calabrese, "Revolutionary Horizons," 128.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid.
- ⁴⁷ Hunter, "Iran's pragmatic policy," 134.
- ⁴⁸ Herzig, "Regionalism, Iran," 509.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid., 510.
- ⁵⁰ Morady, "Iran ambitious for," 86.
- ⁵¹ Calabrese, "Revolutionary Horizons," 23.
- ⁵² Vahram Petrossian, "Iran: at the hub of new trade alliances," *MEED Middle East Economic Digest* 13 (1992), accessed September 28th, 2016, <http://elibraryusa.state.gov/primos?url>.
- ⁵³ Sadri, "Iran and the Caucasus," 387.
- ⁵⁴ Herzig, "Regionalism, Iran," 507.
- ⁵⁵ Herzig, "Regionalism, Iran," 514.
- ⁵⁶ Anatol Lieven, "GUUAM: what is it, and what is it for?" *Eurasia Insight* 18, 2000, accessed July 28th, 2019, www.eurasianet.org.
- ⁵⁷ Afrasiabi & Jalali, "Economic Cooperation Council," 2001.
- ⁵⁸ Walter Posch, "The third world, global Islam and pragmatism: The making of Iranian foreign Policy," (2013): 31, accessed July 28th, 2019, <http://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publications/swp-research-papers.html>.
- ⁵⁹ Calabrese, "Revolutionary Horizons," 111.
- ⁶⁰ Bahae & Saremi, "Assessing ECO Performance," 22.
- ⁶¹ Ibid., 25.

HOW BEST TO UNTANGLE THE PERSIAN PUZZLE?

Saqib Anjum*

Abstract

This study endeavors to find a solution to the predicaments in which the Islamic Republic of Iran presently finds itself to be within the comity of nations in general and with the US in particular. Out of many options available, the response has been configured out to unravel the mystery against the most doable that is of going to war against allowing the emergence of a nuclear Iran or else entering into a deal with them. Notwithstanding Iran's intransigence and stubborn behavior, the research finds that it is, in fact, the prevalent international system led by the US and not the Islamic Republic of Iran which actually holds the key to this impasse. It is assumed by the study that US reliance on the precincts of Realism or Idealism in tackling the Iranian imbroglio would ultimately decide upon Iran's continuum as an enigma or otherwise.

Keywords: US, Iran, Nuclear Deal, Sanctions, Enigma.

Introduction

Iran exceedingly resembles Russia (then USSR) of the 1930s. It has, in fact, become a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.¹ Therefore, the main purpose of this article is to uncover the reasons for which Iran has become an enigma and then to find the best possible options to untangle the puzzle. While a listing of all possible options may not be within the scope of this article but as a guide, the foreign policy's assertion of eight possible ways² to deal with this problem, though, seems plausible but too broad-based in reaching to the core of the problem. However, in order to simplify the answer to the most comprehensive of the responses, this paper endeavors to examine three most-likely ways for unraveling this puzzle; first, of going to war; second, to work out a comprehensive deal, such as the recent Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA); and third, to explore possible effects of a nuclearize Iran in the region.

The paper after narrowing down the options applies comparative analysis to include both pros and cons of each of the three options so as to reach the best possible alternative for un-raveling the Iranian problem. The study astonishingly finds the US to be more responsible than Iran for the chaos in the region and the predicament in which Iran happens to be overwhelmed with.

Historical Background

Modern Iran – the old historic region of the West Asia – was earlier known as Persia. This term was in use since ages by southern Iran's inhabitants, who alternatively

*Saqib Anjum is a PhD scholar at the Department of Strategic Studies, National Defence University, Islamabad.

referred it to as Pars or Pers.³ Iran is also known as “Land of Aryans” deriving it from the word Aryan or Arya.⁴ The name ‘Iran’ was officially adopted in 1935.⁵ The 83 million Iranians,⁶ unlike most countries, live in mountains instead of plains.⁷ Its geostrategic location in Central Asia and the Middle East gives her unique importance and its ability to defend its geographical frontiers due to difficult and impassable terrain and cultural identity makes her distinctly apart from any other nation in the region.⁸

Iran is also considered a regional bulwark due to an abundance of energy resources and its high standing in the world economic and energy calculus.⁹ According to a US-based survey, Tehran has the world’s proven second-largest gas and fourth-largest oil reserves.¹⁰ Iranian civilization is one of the world’s oldest. They are immensely proud of their culture and heritage. A glance into their history reveals that the nation, notwithstanding the type of government, has consistently exerted a powerful influence over its neighboring countries.¹¹

Geopolitical Imperatives of Iran

There is a need to probe the reasons that how a country which was once the ‘apple of the eye’ of Americans and one of the main player of the ‘Twin Pillars’ policy¹² be called the ‘axis of the evil’ and then despite all the wrong accolades once again found itself to be on the favored-list of the US administration. But, before the continuing saga of love and hate relationship between the US and Iran is dilated in more detail, it is pertinent to understand some of the basic facts about Iran.

The US and Iran were great allies in the early days of the Cold War. Washington in order to checkmate the Soviet influence gave economic wherewithal and military assistance to Tehran. The US tried to manipulate Iran through the Iraqi card and later by installing Raza Shah Pahlavi in 1953,¹³ which did not go well with the people of Iran who blamed the West for supporting a repressive and unpopular regime; resultantly, as a sequel to the Iranian revolution, people stormed the US Embassy in November 1979 and held 52 Americans as hostages for well over a year. The ouster of Shah brought the blossoming relations to a grinding halt in 1979 and to date, there are no diplomatic relations between the two old allies.¹⁴

The frozen relations further deteriorated with the clubbing of Iran along with Iraq and North Korea by President Bush as “Axis of Evil,” who were allegedly involved in nuclear proliferation and building of long-range missiles.¹⁵ Subsequently, the Iran Nuclear Deal which came as a result of President Obama’s efforts, could have warmed the relations between the two warring nations and given much-needed stability to the region but President Trump’s walking out of the deal, the subsequent imposition of sanctions and assassination of Major General Qasem Soleimani¹⁶ have once again turned the region on its head.

Major Conclusions from Iran’s Geography

Iran is bestowed with two formidable mountain ranges – Zagros and Elburz – which provide a defensive barrier. It has also a strong intermediate defensive line

against Afghanistan and Iraq. Unlike Iraq, it is quite difficult to invade, isolate, or blockade Iran.¹⁷ Stretching to the Persian Gulf from the Caspian Sea and onwards to the Indian Ocean and then to Hindukush from the Iraqi rivers, Iran is a country with 800 miles of coastline along Gulf of Oman and the Persian Gulf. Iran's seaport, Bandar Abbas in the Strait of Hormuz, is strategically important and considered to be highly vulnerable to any interdiction. Iran is, therefore, a land power than a maritime authority.¹⁸ Iran, being walled by mountains on its three sides, sea waters on the other and badland in the center, is almost impossible to conquer. The Mongols did so only once from the North while the Ottomans coming from the Zagros stopped around the Caspian.¹⁹ However, Iran's greatest threat is posed by the big powers that are from outside this region. Tehran was, previously, a gateway to India for any power coming from Europe. Besides, their main concern remained the manipulation by foreign powers to use their position as a platform to foment ethnic dissent in Iran.²⁰

For Iran, the foremost geo-compulsion is to secure its border and further ensure its internal stability and cohesion. Salient are:²¹

- To secure the mountains of Zagros and Elburz in order to negate any incursion from the West and North.
- To secure the secondary line of defense as formed by the borders on the East to the Caucasus in order to negate any threat from Russia, Turkey, Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- To defend Shatt al-Arab by protecting the western coast in the Gulf region.
- To manage and manipulate any diverse religious and ethnic groupings.
- To secure the borders against any incursion by the major powers, especially those from outside of the region.

Likely Responses against the Iranian Threats

Notwithstanding the host of options as forwarded by many, it is imperative to look into a little more detail about the pros and cons, and the efficacy of each of the three most likely or doable responses.

Attacking Iran

Much has changed in Iran during recent years less one fact and that is Iran's nuclear program which is not likely to be deterred by diplomacy alone.²² Since diplomacy is not to yield the desired results, therefore, it leaves only two options for the US to choose and that is to either attack Iran or let it acquire a nuclear bomb. Any debate about the US attack on Iran is sure to bring out resistance in the US but Washington would be wrong to pay attention to the arguments of those who would voice moral objections to such an attack. If the policies that oversee the international structure including the nuclear nonproliferation regime are to have any sense, they must be imposed. Yet the increase in nuclear weapons seriously endangers the global

security environment. If Washington believes that it is vital to thwart other countries from acquiring nuclear weapons then it ought to be prepared in principle to use power to realize that objective. Former US Presidents have openly declared for quite some time that they would keep all options²³ open to stop Iran from making a nuclear weapon including military action under definite circumstances. Therefore, it is important to see the major implications of 'Attacking Iran' as an option to untangle the dilemma.

Military Action – Benefits

A wholesome study by Wilson Centre²⁴ contemplates that a pre-emptive military action by the US can delay Iran's capacity to build a nuclear weapon for about four years. The delay can be as a consequence of damages to Tehran's present nuclear services. Iran's weakening ability to reconstruct similar facilities or damage to its military prowess is likely to have broader strategic benefits for the US. Salient being:

- **Damaging Iran's Nuclear Installations:** Intense US attacks can destroy or damage Tehran's main enrichment and conversion installations in Natanz, Esfahan, Tehran, and as yet incomplete heavy water reactor at Arak. While a debate is on whether one bomb could destroy Fardow, or a series of bunker-buster shells would be required to neutralize the facilities storing 20% of the stockpile of enriched uranium permanently or otherwise.²⁵
- **Inability to Reestablish Nuclear Installations:** Tehran's response to restart its nuclear weapon program can be considerably weakened by the US attacks on places housing their components of centrifuges. Since these things are mostly procured from abroad, therefore, any damage to them will be irreparable.²⁶
- **Hurting Military Prowess:** There is a likelihood to damage Iran's air defense system and armed forces network of communication, command and control centers. There is also a chance of destruction of Iranian retaliatory mechanisms, such as missile and rocket-launching sites and the main military bases.
- **Deterrence against Proliferation:** Attacking Iran's nuclear installations by US forces would send a strong message for any nuclear aspiring country. Additionally, it will also allay the fear of the US abandoning close friends in the hour of need and that nuclear proliferation is the last thing that will be allowed by Washington.

Military Action – Costs

Any initiation of a deterrent action against Tehran notwithstanding even narrow objectives are likely to engulf the entire region into uncertainty. The US would also have to confront global backlash and negative consequences for such an action.

Also, any future cost of military action may not be easy to foretell the likely reaction of both Iran and other regional states.

- **Cost of Direct Retaliation by Iran:** It is expected that Iran in most probability is likely to hit back despite many people's reservations that Iran would stay short of inciting a larger US retaliation. Even a symbolic strike back in the shape of a missile attack could cost both lives and material of the US. Iran is believed to have developed a credible ballistic missile program besides their nuclear program.²⁷ Tehran may, however, limit the extent of their retribution so as to get support and consideration of main regional countries and the global fraternity as being the sufferer is likely to accrue more political mileage.
- **Striking Back at the US:** Reprisal would possibly involve Tehran's irregular conventional force potentials. Iran would feel like to keep away from a direct armed confrontation with the US and would instead target Israeli and US installations or a mix of it, thereof.
- **Closure of Hormuz:** In retaliation against any military attack, Tehran may choose to close the Strait. Almost one-fifth of the world's petroleum goes through it.²⁸ Closure of the Strait has all the ingredients to upset the volatile gas and oil market worldwide. It can also upset countries like China and Russia. Iran may also contemplate that by closing the Strait, the world may pressure the US to deescalate.
- **Global and Regional Costs:** The global and long-term costs to US interests in the longer run are not only going to be colossal but will be very difficult to approximate.
- **Increased Chances of Iran Becoming a Nuclear State:** Diplomatic talks before any military action can prove beneficial. But once a military strike takes place, it will be next to impossible to sit and talk unless the Iran surrenders (which seems most unlikely).

As discussed above, the only way to capitulate Iran is to have boots on the ground and that too for a long haul. But if all options fail then the world will be forced to contend with a nuclear Iran.²⁹

Nuclear Deal

To reiterate, the US can either agree to a nuclear Iran or gamble an attack that might fail out-and-out inflict only an insignificant delay on their nuclear program or trigger painful responses even it succeeded. When neither alternative is acceptable, it is essential to find a third option. As long as the dilemma of Iran is seen from its nuclear program, the US is in an impracticable place. Therefore, the Persian problem ought to be redefined. One try at the redefinition looks forward to an uprising against the present regime, which does not look to be a workable option. Tehran has easily crushed them in the past and even if they did succeed, it is for sure that it will not create

management any more obliging towards the US. Besides, waiting for a revolution is the only justification for doing nothing and accepting a nuclear Iran than as a strategic alternative.³⁰

Therefore, the third option was finally given a try where all the countries who matter sat down to carve out a deal which fell between the options of 'a war' or 'a nuclear Iran'. The key countries participating in the talks with Iran included the United Nations Security Council's permanent five members (Russia, China, France, US, and UK plus Germany and EU). Intense parleys of two years made the deal possible which aimed to lift the economic sanctions against Iran for agreeing to limit their ability to build a nuclear weapon. Tehran agreed to limit enrichment of uranium by 2/3rd while reducing the number of centrifuges used for enrichment. Iran also consented to decrease the enriched uranium stockpile by about 98% and to limit the uranium enrichment to fewer than 3.67%. In essence, Iran opted for having enriched uranium for its energy needs but not enough to build a nuclear weapon. Additionally, Iran consented to give the right of entry to inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to inspect their nuclear sites. Iran has been constantly seen by IAEA to be complying with the nuclear deal. IAEA, in January 2016, lifted all sanctions related to its nuclear program as they found Iran to be living up to its end of the deal.

Nevertheless, many in Washington were not fully convinced that Iran's ability to make a nuclear weapon was totally-controlled. Part of the accord that will subsequently expire and the sunset clauses were not palatable to them. The deal allowed restrictions on uranium enrichment and limits on use of centrifuges to expire in 2030 and 2025 respectively. It was feared that once these expired, Iran could rush to make a nuclear bomb. "It is clear to me that we cannot prevent an Iranian nuclear bomb under the decaying and rotten structure of the current agreement," President Trump said in May 2018. Trump along with others believed that the accord did not effectively touch Iran's regional behavior or the nuclear program, therefore, it is quite evident that the US is looking for a more restrictive deal with Iran.

As the world witnesses the raising of tensions regarding the consequence of JCPOA, it is important to visit some of the pros and cons of the agreement: -

The Pros

- **It Would Defer Iran's Desire from becoming an Atomic Power:** The main objective of the deal seems to delay Iran from becoming an atomic power by ten years at least.³¹ The work on the accord began in 2015 as it was generally believed that Tehran was two years away from making a useable bomb. This was, in fact, the reason for the hastening of the agreement into a practical shape.
- **Accord Impedes a Race for Weapons in the Region:** If Tehran was left unchecked in their nuclear ambitions and allowed to develop a nuclear bomb, this would have triggered an arms race in the Middle East. The limiting of enrichment allowed prevention from raising the ante and

reduction in chances of outright war and nuclear proliferation in the region.

- **Put a Stop on Iran's Usage of the Latest Centrifuges:** At the time of the accord, Iran had around twenty thousand latest machines enriching the uranium. The accord, however, limited Iran to use only 5000 of its oldest types of centrifuges for the next ten years.³² Ever since the commissioning of the deal, Iran has demolished the core of the plutonium reactor which could have developed a plutonium bomb. Additionally, Iran also moved 97% of its centrifuges from the existing operational centers.
- **Economic Boom for the US Companies:** There were plans for approximately \$100 billion worth of sale in both the oil and gas sectors. Besides, Boeing was found very eager for the deal as it got about \$20 billion deals under its belt for the selling of new aircraft and up-gradation of the existing 1970 vintage fleet.
- **US to minimize its Trade Shortfall:** At the point when the UN Security Committee approved the Iran atomic arrangement, Iran's economy developed practically by 13%. Iran is now exporting only 300,000 barrels of oil each day as against 2.5 million at the time of signing of the accord.³³ Although the nation's monetary yield is not even close to what Canada, China or even Mexico trades with the US but trading with Iran would have helped the US to minimize its trade deficit.
- **Consensus that Iran is Complying:** Despite earlier infringement of past settlements, there is noteworthy proof to recommend that Iran has remained consistent with the provisions of this accord until the late spring of 2019.

The Cons

- **The Deal did not Stop Iran from Becoming a Nuclear Power after 10 Years:** Detractors of JCPOA have worries about the way that this understanding still enables Tehran to continue with the program. Ideally, it would curtail the improvement of warheads and advancement for just 10 years only. Since, there are no assurances that another deal would take place after the expiry of the present one, there are strong indications that this deal accelerates rather than impedes the Iranian quest for the nuclear bomb.
- **No Restrictions Set on Testing Missiles in the Deal:** After the conclusion of the Iran atomic arrangement, the local ballistic rocket tests by Iran were viewed as provocative acts and to be against the spirit of the deal by the US and the UK. Iran contends that the rockets are not intended to carry atomic warheads so they do not violate the arrangements. There will consistently be a fundamental uncertainty that Tehran will ever leave

their desire for an atomic weapon which is precisely the reason the experts think that a political arrangement that gives Iran more cash is a poorly conceived one.

- **Ambiguity Remains on Heavy Water Fuel at Arak:** Arak has a 40 MW atomic plant that makes heavy water. It can furnish enough plutonium for making a few bombs each year. It is strongly felt that there is no need to have a heavy water facility for a peaceful venture. But, still the deal surprisingly remains quiet on it.
- **All Quiet on the Use of ICBMs:** Surprisingly, despite threats from this regime, the US and its partners did not follow their demands to limit the progress of inter-continental ballistic weaponry.
- **Bilateral Relations Left Untouched:** Iran and the US have been daggers drawn since the Islamic Revolution. The Iran nuclear deal seems to have let this problem stay untouched. Notwithstanding the declaration, President Obama conceded that the real motivation behind the accord was to exchange the sanctions for limitations in the atomic program. The Iranian government still observes it to be in a holy war against western beliefs. This deal, however, has shown some signs of hope that even the US and Iran can work out an understanding even for a short while, though.

A Nuclear Iran

While alluding to the third option of a Nuclear Iran, one finds the arguments of Scott Sagan to be very persuasive that the world would become an un-safer place, if more states in the world were to have nuclear weapons as it would render that the deterrent value has failed to create the desired results.³⁴ Also, Iran's acquiring of a nuclear weapon is likely to have a snowball effect in the Middle East but this study finds Kenneth Waltz arguments³⁵ more pertinent and appealing that 'power begs to be balanced' and history is a witness that ever since the end of World War II, no nuclear weapon states have gone into a major war amongst themselves.³⁶ The Middle East needs a balancer to counter Israel's hegemonic aspirations in the region. Waltz feels that Iran's nuclearization will eventually portend well for the region's stability and is likely to provide the required stabilizing effect. So far, it seems that Iran's desire to become a nuclear power is a legitimate one but balancing the equilibrium of stability in the Middle East would be a challenge for this region.

An Alternate Option

There are no issues in the world of international relations that cannot be resolved by involving different and appropriate tools for an amicable resolution. Having said that the Persian Puzzle can still also be resolved, if both the main players truly want it. The US, though, would have to carry the major burden and responsibility. The three main response options were picked after sifting through many options that were under discussion. However, one alternative view which has hardly got noticed but has the

ingredients of solving the issue harmoniously is for the US to take the lead and resolve the main bone of contention between Israel and the Muslim world by amicably solving the Israeli-Palestinian Two-State impasse and then facilitate to resolve the Arab-Persian rivalry. It may be a difficult call but for the overall expected dividends, it at-least deserves an honest try by the US.

Conclusion

The paper endeavored to find reasons what made Iran enigma, it had become, and what are the most doable options available to unravel the mystery. The study found that of all the three options discussed above at length, the military option perhaps seems the most impracticable. This option, though, the most difficult to achieve and even if successful, it will curtail any further bargaining options for the US and would leave them 'high and dry' in the realm of any future diplomatic manipulations. Secondly, the deal is nevertheless a sort of arrangement of mutual benefit between the parties involved. Therefore, whenever a party seems to have achieved the desired benefits, it may try to get out it - the US action is a point in case. The Iran nuclear deal was an understanding of mutual benefit to both the parties discreetly steered and led by the US administration but Trump's entry altered the landscape. Another change might see a reversal and the usual balance of power restored. To expect a permanent solution was never the objective of either party.

Therefore, the third choice, i.e., a nuclear Iran, somehow, appears workable but not going to be acceptable to the US because Israeli factor is too strong to be brushed aside. The US which owes its early rise to the top of the world through its adherence to the virtues of fair play and justice so beautifully enshrined in the age of the Wilsonian Idealism,³⁷ where the famous fourteen points for the world's peace were given. Since, then the US has slowly allowed the Realism to take precedence over the Idealism - in order to maximize its power to manipulate events to suit its varied interests but has in the bargain lost the moral leadership of the world. The ball is now in their court and it remains to be seen as to who finally triumphs - Realism or Idealism?

References

- ¹ Alan Cowell, "Churchill's Definition of Russia Still Rings True," *New York Times*, December 16, 2011.
- ² Stephen Hadley, "Eight Ways to Deal with Iran," *Foreign Policy*, December 16, 2011, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2012/09/26/eight-ways-to-deal-with-iran>.
- ³ "Fars, Persis or Pars," *Britannica Encyclopedia*, accessed June 5, 2019, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/452741/Persia>.
- ⁴ "The Origins of Aryan People," *David Licke*, accessed May 2, 2019, <http://www.davidicke.com/forum/showthread.php?t=203063>.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁶ "Iran," *CIA Fact book*, accessed December 5, 2018, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ir.html>.
- ⁷ George Friedman, "The Geopolitics of Iran: Holding the Centre of Mountain Fortress," *Stratfor*, December 16, 2011, <http://www.stratfor.com/sample/analysis/geopolitics-iran-holding-center-mountain-fortress>.
- ⁸ James E Jennings, "The Geo-Strategic Position of Iran," *Logos: A Journal of Modern Society & Culture* 4, no.4 (2005).
- ⁹ "Iran-Country Analysis Brief Overview," *U.S. Energy Information Administration*, accessed March 29, 2019, <http://www.eia.gov/countries/country-data.cfm?fips=IR>.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹ James E. Jennings, 'The Geo-Strategic Position of Iran', at http://www.logosjournal.com/issue_4.4/jennings.htm (Accessed 31 December 2019).
- ¹² "Twin Pillars Policy," *Encyclopedia*, accessed April 11, 2020, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/humanities/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/twin-pillars-policy>.
- ¹³ "Axis of Evil," *Britannica*, accessed April 22, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/axis-of-evil>.
- ¹⁴ Nikki R Keddie, "Iranian Revolutions in Comparative Perspective," *The American Historical Review* 88, no. 3 (1983): 579-98.
- ¹⁵ Daniel Heradstveit and G. Matthew Bonham, "What the Axis of Evil Metaphor Did to Iran," *Middle East Journal* 61, no. 3 (2007): 421-40.
- ¹⁶ Sadjadpour Karim, "Why the U.S. Assassination of Soleimani Is a Windfall for Iran's Mullahs," *Time Magazine*, January 9, 2020.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁸ "The Geopolitics Of Iran: Holding the Center Of a Mountain Fortress," *Stratfor*, December 16, 2011, <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/geopolitics-iran-holding-center-mountain-fortress>.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*
- ²¹ *Ibid.*
- ²² "Still Time to Attack Iran," *Atlantic Council*, January 7, 2014, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/still-time-to-attack-iran>.
- ²³ "Why has the United States not bombed Iran? The domestic politics of America's response to Iran's nuclear programme," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 24, no.4 (2011): 659-684.
- ²⁴ "Weighing Benefits and Costs of Military Action Against Iran," *Wilson Center*, August 31, 2012, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/IranReport_091112_FINAL.pdf.
- ²⁵ "Iran Nuclear Deal: Why Do the Limits on Uranium Enrichment Matter?" BBC, September 5, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-48776695>.
- ²⁶ David Sanger, Edward Wong and Steven Erlanger-Eric Schmitt, "U.S. Issues New Sanctions As Iran Warns It Will Step Back From Nuclear Deal," *New York Times*, May 5, 2019.
- ²⁷ "Here's the Most Critical Part of Iran's Nuclear Program That Nobody Is Talking About," *The Washington Institute For Near East Policy*, July 7, 2015.
- ²⁸ "Trump's Iran Policy Is Undermining Gulf Oil Security," *Atlantic Council*, July 18, 2019, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/iransource/trump-s-iran-policy-is-undermining-gulf-oil-security>.
- ²⁹ John Mearsheimer, "Iran Is Rushing To Build a Nuclear Weapon - and Trump Can't Stop It," *New York Times*, July 1, 2019.
- ³⁰ Masoud Amin and Muhammad Khurshid Khan, "Strategic Impacts of Iranian Nuclear Program," *Margalla Papers* (2015).
- ³¹ Robert Einhorn and Richard Nephew, "The Iran Nuclear Deal: Prelude to Proliferation in the Middle East?" *Brookings*, accessed August 10, 2019, https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/acnpi_20160531_iran_deal_regional_proliferation.pdf.
- ³² Rezaei, Farhad. "Iran's Nuclear Agreement: The Three Specific Clusters of Concerns." *Insight Turkey* 20, no. 2 (2018): 167-200.
- ³³ Keith Johnson, "Trump Sanctions Iran Again, Inching Toward Economic Blockade," *Foreign Policy*, September 18, 2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/09/18/trump-sanctions-iran-again-inching-toward-economic-blockade-saudi-oil-rouhani>.
- ³⁴ Gideon Rose and Jonathan Tepperman, *Iran and the Bomb Solving the Persian Puzzle* (New York: Foreign Affairs Press, 2012), 15.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, 66.
- ³⁶ Sindhu Vijayakumar, "The Theory of No First Use of Nuclear Weapons: The Need for A Balanced Approach From Necessity To Demand," *World Affairs: The Journal of International Issues* 20, no. 1 (2016): 82-93.
- ³⁷ "Stanley Hoffmann, "The Crisis of Liberal Internationalism," *Foreign Policy*, no. 98 (spring 1995):159-177.

US-NORTH KOREA RAPPROCHEMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON REGIONAL STABILITY

*Waseem Ishaque, Musarat Amin and Mudassir Mukhtar**

Abstract

The Korean Peninsula has remained a flashpoint and international hot spot since the Korean War (1950-1953). The US, a victor of the Second World War, in this theatre had to suffer reversals just after five years despite overwhelming military power and glory of past victory. The changes in the regional environment and dynamics of Chinese involvement in support of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) played a significant role in altering the ground situation. President Trump after taking over office initiated a series of provocations against DPRK leadership, which brought both countries to the brink of a nuclear showdown. However, dramatic events unfolded after Chairman Kim's New Year speech in December 2018, where peace and rapprochement became the international buzzwords and gained a lot of popularity which are now fading due to dimming enthusiasm by all stakeholders. The sudden breakdown of diplomatic relations between the DPRK and the Republic of Korea (ROK) due to propaganda posters allegedly flown from the ROK and blowing up of liaison office at Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) by the DPRK on June 16, 2020, has added new dimensions to the fragility of the situation. This research article, therefore, explores the causes of breakdown of the past two summits between President Trump and Chairman Kim, the current stalemate and future prospects of peace in the Korean Peninsula along-with impact analysis on regional stability.

Keywords: Denuclearization, Enduring Peace, Regime Survival, Regional Stability.

Introduction

US President Donald Trump's speech at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in September 2017 using the words of fire and fury, rocket-man and destruction of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) indeed created a doomsday scenario due to extraordinary tension in the Korean Peninsula. Such a scenario created anxiety for the regional and global players, who were trying hard to defuse the situation and avoid another Korean War involving nuclear weapons. The exchange of rhetoric between President Trump and Chairman Kim was extraordinary, which created unnecessary tension with serious consequences. The forum of six-party talks¹ played a significant role in containing further nuclear ambitions of the DPRK and provided a multilateral forum for a negotiated settlement of the dispute. The Chinese government independently and using multilateral forums like six-party talks and the

*Dr Waseem Ishaque is an Assistant Professor at the Department of International Relations, National Defence University, Islamabad. Dr. Musarat Amin is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Defence and Diplomatic Studies, Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi. Dr. Mudassir Mukhtar is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Mass Communication, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad.

United Nations Security Council (UNSCR) started intensive diplomatic efforts in convincing all parties to show restraint and avoid a nuclear holocaust. Additionally, the forward deployment of forces along the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) was also to be deescalated to avoid any miscalculation by either side involving military conflict.

The Republic of Korea (ROK) also proposed to postpone joint drills with the US military and remove propaganda speakers installed along DMZ to deescalate the situation.² Chairman Kim's tactful move of offering to participate in the Pyeong Chang Winter Olympics surprised the world and paved the way for the exchange of pleasantries between the two Koreas resulting in a calculated de-escalation of the situation. The damage of fire and fury speech rhetoric was contained with the cautious optimism of advancing peace overtures into a durable settlement between the US, the DPRK and the ROK. The former UK diplomat, James Hoare, who had served in Pyongyang, remarked: "North Korea is trying to break out of the increasing international hostility they face, the isolation and the sanctions. The Olympics is a chance to present a different face to the world."³ As these overtures were widely appreciated, the South Korean President also remarked that the games are a "precious opportunity" to seek peace on the Korean Peninsula and called these games the "Peace Olympics."⁴ This article, therefore, critically analyses the peace efforts of the last two years, predicts the future course followed by viable recommendations for lasting stability in the region.

Genesis of the Conflict

Since the end of the Korean War in 1953, both the US and the DPRK have maintained hostile posturing against each other. US presence in the ROK and Japan is considered as a serious national security concern by regimes in Pyongyang. The hostile military posturing, regime survival, internal consolidation and effective deterrence against provocations from the US and the ROK assumed prime national security priorities for the DPRK. While the US has used sanctions as coercive tools of diplomacy to change the DPRK'S behavior in order to either cause internal implosion or surrender in the face of a military threat and economic hardships. On the other hand, successive regimes in the DPRK have done reasonably well on all above-highlighted fronts and remained consistent in acquiring credible nuclear deterrence to ensure regime survival. The acquisition of nuclear capability was pursued as a supreme national security priority with the help of the Soviet Union in 1956. To consolidate its strategic deterrence, the DPRK successfully conducted a series of nuclear and missile tests commencing from 2006 until 2017. The antagonizing pre- and post-election speeches of President Trump, joint military drills of the US and the ROK for an invasion of the DPRK and extensive propaganda campaign by the ROK contributed significantly to deteriorating the situation. The urgency was, therefore, generated for diplomatic overtures by Russia and China.

While there is unanimity of views within the six-party platform and other world players that denuclearization of the entire Korean Peninsula is a must goal for lasting peace, however, they differ in methodology to approach the issue. Where China

and Russia support negotiated settlement giving due consideration to national security requirements of the DPRK by eliminating Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) from all parties and immediate secession of hostilities. On the other hand, the US, the ROK and Japan support unilateral denuclearization of the DPRK as proposed by the US. It is widely believed that the change in Chinese policy towards nuclear posturing of the DPRK has been instrumental in policy review by Chairman Kim. China initially maintained a policy of “watching from sidelines”⁵ till 2002, which means that China was not paying much attention towards the development of strategic capabilities of the DPRK, however, from 2002-2009, China adopted a policy of “active intervention”⁶ in order to ensure strategic stability in the region and refrain DPRK from unnecessary provocations.

However, President Trump’s speech of September 19, 2017, at the UNGA in which he threatened to “destroy North Korea”⁷ by declaring that the era of strategic patience of the US is over, which suddenly changed the regional scenario where nuclear showdown was perceived as a most likely possibility. However, behind the curtain, the intervention of China for diplomatic engagement to avoid military confrontation prevailed and Chairman Kim surprised the world by offering peace through a New Year message.⁸ The dramatic de-escalation and holding of one-on-one summits between President Trump and Chairman Kim in Singapore were positive indicators with the potentials of lasting stability.

Active Diplomacy to Ease Tension

Chairman Kim’s sudden decision to participate in the Pyeong Chang Winter Olympics brought a pleasant surprise for the international community. After months of rhetoric, provocations and active hostilities, smart diplomacy provided new opportunities of hope, Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) and prosperity. The ROK welcomed the offer and immediately travel formalities completed to enable DPRK teams to participate in the Olympics. A series of events followed where intense diplomatic engagement by China, Russia, ROK and Japan paved the way for the first-ever summit between President Trump and Chairman Kim in Singapore in 2018 and later at Hanoi in 2019. While it is a fallacy to assume that the immediate results of denuclearization would happen, however, the ice-breaking had already paved way for sustained future dialogues. As a whole, the 2018-Olympics provided a unique opportunity for all parties to look for alternate options away from confrontation. For the DPRK, it helped to break isolation and taking lead as a potential peacemaker. Similarly, for the US and the ROK, it provided an opening for sustained dialogues and future summits.

Chairman Kim and President Moon Jae- in Summit

Chairman Kim’s landmark visit to the ROK across DMZ on April 26, 2018, provided an opportunity for both North and South Korean leaders to discuss the future course of action of eventual peace and stability. Both leaders reaffirmed their commitment that “there will be no more war on the Korean peninsula and a new age of

peace has opened.”⁹ At the signing ceremony of the joint communique, Chairman Kim pointed out on reunification that “the current state of the truce and establishing a firm peace is a historic task that [the two Koreas] can no longer delay.”¹⁰ Therefore, the process of goodwill and exchange of pleasantries initiated a new era of hope and durable peace amid suspicion and frustration.

Singapore Summit (2018)

After incremental diplomatic steps and confidence-building measures, the world witnessed the historic moment of a direct meeting between President Trump and Chairman Kim on June 11, 2018, at the Capella Hotel, Singapore. Chairman Kim visited Beijing before the summit and had lengthy sessions with President Xi Jinping. The Chinese leadership also played a key role in convincing Chairman Kim for the summit. The banter exchanged created a congenial atmosphere for the summit and both leaders demonstrated marked statecraft in pragmatically concluding the summit. US President, while talking about the special bond with the North Korean leader, said that he was “absolutely willing to invite him to the White House.”¹¹ Another significant outcome of the Singapore Summit was the cessation of hostilities between all three main parties, i.e., the US, the DPRK and the ROK. President Trump declared Chairman Kim an honorable partner and “promised to improve relations and suspend military exercises with the ROK.”¹² Later in a Twitter message, President Trump stated, “there is no longer a nuclear threat from North Korea despite the absence of any timetable for denuclearization.”¹³ In a rational analysis, the Singapore Summit can be termed as a great success as it provided a unique opportunity for both leaders to one-on-one meetings and pragmatically move forward on all issues of conflict and cooperation for enduring stability.

Hanoi Summit (2019)

While the Singapore Summit (2018) ended without any conclusive and tangible outcome, yet it was a great success given that the world, a few months ago, was concerned about the future of the Korean Peninsula after President Trump’s remarks of the destruction of North Korea. Secondly, it was the first time that the heads of governments of the US and the DPRK met personally since the end of the Korean War in 1953. Thirdly, it provided a unique opportunity for both leaders to understand each other, break the past path of rhetoric, and evaluate their respective compulsions and positions. Certainly, no one expected a miracle or breakthrough in the first-ever meeting.

President Trump’s approach towards the DPRK since then has been more rational, and choice of words, thereafter, has been carefully articulated, keeping in view the self-respect of the DPRK as a state and its leadership. For Hanoi Summit, both sides remained involved in detailed deliberations. Chairman Kim made exhaustive train journeys to Beijing, and later to Hanoi and extensive consultative process with the Chinese leadership. Similarly, on the US side, comprehensive preparations were made for a second summit. Jenny Town, a research analyst at Stimson Center, opines that “a

second summit with no outcome will be highly criticized, especially in the US and especially when Trump is in a state of domestic turmoil.”¹⁴ The Hanoi summit commenced with immense fanfare and the world was eagerly anticipating a viable outcome. However, the summit abruptly ended with clouds of disappointment over the Korean Peninsula as the world was watching with a lot of anxiety of positive outcome for this summit.

The stalemate provided a new stimulus to the leadership of DPRK, US and ROK to put in more efforts and deliberate consultations to make systematic progress, instead of seeking a conclusive agreement. President Trump described the summit as “it was about the sanctions basically,”¹⁵ at a press conference in Hanoi and elaborated that “they wanted the sanctions lifted in their entirety and we couldn’t do that ... sometimes you have to walk and this was just one of those times.”¹⁶ The DPRK Foreign Minister, Ri Yong Ho, in a midnight press conference, clarified his government’s position on the failure of the talks. He stated that Pyongyang had only demanded partial sanctions relief in return for closing Yongbyon. He said that the US had wasted an opportunity that “may not come again.”¹⁷ President Trump summarized the overall situation by saying that “status quo will continue, with North Korea continuing to suspend nuclear and missile tests, while the US will not take part in joint military exercises with South Korea.”¹⁸

ROK President also gave his version of the events by stating, “I believe this is part of a process to reach a higher level of agreement. Now, our role has become even more important.” He said, “My administration will closely communicate and cooperate with the US and North Korea, so as to help their talks reach a complete settlement by any means.”¹⁹ President Trump concluded by praising Chairman Kim, “We spent all day with Kim Jong-un ... He’s quite a guy and quite a character. And our relationship is very strong.”²⁰ Professor Leif Eric Easley from Ewha University Seoul opines that “the problem with the Hanoi summit was that it failed to achieve sanctions relief, and hence, did not empower South Korea to offer sufficient carrots to keep the engagement going.”²¹

Panmunjom DMZ Summit (July 2019)

At the end of the G-20 Summit at Osaka on June 29, 2019, President Trump indicated to meet DPRK leader at DMZ during his official visit to South Korea on June 30, 2019. This was named as Hand Shake Summit, and helped in a greater level of confidence-building after the Hanoi Summit of February 2019. President Trump stepped across DMZ to the DPRK and Chairman Kim to the ROK, and this handshake was significant from the perspective of confidence-building and acknowledging the legitimate rights of each other’s national security concerns. President Trump expressed his sentiments that “we’ve developed a great relationship ... the relationship that we have developed has meant so much to so many people, and it’s just an honor to be with you and it was an honor that you asked me to step over that line and I was proud to step over the line.”²² The haze surrounding the abrupt ending of the Hanoi summit was cleared to a large extent as both leaders got an opportunity once again to speak in

cordial and informal environments and build on the positive sentiments demonstrated by both leaders. In the overall context, this summit helped “the reintroduction of working-level envoys and their presumptive continuation of talks.”²³

Critical Analysis on Breakdown of Summits

President Trump since assuming the office has demonstrated statesmanship abilities to make tough decisions to serve the core national interests of the US. Due to his uncompressing election speeches on the DPRK, he took, unusually, harsh posture after inauguration as President. However, with pragmatic handling on both sides, the temperature gradually started to cool down; global and regional players felt a sigh of relief, who were struggling to avoid any further conflict on the Korean Peninsula. Both the leaders deserve credit for their hard work in pursuit of peace, though, fifty-years-long issues cannot be expected to be resolved in few summits. However, strong signaling of peace overtures has been initiated, which will continue to be capitalized in times to come. As a whole, even though two summits failed to produce any tangible outcome, yet provide a realistic future course of action to be adopted. Significant aspects, which led to the breakdown of summits, are multiple but two things are worth mentioning here. First, the unusual expectations of outcome and the second one was jumping to conclusions without adequate groundwork.

From the US perspective, DPRK’s refusal to complete denuclearization was the main sticking point, while from DPRK’s perspective, the US refusal to complete sanctions lifting despite the destruction of Yongbyon before the summit. Later, the US State Department special representative, Stephen Biegun, stated that North Korea had committed to destroy all Plutonium and Uranium enrichment facilities in a pre-summit commitment. These two contrasting claims demonstrate that inadequate preparations and unusual expectations led to the failure of talks. For the members of the Six-Party Talks Forum, such developments were regrettable, yet the exchange of pleasantries was a positive outcome. It must be remembered that the core national interests of both the US and the DPRK have to be understood in their respective perspectives to allay any fears of miss-appreciation of each other’s intentions. Any future settlement cannot happen without strong guarantees of the regime and national survival for the DPRK, where nuclear capability cannot be easily negotiated in a few summits. However, on a positive note, these summits facilitated unprecedented face-to-face meetings between the two leaders and provided a forum for future dialogues in a more substantive manner.

Prospects of Future Summits During 2020

The atmosphere of goodwill and review of harsh positions both by the US and the DPRK were welcome gestures despite the breakdown of the Hanoi Summit. Both leaders have demonstrated extraordinary statesmanship abilities, and have made significant progress towards confidence-building at a steady pace. While the journey to peace will be full of challenges, yet the path of negotiated settlement selected by all stakeholders will yield positive results, if all sides with the help of the international

community remain firm towards delivering peace a chance to resolve the most complex issues of the century. Both President Trump and Chairman Kim have indicated the possibility of another summit during 2020. The ROK has also stepped up its diplomatic efforts to re-energize the stalled process. The ROK Foreign Minister stated at Geneva Forum on February 24, 2020, that “speedy resumption of the US-DPRK negotiations is critical so that all stakeholders maintain and build upon the hard-won momentum for dialogue. We stand ready to engage with North Korea in a way that facilitates and accelerates the US-DPRK dialogue.”²⁴ Professor Cheehyung Harrison Kim at Hawaii University gave his analysis of the last two summits: “I think in the past year, there has been a very positive increase in the amount of meaningful public debate about North Korea. The Korean War, peace issues, sanctions and the negative impact of sanctions are all becoming general knowledge in the public”. He added, “we are moving on from the simple, one-sided view of North Korea, and I think that’s a very positive change.”²⁵ Professor Charles K. Armstrong, from Columbia University states: “What lies ahead is likely neither an explosive conflict nor a breakthrough to peace, but a return to the status quo ante of Korea’s never-ending Cold War.”²⁶ The extremely explosive developments of June 15, 2020, where the DPRK blew up the liaison office at DMZ on alleged propaganda leaflets sponsored by the ROK has created a sudden summersault scenario and point towards the serious escalation in tension dimming the prospects of future talks and eroded the goodwill environments created in last two years. One possible reason could be the overwhelming expectations and frustrations demonstrated by key parties to the conflict and lack of progress on promised sanctions relief by the DPRK. Constructive engagement and comprehensive road map for enduring peace is the need of time, which must be announced especially by the US, the ROK as time is premium, and any delay in this context may lose the last opportunity for peace and stability.

Perspectives of Six-Party Talks on Peace in the Korean Peninsula

Perspective of China

The region of the Korean Peninsula and wider Northeast Asia is very important from a political and economic point of view. On one hand, it involves strategic issues of denuclearization, the perpetual state of hostility and competition between the DPRK and the US, and on the other hand, there is intense economic engagement on part of all major players, therefore, this region is “rife with political-economic paradox.”²⁷ The rising tension amid a heated exchange of rhetoric between DPRK and US leaders created anxiety around the globe of any miscalculated action that could lead the entire region into highly destabilizing chaos. Additionally, deployment of US THAAD anti-missile system in the ROK in 2017, US joint military drills with the ROK and Japan and regular maneuvers of US aircrafts in the peninsula had generated a sense of insecurity in the DPRK.

China has huge stakes in the stability of the Korean peninsula, being it’s near abroad, therefore, China has been playing an active role in defusing the crises. China has repeatedly professed restraint and negotiated settlement. There has been a consistent transformation in Chinese policy towards the DPRK. In the beginning, China

maintained a policy of “watching from the sidelines; a policy of non-intervention through 2002 and was unconcerned with DPRK’s nuclear program.”²⁸ During the period from 2002 to 2009, Chinese policy changed to “active intervention due to DPRK’s unilateral withdrawal from the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT),”²⁹ and supported for the creation of multilateral Six-Party Talks forum for a comprehensive response. The nuclear tests conducted by the DPRK in 2009 brought a policy shift in China, where the focus now shifted towards maintaining regional stability and denuclearization of the entire Korean Peninsula. In short, the Chinese current strategic orientation involves parallel efforts in four key areas as highlighted by President Xi during his address at the Seoul National University on July 4, 2014, i.e., “economic integration and development; long-term political interests; peaceful unification between South and North Korea; and public diplomacy.”³⁰ China has always advocated peaceful and negotiated settlement avoiding provocations and applying restraint for all sides.

Perspective of the Republic of Korea (ROK)

The current South Korean leadership has remained actively involved in defusing tension between the DPRK and the US, especially in the aftermath of Chairman Kim’s New Year speech and participation of the DPRK in the winter Olympics in 2018. There has been much restraint applied in removing propaganda speakers along DMZ, halting joint drills with the US, and facilitating the past three summits between President Trump and Chairman Kim. President Moon advocates “Sunshine Policy”³¹ in his relations with Pyongyang.

The first-ever summit at Panmunjom on April 27, 2018, “South and North Korea confirmed the common goal of realizing, through complete denuclearization, a nuclear-free Korean peninsula, along with the promise of huge economic incentives by way of investment by the ROK to alleviate ailing economy of the DPRK.”³² Since then, President Moon has made DPRK a foreign policy preference and lost no opportunity for creating conducive environments where President Trump and Chairman Kim can sit together again in 2020 and hammer out a respectable deal which is win-win for all sides. Additionally, the ROK has remained actively engaged in Six-Party forums for continuous engagement of the DPRK on the table and has helped in diffusing tension especially after President Trump’s UNGA speech. Overall, it is in the interest of the ROK to ensure that peace and harmony prevail in the Korean peninsula and denuclearization of the entire region is a must for lasting peace and stability. The unfortunate incidents of June 15, 2020, which has created a diplomatic breakdown between North and South Korea, President Moon is still actively pursuing diplomacy to ease tension and bring the DPRK back on the negotiating table. The damage done by propaganda leaflets is enormous and needs to be carefully handled.

Perspective of Japan

The peace and stability in North-east Asia are contingent upon the future engagements between the DPRK and the US when it comes to the issues of regional security. The tit for tat provocations and war of words had created anxiety among

Japanese policy circles as the region cannot afford another war and instability. In the case of a military standoff between the US and the DPRK, it is conceivable that the “first target of attack could include US bases in Japan.”³³ Another fear is that most of the test missiles overflowed Japan, therefore, “any malfunction can create havoc in mainland Japan, having thickly populated and highly advanced industrial base.”³⁴ Japan, therefore, actively participated at six-party talks forums and has remained committed towards a peaceful and negotiated settlement of Korean issues along with denuclearization of the entire region.

Perspective of Russia

While the Russian approach towards the DPRK has generally remained quiet and watching from the sidelines, however, it has played an important role in maintaining and projecting six-party talks forum as an effective platform for comprehensive discussions and keeping the DPRK engaged in the process of dialogue. During Putin-Kim Summit in April 2019, President Putin “reiterated the importance of denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula, but he also backed North Korea’s advocacy of a phased process involving confidence-building measures with the US.”³⁵ Russia closely observed Trump-Kim summits and intends to remain constructively engaged and contribute towards negotiated settlement and denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Prospects of Enduring Stability in the Region

The era of conventional wars and armed conflict appears to be drawing down with the international community feeling tired of deaths, devastations and refugees because of instability in the Middle East and adjoining regions. The realist notion of accumulation of power at the cost of others, though relevant but losing its significance due to more accommodative and cooperative order professed by China. The Korean Peninsula has been an international hot spot since the Korean war of the 1950s but has become even more complex due to nuclear dimensions and anxiety of US and DPRK leadership in dealing with each other based on the international norms of sovereign equality and reciprocity. The regional environments have been taking a positive turn after three summits between President Trump and Chairman Kim along with active diplomacy demonstrated by other regional stakeholders, like China, Russia, Japan and the ROK. While the year 2020 is marked by two important events, one is US elections and second is President Trump’s desire to achieve a breakthrough with Kim before elections to make a history never witnessed before in the US approach towards the North-east Asian region. While on the negative side of events, any small miscalculated gesture can create a sudden breakdown of relations as has been witnessed since June 15, 2020. Damage control in such cases becomes extremely crucial and all-out efforts are needed by all the stakeholders for comprehensive engagements to defuse tension and recommence stalled dialogue process.

Following suggestions are offered for lasting peace and stability in the region and averting a potential nuclear holocaust:

- A gradual approach is suggested for US-DPRK future summits, whereby, intensive groundwork at working level groups followed by ministerial-level meetings should be extensively held to fine-tune the agreed agenda items with due regards to sensitivities of each other.
- Regional approach and forum of six-party talks should continue as an alternate platform for negotiating teething issues requiring substantial input from the regional stakeholders. Also, these countries should be engaged to make credence to any future settlements and all must be made partners in such peace efforts.
- The provocations like joint drills, media rhetoric, leaflets and public statements with destabilizing potentials should be avoided for maintaining a congenial atmosphere.
- Hotline communication between DPRK, ROK and US leaders should be established for a direct conversation to address any emergency.
- No provocations should be allowed to avoid strategic miscalculation by any side.
- Confidence-building measures should be taken for creating an atmosphere of goodwill and exchange of pleasantries that can help in achieving such goals.
- Denuclearization should be carefully articulated, and should not appear to be one-sided over-exuberance on part of the US.
- DPRK regime survival and internal consolidation should be preserved as the country cannot afford to implode from within as a result of sudden regime collapse with serious consequences.
- DPRK should be incentivized for its change in conduct by way of sanctions relief and economic assistance for improving the quality of life of its citizens. Otherwise, the leadership's decisions may not gain public support in the long run.
- All parties should put in hectic diplomatic efforts to keep the current momentum of talks moving forward during 2020 for tangible and result-oriented outcomes.
- The reunification of two Koreas should eventually happen as a part of a comprehensive peace deal. It is a long desire of the people of both Koreas and the ROK has dedicated ministry for reunification.

Conclusion

The Korean Peninsula has remained divided and unstable since the Korean War. Despite several diplomatic efforts, the temperatures kept rising due to overt nuclearization of the DPRK and hostile posturing of the US and the ROK. The scenarios like implosion from within, forceful regime change, and altering state behavior by coercive means remained the language of the US, especially since President Trump assumed office. The nuclear ambitions of North Korean leader Kim and demonstrated nuclear capability backed by delivery means have put the Korean peninsula on the verge of showdown with the US. President Trump's speech of fire and fury and response by

the North Korean leadership aggravated the tension in the bilateral relations of US-DPRK and enhanced instability in the region. However, realizing the gravity of the problem at hand, Chairman Kim demonstrated pragmatic statecraft and mature diplomatic overtures and participation in the 2018-winter Olympics, helped in reversing tense paradigm into a cordial atmosphere. It is also noteworthy to mention the intense engagement by ROK President Moon, who not only hosted North's Olympic team but also held summits with Chairman Kim. President Moon also played a major role in facilitating US-DPRK summits and is making earnest efforts for holding the same during 2020. However, the dramatic breakdown of DPRK-ROK relations since propaganda leaflets allegedly sponsored by the ROK Government has created new challenges of rebuilding the trust and atmosphere of goodwill invested in the last two years. It is strongly felt that all stakeholders should maintain constructive engagement and no opportunity should be lost for attaining the objectives of lasting peace and prosperity and saving the world from an impending nuclear showdown. At the same time, the available forum of Six-Party Talks should also continue to engage all parties through constructive dialogue mechanisms so that momentum is maintained in the coming years and negotiated settlement should be realized for enduring peace and stability in the region.

References

- ¹ The forum of six Party Talks comprises USA, DPRK, Republic of Korea (ROK), Japan, China and Russia, remained functional from 2003 to 2008 which provided platform to diplomatically handle DPRK's nuclear issue.
- ² South Korea Takes Down Propaganda Speakers at Border, *BBC News*, May 1 2018.
- ³ Benjamin Haas, "Winter Olympics Bring Peace to Korean Peninsula – for Now," *The Guardian*, February 7, 2018, sec. Sport, <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2018/feb/07/winter-olympics-bring-peace-to-korean-peninsula-for-now>.
- ⁴ "Winter Olympics: The Politics in Brief," *BBC News*, February 7, 2018, sec. Asia, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-42975912>.
- ⁵ "Negotiating North Korea's Nukes - The Stop-Start Negotiations," Institute for Security and Development Policy, accessed February 27, 2020, <https://isdip.eu/publication/negotiating-north-koreas-nukes/>.
- ⁶ "Negotiating North Korea's Nukes - The Stop-Start Negotiations."
- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ North Korea Offers a Message of Peace to South Korea, *Wall Street Journal*, 30 December 2018.
- ⁹ "New Era, No More War: Two Koreas Agree on Complete Denuclearization," RT International, accessed February 27, 2020, <https://www.rt.com/news/425279-koreas-peace-denuclearization-talks/>.
- ¹⁰ "New Era, No More War," *RT*, accessed on January 18, 2020, available at <https://www.rt.com/news/425279-koreas-peace-denuclearization-talks/>.
- ¹¹ "Trump and Kim Make History with a Handshake," *BBC News*, June 12, 2018, sec. Asia, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-44435935>.
- ¹² "How the Trump-Kim Summit in Hanoi Failed: Big Threats, Big Egos, Bad Bets, United States News & Top Stories - The Straits Times," accessed February 28, 2020, <https://www.straitstimes.com/world/united-states/how-the-trump-kim-summit-in-hanoi-failed-big-threats-big-egos-bad-bets>.
- ¹³ "How the Trump-Kim Summit in Hanoi Failed: Big Threats, Big Egos, Bad Bets, United States News & Top Stories - The Straits Times."
- ¹⁴ "Vietnam: Trump, Kim Arrive in Hanoi for Second Summit | North Korea News | Al Jazeera," accessed February 28, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/02/vietnam-trump-kim-arrive-hanoi-summit-190226195343215.html>.
- ¹⁵ Laura Bicker, "Trump-Kim Talks Break down over Sanctions," *BBC News*, February 28, 2019, 1, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-47398974>.
- ¹⁶ "Vietnam Summit: North Korea and US Offer Differing Reasons for Failure of Talks | World News | The Guardian," accessed February 28, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/feb/28/vietnam-summittrump-and-kim-play-down-hopes-of-quick-results-nuclear-talks>.
- ¹⁷ "Vietnam Summit: North Korea and US Offer Differing Reasons for Failure of Talks | World News | The Guardian."
- ¹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁰ "The Quick Read on the Trump-Kim Summit in Hanoi | Time," accessed February 28, 2020, <https://time.com/5541197/quick-read-bremmer-north-korea-summit/>.
- ²¹ "Diplomacy Stalled a Year after Trump-Kim Summit Collapse | North Korea News | Al Jazeera," accessed February 28, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/02/diplomacy-stalled-year-trump-kim-summit-collapse-200227015554627.html>.
- ²² "Trump-Kim Summit: Will Two Leaders Meet for Third Round of Talks? | News | Al Jazeera," accessed February 28, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/09/trump-kim-summit-leaders-meet-talks-19090511656760.html>.
- ²³ "The Trump-Kim DMZ 'Handshake Summit': What It Changes and What It Doesn't Change - The Diplomat," accessed February 28, 2020, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/07/the-trump-kim-dmz-handshake-summit-what-it-changes-and-what-it-doesnt-change/>.
- ²⁴ "South Korea Seeks 'speedy Resumption' of U.S.-North Korea Nuclear Talks - Reuters," accessed February 28, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-southkorea-northkorea-nuclear/south-korea-seeks-speedy-resumption-of-u-s-north-korea-nuclear-talks-idUSKCN20138>.
- ²⁵ "Diplomacy Stalled a Year after Trump-Kim Summit Collapse | North Korea News | Al Jazeera," accessed February 28, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/02/diplomacy-stalled-year-trump-kim-summit-collapse-200227015554627.html>.
- ²⁶ Charles K Armstrong, "Korean Peninsula Peace Prospects Unravelling in 2020 | East Asia Forum," accessed February 28, 2020, <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2020/01/25/korean-peninsula-peace-prospects-unravelling-in-2020/>.
- ²⁷ Min Ye and Kent Calder, "The Making of Northeast Asia |," accessed February 28, 2020, <http://www.sup.org/books/title/?id=17723>.
- ²⁸ Jim Canrong et al., "World Views: Negotiating the North Korean Nuclear Issue," n.d., 27.
- ²⁹ Canrong et al.
- ³⁰ "President Xi Jinping Delivers an Important Speech in ROK's Seoul National University, Stressing That China Will Always Be a Country That Maintains Peace, Promotes Cooperation and Is Modest to Learn from Others, and That China Will Create the Future of China-ROK Cooperation and Accomplish Asia's Revitalization and Prosperity Together with ROK," accessed February 28, 2020, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/xjpxzdh_gjxgsfw/t172436.shtml.
- ³¹ Canrong et al., "World Views: Negotiating the North Korean Nuclear Issue."
- ³² Choe Sang-Hun, "North and South Korea Set Bold Goals: A Final Peace and No Nuclear Arms," *The New York Times*, April 27, 2018, sec. World, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/27/world/asia/north-korea-south-kim-jong-un.html>.
- ³³ Kazuto Suzuki, "Japan's View of the North Korean Threat," Text, IAI Istituto Affari Internazionali, March 24, 2018, <https://www.iai.it/en/publicazioni/japans-view-north-korean-threat>.
- ³⁴ Suzuki.
- ³⁵ "Where Does the Russia-North Korea Relationship Stand?" Council on Foreign Relations, accessed February 28, 2020, <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/where-does-russia-north-korea-relationship-stand>.

ROLE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES IN FOSTERING ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP: A STUDY OF FACEBOOK USERS IN PAKISTAN

Aisha Anees Malik and Sajjad Haider*

Abstract

The processes of globalization have led to a transformation in citizenship from a more legalistic one to active citizenship. This transformation has been enabled, in parts, by the rise of social media. Therefore, Social Networking Sites offer an online interactive space where users can communicate and share their views and digital resources through decentralized and participatory communication. Facebook is a leading global social networking site given a large number of active users globally as well as in Pakistan. This is a study of selected Facebook users to understand how Facebook enables active citizenship. The in-depth interviews help us to discern the respondents' understanding of the concept of active citizenship and how Facebook creates a virtual space that fosters it. The findings reveal that the selected users consider Facebook as an influential and dynamic forum where they can assert their role as active citizens by educating people through the dissemination of information, participation in political debates and critically evaluating the government's performance. The paper calls for a better understanding of the role that Social Networking Sites are playing in the making of more responsible as well as responsive citizens that ultimately translates into better communities.

Keywords: Globalization, Social Media, Active Citizenship, Facebook, Social Networking Sites.

Introduction

Globalization, presumably, weakens the idea of citizenship as a form of identification as boundaries of a state, political communities and self, increasingly, becoming blurred and fluid. Globalization is, however, intimately tied to information sharing and the emergence of new media has become the main vehicle of its expansion. This enables transformation in citizenship through an increased political and civic engagement using social media. The role of Social Networking Sites (SNS) in providing computer-mediated communication through the internet has greatly helped foster active citizenship. Communication on these sites is multi-directional and is steered by the users who create the content for these SNS called Users Generated Content (UGC). Unlike broadcast or print media where editorial boards and broadcast units have strategic policies for the creation and dissemination of content, the users on SNS have

*Dr. Aisha Anees Malik is an Assistant Professor of Gender Studies at the Centre of Excellence in Gender Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad. Sajjad Haider is a PhD Scholar at the Department of Anthropology, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad.

relatively more freedom to post and express their opinions and ideas. However, each SNS has its community standards with the possibility of reporting posts by other users and blocking or unfollowing them. The messages on SNS can travel instantly and can be edited, reused, and redistributed by users anytime and anywhere within cyberspace. In Pakistan, Facebook dominates the social media landscape. According to the website Stat Counter (Global Stats), in July 2019 alone, 90.1% of SNS users in Pakistan were Facebook users.¹

This paper aims to ascertain the role of Facebook, a popular SNS, in fostering active citizenship in Pakistan. It investigates how the selected users consider Facebook as a space of interaction with other people, how this usage translates into active citizenship and what are the outcomes. Users' interaction with their Facebook community helps us understand the concept of not only citizenship but also active citizenship. Facebook users, selected for this study, have at least a master's degree in a social science discipline. Some of them are currently pursuing postgraduate degrees, such as MPhil or PhD. They belong to different provinces of Pakistan but have been residing in Rawalpindi and Islamabad for the last five years or more.

The researchers' Facebook account served as an extension of the research field with respondents as friends. The accounts of respondents were followed on daily basis by tracing their timelines as well as through the newsfeed. Keeping the ethical considerations in view, verbal consent for the study was secured beforehand and the research participants were informed about the privacy settings of Facebook. All participants agreed to set the privacy settings of Facebook to share their posts with the public. The selected respondents explicitly mentioned that they had no objection to the use of their posts for the research as they had posted it for the public.

Theoretical Understanding of Active Citizenship

The classical conception of citizenship refers to the basic form of a reciprocal relationship between individuals and the state, whereby, individuals offer loyalty to the state in exchange for protection.² This protection was initially limited to defence from external threats. It, later, expanded to include notions of welfare like protection from sickness or poverty. Today, it is not only seen as a relationship between state and individuals but as a basis for connections between individuals.³ The broadened concept of citizenship makes it dynamic especially when the citizens respond to the state and interact with other citizens through new forms. This interactive form of citizenship is labelled as 'active citizenship'.

David Blunkett sees the role of the state in the promotion of active citizenship for better governance and empowering citizens by enabling them to acquire a better quality of life by solving the problems of their communities. According to him, "... citizens should be given more opportunity and support to become actively involved in defining and tackling the problems of their communities and improving their quality of life."⁴ This understanding veers more towards social development than political dimensions. Others, like De Weerd, Gemmeke, Rigter, and Van Rij, define active citizenship largely in political terms as "political participation and participation in

associational life characterized by tolerance and non-violence and the acknowledgment of the rule of law and human rights.”⁵ They identify seven indicators of active citizenship including voting in elections, participation in political parties, participation in interest groups, participation in forms of peaceful protest, voluntary work in organizations and networks, organizing activities for the community, and participation in public debates. These seven indicators appear to be integral elements of active citizenship and lead towards the promotion of human rights and democracy.

It has also been argued that active citizenship can be best understood in terms of participation and agency.⁶ This argument is drawn from a feminist political perspective that sees active citizenship as central to radical and inclusive forms of democracy and an active citizen must be a radical and democratic citizen.⁷ Active citizenship can also be seen as a process rather than status or an outcome and ‘citizenship as participation’ represents an expression of human agency in the political arena.⁸

Active citizenship is also about inclusiveness and empowering people. Alternative media are recognized as a source of empowerment and active citizenship.⁹ The term alternative media is a slippery term. It includes all forms of media that challenge the status quo, counter mainstream assumptions and representations and suggest democratized media production.¹⁰ Alternative media is culturally and politically oppositional in intent but has social change at their heart.¹¹ Internet and particularly social media offer a similar opportunity of participatory and democratic communication. In this study, the terms alternative media, social or new media have been used interchangeably for SNS, such as Facebook, Twitter, Google Plus, etc. These interactive online portals offer new ways of interaction among users from across the globe by sharing and disseminating data in various forms, such as images, words, videos, sounds, etc., creating a hoard of online UGC.

Kellner expounds upon the peculiarities of communication through social media as “... independent of time and space; its messages can be transmitted instantly across the globe, archived and stored multiple sites, and retransmitted and circulated through potentially vast spaces.”¹² These dynamic features make SNS thriving forums for content creation and sharing. Unlike the broadcast media, users are not passive receivers of a message; they can perform multiple roles. For example, they can instantly respond to the message or edit its content and further regulate and reset the directions of its circulation for new recipients. In the new media system, a message itself is a medium because the target audience and characteristics of medium are shaped by the message.¹³

On SNS, users also strategize and avail communicative autonomy to mobilize other users. This process of online social mobilization contributes towards active citizenship through participatory communication. SNS provide a pluralistic mode of communication through the participation of users from diverse social classes. Now, minorities and marginalized groups can advance their views at national and international levels. As compared to the broadcast media, these forums are open to all and users have the freedom to communicate without the influence of powerful elites.

They often respond and react to the dominant narratives created through the broadcast media.

Mass media has an influential role in opinion-making. During most of the twentieth century, mass media gained power not only by cementing its institutional status but also by developing a commanding discourse that guided the organization of the public sphere.¹⁴ In this context, we consider social media both as an extension of the broadcast media as well as a challenge to it. Where broadcast media represents a top-down mode of communication and the state and power elites have hegemonic control over the broadcast media, SNS have more freedom of expression and the least amount of control.¹⁵ Having said that, it may also be noted that freedom and lack of control by political and economic elites in the case of SNS have been overemphasized. Global technology companies, such as Facebook, Google, and Twitter, etc., are privately owned corporations following their regulation policies. Also, the state regulators have the power to restrict access to any website. Despite this, in comparison to the broadcast media, social media users have more communicative autonomy because of its interactive construction and the possibility of participatory and pluralistic communication.

In a nutshell, SNS create new ways of thinking and acting for the users. These forums sensitize individuals and groups facilitating them to participate in political processes more democratically than ever before. They mobilize groups and individuals for common goals.¹⁶ Among SNS, Facebook and Twitter are fast-growing networks. Active users of these SNS have access to interactive public communication. These active users are also affecting the balance of power of media system at operational as well as institutional level.¹⁷ SNS like Facebook then in a way are fostering active citizenship where active citizens are understood as self-governing agents who actively pursue their interests in the public domain.¹⁸ These communicative spheres expand their horizons and contribute towards disturbing the balance of power in society by giving space to views from below empowering individuals and enhancing their freedom.¹⁹

Note on Research Design

This research study uses in-depth interviews and virtual ethnographic methods to generate qualitative data. Six active Facebook users were identified through judgmental sampling. The selection criteria for being an active user was posting a post at least once a week. However, all of them were found posting more than once a week and in some instances even more than once a day. Posting means participating on Facebook by sharing their thoughts on their timelines or sharing, resharing, and/or commenting, and/or responding with options of emoticons that represent liking, annoyance, sadness, happiness, or amazement. The Facebook timelines of the respondents were regularly followed and it was observed that on certain occasions, the frequency of their posts increased manifold during a day. This was often in response to national or local level political changes.

To reflect the diversity of opinion, users with varying political and religious views were selected based on the previous online interaction with them. These opinions

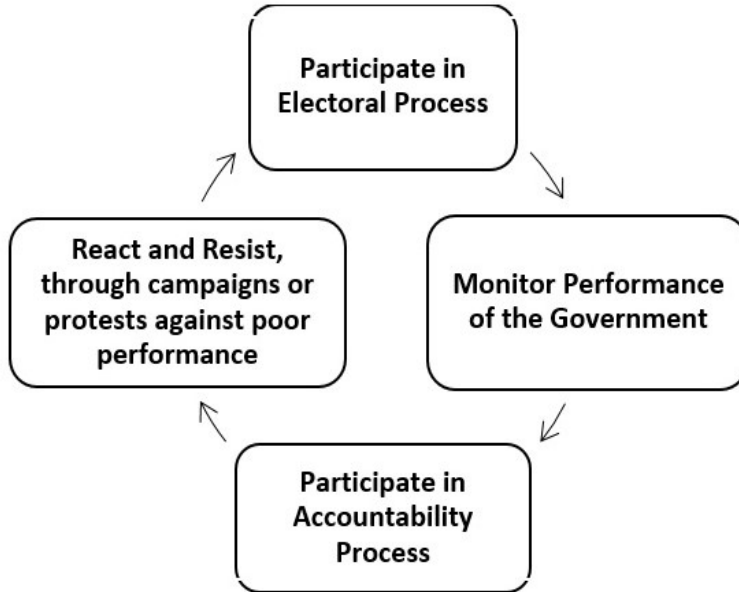
were verified during the interviews and informal conversations where the respondents explained their political and religious positioning in off-line and online worlds. All the respondents had a minimum 16-year of education with a terminal degree in social sciences. The respondents were currently residing in the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad and the interviews were conducted in various sessions with follow-up conversations either at their homes or at a place of their convenience. The interviews were conducted in Urdu as well as English depending upon the language a particular respondent felt comfortable with. The respondents frequently switched between the two languages while responding. Verbal consent was obtained from all of the respondents for the interviews and written permissions were taken to use their public data from their Facebook accounts. To ensure the privacy of the respondents their names have been changed.

Based on the detailed data collected from a limited sample, it appears that these Facebook users who are above 25-year of age and are teaching social sciences and/or serving in research organizations related to social development are actively using Facebook to exercise their citizenship. They understand the meaning of active citizenship. They are participating in debates to promote democracy, volunteering for social and communal causes and human rights as well as professing their ideological stances through Facebook. All this points to the fostering of active citizenship through Facebook usage in ways outlined in the following sections.

Participatory Democracy

The participation of citizens in the direction and operation of political systems is a cornerstone of democracy. What guides, governs, or even facilitates this participation? For Kahlid, aged 38 years, it is a combination of multiple things. Foremost, it is exercising active citizenship. For him, the understanding of citizenship flows from an understanding of the constitution. He believes that the constitution of a state is a binding document between the state and citizens, such as the 1973-Constitution of Pakistan. He has approximately a decade long experience in a non-profit organization specializing in projects dealing with governance, budget-watch, and other election-related activities. Explaining his understanding of active citizenship, he asserts that “active citizenship is a combination of two words: Active and Citizen. It means to fully understand one’s role as a citizen and it is a modern form of governance. Active citizenship is there even in the absence of democracy.”

Concerns with regards to the taxes, budgeting, the procedure for electing parliamentarians following their performance critically, and holding them accountable for their actions, all configure in his conception of active citizenship. He sketched a simple diagram to explain active citizenship, which he calls the cycle of active citizenship.

Figure-1: Cycle of Active Citizenship

Similar views were expressed by Abrar, aged 37 years, who is a development professional with a master's degree in Political Science and an LLB. He has a decade long experience of working in the development sector, particularly, on projects related to governance, budget, and election watch. He considers citizenship as a two-way relationship between the state and citizens in which both parties are bound by a sociological contract called the constitution. Abrar defines:

An active citizen is the one who is not only vocal about his rights as a citizen but also of others. An active citizen engages himself to monitor the proper and well in time delivery of state's provided facilities like street and road maintenance, electricity, and water supply or any other services for which users are paying bills or they are provided through the taxpayers' money. An active citizen takes notice of the improper service delivery and inquire about the relevant department on behalf of all other users. On the other hand, active citizen also looks after the state's property and urges others to care for it as well.

Allowing public outrage against injustice is a part and parcel of participatory democracy. "Facebook provides me with an opportunity to speak out," says Jamshaid, aged 27 years and a university social sciences student in Islamabad. He takes a keen interest in literature and political science. His journey of Facebook usage evolved over a period of about a decade. For the previous three years, he has been actively using Facebook for political mobilization as it offers him an opportunity to meet and interact with like-minded people. It helps him to be a part of the community that he may have lost in his move from Lahore to Islamabad. It has also helped him find new ways, like the use of satire, to get his message across. He explains that:

Facebook has its own sociology especially because of its interactive features of engaging users into social and political debates. For the previous few months, I have quitted extensive debates after realizing the fact that heated debates ultimately result in offending others. Now, I prefer to express my opinion in the form a satire that I believe is the best way to share the message to a larger audience.

He also believes that while expressing outrage on perceived injustices one needs to find logical arguments. He tries to build a logical discourse through Facebook with his audience. He explains:

The Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government donated a huge amount of money to a religious madrassah and there was a huge outcry on social media. I raised a question and tried to offer an alternative perspective for critical debate that the private commercial educational institutions also receive funding from the state but they have never pointed this out. My point was not to endorse the funding of hardliner's madrassah but to offer a critical approach to analyze any issue.

Abrar mentions that he understands Facebook as an open medium, therefore, he carefully chooses the words. He stated that during heated debates on Facebook, the participants support their favorite parties and often these debates result in hate speech, therefore, he avoids them. He mentioned that his organization has launched a mobile phone application to track the budget allocation of each district. He thinks that it is the best way to be an active citizen to keep a track record of the government's performance through such information technology tools.

Khalid is also aware of the diverse and conflicting political positioning of other users that he interacts with. He says that they are supporting their own ideal political heroes. Because of this, he cannot assess the effectiveness of his message. He is never sure of the level of circulation of his message in the virtual space - how other people will interpret and react to it. He, however, considers it his responsibility to share his learning with others irrespective of how they receive it.

Service delivery monitoring is also quite common on SNS. Abrar asserts that during his 10 years of Facebook usage, the nature of usage has changed from personal to professional. With the advent of mobile internet, his Facebook usage has been increased. His usage has also increased due to professional reasons, i.e., faster communication with different agencies and clients, and now, he is interacting more with regards to wider issues like social service delivery. Abrar recalls:

Once I posted a photo of a broken bridge over a canal. There was a warning message by the roads department to cross the bridge carefully. I criticized the government that after placing this warning message, the concerned department has fulfilled its duty and is now waiting for an accident to occur.

Abrar works for an NGO monitoring transparency in the electoral process. He has been posting all his team's activities on his personal Facebook timeline along with writing on the official pages of the organization and other associated groups. He is an

active participant engaging with the official accounts of his organization which are primarily addressing the roles of an active citizen. He uses Facebook more actively and reflects upon his understandings and takes positions by explicitly criticizing various governance issues.

Social and Communal Causes

Facebook helps to share ideas not only related to governance and politics but also enables users to engage in a variety of contemporary issues both on the local and international levels. Khalid started a page for civic education even though his primary purpose for joining Facebook was to connect with friends and family. For some like Jamshaid, this aim is more explicit. He considers all those as active citizens who talk on a communal or social issue on social media including Facebook without any vested interests or self-promotion. In his opinion, Facebook is an online public sphere where people exercise their active citizenship as they do so in the physical world. He believes that “every human being has a sense of responsibility, thus, feels satisfied when he/she gets an opportunity to fulfill his/her responsibility; this is what academic-training in psychology teaches.”

Active citizenship is a sense of responsibility and it is akin to giving importance to citizens participating in the state’s affairs. Azfar explains that citizenship is a social contract between the state and citizens. Active citizenship is delegating responsibilities to the citizens by a state. Every human being has a built-in sense to own responsibility. If someone is not assigned a responsibility that individual would feel dissatisfied. As a manifestation of this ignorance, one can feel less important by falling into the symptoms of anxiety or depression. Azfar considers that assigning a role and responsibility to the citizen is giving them importance. In societies where citizens are not allowed to participate in the state’s affairs through active citizenship, they end up displaying complaining behaviors. Social media has created an opportunity for users to express their feelings with other users diminishing the feeling of discontent.

Sana, age 37 years, a PhD in social sciences and a university teacher, also believes in owning up to the responsibilities, a state imposes as part of being an active citizen. She thinks that citizenship is about rights as well as the responsibilities of citizens. It is a two-way process in addition to being a basic human right. The first right that a child gets is citizenship. Active citizenship is an awareness of knowing one’s rights and responsibilities in a state. An active citizen is paying back to the state by actively fulfilling one’s responsibilities as a citizen. An active citizen should be loyal to the state, patriotic, vote for political change and the promotion of democracy, and should protect the state property.

Sana highlights that an active citizen should also be responsible for the cleanliness and environment especially in the public or shared spaces like parks and roads. People should value resources and opportunities they avail and that are granted by the state. She mentions as an example, caring for books borrowed through the public libraries, these should be kept carefully as one keeps one’s own books. With this example, she states that an active citizen is responsible for the state property. She

mentions that as an active citizen, she gives awareness to her children and students on social issues.

For Sana, her Facebook account is more official than a personal account. Although she mentions her academic accomplishments or other success stories, she always has in mind to motivate her students for higher education and to do research. She also tends to motivate her Facebook audience by using inspirational quotes and sayings. She says that she uses Facebook to bridge the information gap. She is also a member of several Facebook groups and has liked many pages that provide information regarding academic activities. Sana prefers to participate in academic groups on Facebook instead of political debates. She sums up by stating that she has been using this for academic purposes and social awareness on education and the environment. Sana gives an example that one should refrain from bringing one's vehicle on the road if it is emitting smoke. It should be fixed before polluting the shared road. As an active citizen, one should be careful about the environment.

Ideological Debates

Some respondents of the study saw a greater possibility of using Facebook for advancing their religious and ideological positions. However, interactions on Facebook have brought in many changes in ideological positions they started with. Azfar started as a conservative member of a religious organization, however, he has now become more progressive over the years. He actively engages with other members of the organization advocating electoral democracy. He thinks that the world has changed and there is no room for conventional mechanisms of political change. He believes that with the emergence of institutions like parliament, judiciary, and executive; democracy delivers far more in terms of governance. Azfar thinks that social media is a new virtual society where one can express views with fewer restrictions as compared to the physical world. He does express concern that currently, social media is more about propaganda than a forum where one may express one's inner feelings and thoughts. But he is still hopeful based on his personal experience where he has evolved as a Facebook user. In the beginning, he was conservative but now he has turned progressive based on how his ideologic-thinking has evolved.

Facebook users can also, sometimes, be intolerant. For Azfar, the reason behind this intolerance is the reaction to suppression that they had undergone previously through the control over the medium of expression. Azfar says that some of his students are also his Facebook friends and sometimes they pass derogatory comments on his posts without respecting him as their teacher. To counter this, Azfar uses poetry to get his message across much like the use of satire for political messaging discussed previously. Azfar uses poetry in the service of humanity.

Jamshaid also feels that Facebook has the potential for educating common masses on ideological affairs in addition to political and social ones. His impetus came from an internship in the National Assembly of Pakistan, where he started sharing his learning with his Facebook friends. Other than political ideologies, he became an ardent

proponent of the rights of religious minorities. Belonging himself to the minority, he routinely speaks about such issues that may bring about more harmony in the society.

Almost all respondents speak of issues of privacy and surveillance while using Facebook in one way or the other. Umair, aged 27 years, expresses his concern as: "I do not want to be predictable to the world through Facebook." He started using Facebook in 2007 when it was accessed through only institutional invitation. He exclaims that Facebook and similar SNS are also spying on users and these are the tools of surveillance. He thinks that computer software and algorithms analyze Facebook users' psychology based on their online activities to observe their collective behavior as a nation. After realizing this aspect of Facebook, he has become conscious of this technical misuse and he does not want to be predictable for the world.

Despite this aspect, many are still enamored by the possibilities afforded by SNS. Umair adds that being a citizen is being a shareholder in the power of state and citizenship is always active. Every citizen exercises one's agency of citizenship off and on to figure out the solution to various social issues faced by them. Active citizenship refers to the idea of interacting with state and asking for your rightful share in power and resources.

Conclusion

The findings of this study reveal that all the users have understandings of citizenship as a relation and bond between the state and citizens through the written constitution of Pakistan. For all of them, active citizenship refers to paying back to the state by fulfilling the responsibilities that the state has assigned to them. However, for them, active citizenship also entails critically analyzing the performance of the government. All the respondents are using Facebook for multiple purposes and they believe it is helping them to exercise active citizenship. They are using Facebook for the dissemination of information, promoting awareness, highlighting gaps in the performance of the state, dissemination of information, promotion of awareness on human rights, and sharing political and religious ideologies. They understand that their Facebook accounts are subject to surveillance. The political content that they share can also be misinterpreted. Even then they consider it an empowering tool to access and correspond with the state and play a role in the operations of governance as well as their respective communities.

The policymakers need to be attentive to the governance issues within the role of the state. The state is seen as a facilitator that enables citizens to become agents of change empowering them to solve the problems of their communities. It is also seen as the protector of the vulnerable where it should not let the notions of free expression impinge upon the rights of weaker members of society. And lastly, the state is also a regulator that has the power to control and policing. A better understanding of how social media is fostering active citizenship and that responsive citizens make for better citizens translating into better communities has the potential to lay the foundations of a more inclusive and supportive digital policy.

References

- ¹ Stat Counter, Social Media Stats in Pakistan July-2019. Last Modified August 20, 2019, <https://gs.statcounter.com/social-media-stats/all/pakistan>.
- ² Lord Peter Henry Goldsmith, *Citizenship: Our Common Bond*. Ministry of Justice, UK, 2008.
- ³ Ibid, pp. 10-11.
- ⁴ David Blunkett, 'Active Citizens, Strong Communities—building Civil Renewal,' *Scarman Lecture 11* (2003): p.06.
- ⁵ Marga De Weerd, Mireille Gemmeke, Josine Rigter, and Coen Van Rij, Indicators for Monitoring Active Citizenship and Citizenship Education, *Amsterdam: Regioplan Beleidsonderzoek*, 2005, p. ii.
- ⁶ Tony Harcup, 'Alternative Journalism as Active Citizenship,' *Journalism 12-1* (2011): p.15-31.
- ⁷ Chantal Mouffe, *Dimensions of Radical Democracy: Pluralism, Citizenship, Community*. Verso, 1992.
- ⁸ Ruth Lister, *Citizenship: Feminist Perspectives*, New York University Press, 2003, p.17.
- ⁹ Tony Harcup, 'Alternative Journalism as Active Citizenship,' *Journalism 12-1* (2011): p.15-31.
- ¹⁰ Victor W. Pickard, 'Alternative media,' *The Encyclopedia of Media and Politics* (2007): p.12-13.
- ¹¹ Chris Atton, *Alternative Media*. Sage, 2002, p.19.
- ¹² Douglas Kellner, 'Globalization from Below? Toward a Radical Democratic Technopolitics,' *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities 4-2*(1999): p. 101-13.
- ¹³ Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, John Wiley & Sons, 2011, p. 368.
- ¹⁴ Van Dijck, José & Thomas Poell, 'Understanding Social Media Logic,' *Media and communication 1-1* (2013): p. 2-14.
- ¹⁵ Douglas Kellner, 'Globalization from Below? Toward a Radical Democratic Technopolitics,' *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities 4-2*(1999): p. 101-13.
- ¹⁶ Natalie Fenton & Veronica Barassi, 'Alternative Media and Social Networking Sites: The Politics of Individuation and Political Participation,' *The Communication Review 14-3* (2011): p.179-196.
- ¹⁷ Van Dijck, José & Thomas Poell, 'Understanding Social Media Logic,' *Media and communication 1-1* (2013): p. 2-14.
- ¹⁸ Thomas J.M. Mattijssen, Arjen A.E. Buijjs, Birgit H.M. Elands, Bas J.M. Arts, Rosalie I. van Dam, and Josine L.M. Donders, 'The Transformative Potential of Active Citizenship: Understanding Changes in Local Governance Practices,' *Sustainability 11-20*, 1581, (2019): p.1.
- ¹⁹ Payal Arora, 'Usurping Public Leisure Space for Protest: Social Activism in the Digital and Material Commons,' *Space and Culture 18-1* (2015): p. 55-68.

CORRIGENDUM

This is with reference to the Article titled "Institutional Imbalance As Disruptive of Democracy in Pakistan: A Reconsideration of the Argument with Reference to the 1956 Constitution" written by Sarfraz Hussain Ansari, Asim Raza & Rifaqat Islam published in Margalla Papers 2019 Volume XXIII, Issue-I, 2019, pp. 158-171. It is to be informed that there has been an inadvertent mistake in the name of first author and author's nomenclature.

Hence the following correction may please be noted by all.

CORRECTION

Authors names and their order published as "Sarfraz Hussain Ansari, Asim Raza and Rifaqat Islam" may please be read as "Asim Raza and Sarfraz Hussain Ansari."



National Defence University
Islamabad - Pakistan
www.ndu.edu.pk