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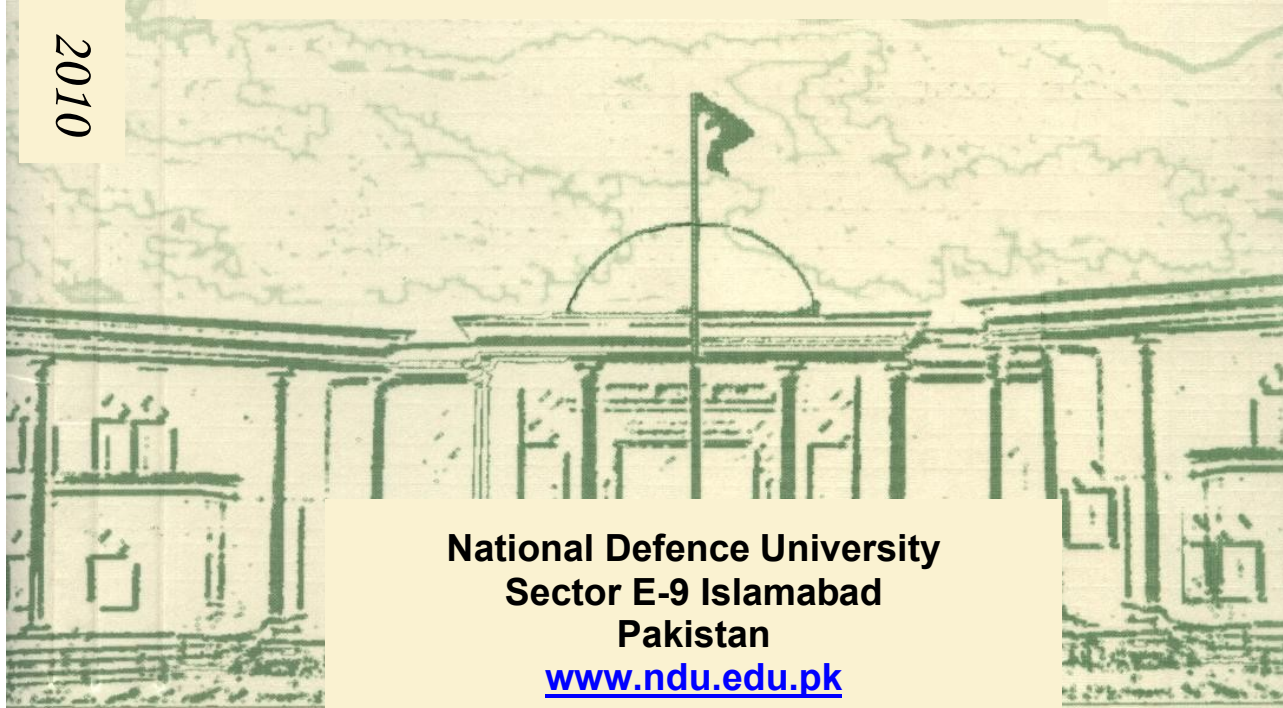


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EDITOR'S FOREWORD

'Margalla Papers' is an annual publication of National Defence University, the premier institution of security and strategic studies at national level. This journal has its own standing as it provides a forum for discussion and debate on contemporary security and defence issues. Institute for Strategic Studies, Research and Analysis (ISSRA) is continuously engaged in pursuit of serious research and analysis on all current global, regional and domestic security matters, with a view to creating a synergy in the efforts of renowned scholars and security analysts.

Former Ambassador Syed Ali Sarwar Naqvi, in the very first article titled 'The United States and South Asia', has focussed on the US overtures towards South Asia. The author has highlighted that the US has emerged as a proactive extra regional player, especially in the aftermath of 9/11. The US Indo-centric tilt is explicit in pursuit of its political, economic and strategic objectives. The writer has given the analogy that countries like China and Pakistan will have to chalk out a new strategy to maintain the balance of power in the region.

The prominence of Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) is evident in the wake of Pakistan's efforts to curb the menace of extremism and terrorism. In this connotation, Dr A. Z. Hilali has examined the region in terms of 'strategic depth'. The author believes that the US-flawed policy in the region is adversely affecting the security of Pakistan. Resultantly, the security situation in Pakistan will be decided on the chess-board of FATA and not in Kabul. The scholar has established a link between FATA and internal stability of Pakistan and suggested the way forward in this regard.

Dr Saqib Riaz and Saadia Anwar Pasha have looked into the issue of Indo-Pak relations through the prism of media. Since media is the most effective medium of communication for developing a rapprochement between the two rival nations, thus the authors have investigated the agenda-setting role of Pakistani media in bridging the trust deficit between the two countries. The content analysis of

study shows that the stories of Indo-Pak relations get a huge coverage in the dailies of both the countries.

‘Nuclearization’ is haunting not only to South Asia but this enormous phenomenon may jeopardise the world peace as well. Professor Shafiq ur Rehman in his article ‘The Probabilities of Nuclear War in South Asia’ has critically evaluated the stance of both countries on the subject matter. The author is of the view that if the poor culture of conflict management is not addressed at this critical juncture of the history, probabilities of nuclear war may arise. The author has attributed Kashmir dispute as a tinderbox for a nuclear war in this region and suggested strategy for avoiding the nuclear risks in the foreseeable future.

‘Doing More Together: Stabilizing Afghanistan and Beyond’, is a scholarly discourse by Mr. Muhammad Athar Javed. The author has made an assertion that mere mounting pressure on Pakistan for ‘Doing More’ will not deliver dividends rather the issue could be resolved by devising an updated strategy of ‘Doing More Together’. The contours of that strategy are bi-dimensional i.e implementing the strategic concept of NATO coupled with evolving a long term ‘Strategic Partnership’ between Pakistan and the US. Arguments advanced by the author have been supplemented by certain recommendations.

Dr Raja Muhammad Khan undertakes an in-depth study of ‘Pak–Iran Relations’. The author methodologically builds up the paper by focusing on the external powers and non state actors which have played a negative role in deteriorating the relations between the two countries. The scholar has tried to dilute the negative perceptions prevailing between the two states and suggested a roadmap for harmonizing the relationship.

The Editor

THE UNITED STATES AND SOUTH ASIA

Syed Ali Sarwar Naqvi

Abstract

The geo-political picture of South Asia is far from clear. There are too many variables and even imponderables in the equation, which can challenge any analyst. The United States saw political, economic and strategic advantages in developing a wide-ranging strategic relationship with India following the demise of Soviet Union. However, given its traditional tactical relationship with Pakistan, it did not entirely marginalize Pakistan. As one analyst put it, its policy has not been India only, even though it certainly became India first. The 9/11 calamity led it to renew its flagging relationship with Pakistan, to deal with the threat of terrorism that endangered US lives and territory. Meanwhile US-India cooperation thrived and developed. However, this burgeoning cooperation can be vulnerable due to: a) traditional India-Pakistan hostility and unresolved “core” issues, b) internal contradictions within India and c) the China factor. China can not allow India-US cooperation, especially defence cooperation and US preponderance in the Indian Ocean as a result, to assume a dimension where it feels threatened. In such an eventuality, China would be obliged to bolster Pakistan to establish a rough balance of power in the subcontinent with a view to thwarting US ambitions. Pakistan, on its part, must create its own space to establish its relevance to the United States. Given these factors, the geo-political configuration of South Asia will remain uncertain and undefined.

Introduction

After long years of being on the margins of US foreign policy, South Asia as a region has recently moved to the forefront of the American world-view. This paper will examine how and why this transformation has occurred and what are the implications of this change. In this regard, I will try to assess what these developments mean for Pakistan and how should we deal with this changing dynamic. South Asia, properly speaking, consists of seven

countries Pakistan, India, Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives. Lately, Afghanistan has also been included in the regional grouping SAARC as an associate member. However, this paper will focus on Pakistan and India, with tangential references to Afghanistan, as and where necessary, mainly because the United States looks at Pakistan and India as the principal players in the geopolitical construct of the region. This is the case even though Bangladesh has nearly as big a population as Pakistan and Afghanistan arguably is also strategically significant. Secondly, it will dwell upon the United States regard of South Asia after the end of the Cold War and subsequently, telescoping history as and where required, rather than make a historical survey from the time of the emergence of these states as independent nations. Thirdly, my paper will be basically a geo-political analysis, because in my view it is the geo-political factor, more than anything else, that governs American policy towards the region.

Post Cold War Developments

The end of the Cold War and the demise of Soviet Union in 1991 resulted in changing the global strategic landscape in favor of the United States. Taking a cue from Francis Fukuyama, and his thesis of the supposed “End of History”, the US adapted its foreign policy to make sure that the world adjusts in such a way as to suit its enduring interests and values. The United States shifted its focus from the strategic imperatives of the Cold War to issues like international terrorism, non-proliferation and drug trafficking. Thus during the last decade of the 20th century, the most important policy of the US toward South Asia related to the possession of deadly weapons by both India and Pakistan and prevention of both countries from any action that would undermine regional security and global stability. This principal aim was specified in a report presented to the Congress entitled ‘A National Security Strategy for a New Century’, January 2000.¹

The Report made the following observations: ‘The development of Indian and Pakistani nuclear programs raise three immediate and one long term concern for the United States, that the two nations do not use their nuclear weapons in a crisis; that their

nuclear weapons not add to regional instability or figure in an inadvertent detonation; and that the technology to produce these weapons not be transferred to other nations or non-sovereign rogue groups’.

While the non-proliferation issue did figure prominently in the US regard of South Asia at this time, nevertheless, new global and regional economic and political scenarios at the dawn of the 21st century obliged the United States to reverse its traditional zero-sum policy of the Cold War era toward South Asia. The emergence of Chinese and Russian influence in Central Asia and South East Asia led the United States to seek a powerful ally in the region and it chose India rather than Pakistan as a strategic ally due to the former’s potential counter weight to China in the region, as well as its growing economy which represented a new big market for the US business.

The demise of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War thus overturned the rough parity and balance of power that had prevailed in the sub-continent in the Cold War era, under which Pakistan was aligned with the United States and India had a treaty relationship with the erstwhile Soviet Union. The end of this phase came around the same time as the assumption of office of the new Clinton administration in the United States. For the first time in American interaction with the sub-continent, both Pakistan and India were at its disposition. There was great excitement in Washington at the possibilities that opened up for the United States to build up a relationship with India, as India’s great ally had suddenly disappeared. Of course, the US interest in close relations with India was not new; it went back to the time when both India and Pakistan became independent in 1947. However, nothing came of the US predilection, as India quickly veered towards the Soviet Union and associated itself with what began essentially an anti-US forum, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Despite this effective alienation, President Kennedy sent his trusted friend, Chester Bowles as Ambassador to India, rushed urgent military aid to India in its border war with China in 1962, and made other friendly overtures. But the strain in US-India relations continued till the end of the Cold War as the then Soviet Union remained India’s principal military

supplier and political ally. It was only after the demise of the Soviet Union that the US found that it could pursue its relations with India relatively unfettered and unhindered.

Reflecting the new focus on India, the prestigious Asia Society in the United States sent a study mission to the sub-continent in 1993, which included area experts Stephen Cohen, Emily MacFarquhar, and General John Wickham, a former US Army Chief of Staff, as well as prominent business leaders, and published their report which drew widespread attention.² The report, published in 1994, opened thus: “New opportunities are emerging for constructive and consistent ties between the United States and South Asia. The ending of the cold war removed the ideological and geo-strategic factors that shaped earlier U.S. policy in the region”. The Asia Society report made a whole range of recommendations for U.S. engagement with both Pakistan and India, but the emphasis was on a concerted effort to engage with India. The buzz in the think-tank community inside the Beltway was that India could be built up eventually as a counterweight to China. Notwithstanding this new thinking, however, no major overtures were made by the United States to India through much of the nineties, as the US remained preoccupied with post Soviet Eastern Europe, particularly the break-up of the erstwhile Yugoslavia and the bloody civil war that followed. As for Pakistan, the U.S. continued to pursue its abiding concerns with it regarding drugs, non-proliferation and terrorism as well as human rights, democracy and economic liberalization. Basically it sought to eliminate or neutralize all the negative factors that marked its relationship with Pakistan.

US Focus on South Asia

It was not till the late 90s that the U.S. attention fully turned towards South Asia, and that too due to developments in the region. First, India and Pakistan conducted nuclear tests in May 1998. A set of sanctions were applied to both countries for violation of US non-proliferation legislation. Then the two newly nuclear armed states came to a conflict in Kargil from May to July 1999. Third, another military coup occurred in Pakistan in October 1999. A new set of sanctions were imposed on Pakistan for violation of a US law

against the forcible overthrow of a constitutional government. Despite these negative developments and in line with the strategic focus on South Asia that the Clinton administration had decided upon, President Clinton rendered a much delayed and yet much-heralded official visit to the sub-continent in the spring of 2000. The US President's visit was markedly India-centric, also because Pakistan was under censure at the time. Though Clinton spent five days in India, he spent just five hours in Islamabad. Clinton's stop in Pakistan however indicated that Pakistan was still occupying attention in Washington, mainly because of the perceived negative developments.

Expanded Relationship with India

The US had finally embarked upon a new and much expanded relationship with India. The joint statement issued at the conclusion of the Clinton visit was grandly entitled "A new strategic partnership for the 21st century". As regards Pakistan, the President lectured the Pakistani nation on the need to return to democracy, change its nuclear policy and stop terrorism emanating from its territory. It was not just a "tilt" towards India but in fact a new focus on India. This was apparent in the following:-

- The US launched a wide-ranging institutionalized program of cooperation with India, covering economic relations, political dialogue and military exchanges and a supply relationship.
- The US acknowledged India's leading position in South Asia by beginning collaboration with New Delhi on broader international issues.
- The US even raised its development and food aid to India to \$170 m. in FY 2000, the second largest amount in all Asia and more than 45 times of similar aid given to Pakistan that year (only \$3.78m).

Secondly, and what was of great concern to Pakistan, the US adopted a new stance on the Kashmir issue, with mention of only three points, respect of the Line of Control, recommending direct dialogue between India and Pakistan, and opposing the use of force

to resolve the dispute, without any reference to the wishes or aspirations of the Kashmiri people. The stance thus formulated was more favorable to India. (Some time before the Clinton visit to the sub-continent, the then US Assistant Secretary of State, Robin Raphel, inadvertently mentioned the aspirations of the Kashmiri people in a press conference but later denied her assertion, perhaps due to pressure from above.)

The principal reasons for the focus on India, according to a Stimson Center study of 2003, were the following:

- India's economic growth made it an attractive trade and investment partner for the United States. India's vibrant Information Technology (IT) industry placed it on the world economic map. Its burgeoning middle class of nearly 300 million represented a big and attractive market for the US business. On the other hand, the Pakistani economy depended largely on foreign assistance, had poor security conditions and a weak or unstable government that inspired little or no confidence.
- The Indian community in the United States had come of age as perhaps one of the wealthiest immigrant communities in the country, with attendant political clout and influence. It had begun to play an increasingly important role in domestic US politics, particularly in influencing the Administration and Congress in India's favor. On the other hand, the Pakistani community in the US was much smaller and far less effective politically.
- The growing strategic importance of the Indian Ocean, which links the oil-rich Gulf States with the constantly growing energy markets in East Asia. As one analyst put it, "From a geo-political perspective, the sub-continent and Indian Ocean connect Washington's European-Atlantic strategy with its Asia-Pacific strategy. The two were disjointed in the Cold War and in the early years after the end of the Cold War, but as the US began to contemplate the need for a new European-Asian strategy to deal with potential threats stemming from the

uncertain future of both Russia and China, it was India, not Pakistan that could play a key role in this strategy”.³

- The US saw India as a potential counter-weight to balance an emergent China with, as perceived by the US, regional ambitions, particularly towards the south. In this regard, the US had in view the India-China border disputes as well as their historical rivalry in economic, political and geo-strategic spheres.
- The US saw China, Russia and India as the main players in the broader region. Developing close relations with India was the most effective way of thwarting a Sino-Russia-India strategic triangle, once proposed by the then Russian Prime Minister Primakov in 1999. Pakistan obviously had no role in this bigger game of power politics.⁴

According to Robert Blackwill, (the US Ambassador to India in the Bush era), when G.W.Bush was Governor of Texas, he had “one big idea”, the “transformation” of US-Indian relations, in view of India’s potential as a world power, its leadership of developing nations and its promise of being a big market for the US.⁵ Sure enough, when Bush became President, he decided to make his “big idea” a reality. In April 2001, India and the United States decided upon a series of steps to change the range and dimension of their bilateral relations. They established a bilateral Defence Policy Group (DPG) to activate defence cooperation, and the US undertook to relax the sanctions imposed on India after its nuclear tests in 1998. Richard Boucher, the then Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs, described the planned transformation of US-India relations as an evolution from “estranged democracies” to “engaged democracies”.⁶

While India was perceived as an opportunity, Pakistan was considered to be a worry and concern. It was seen as economically weak, politically unstable and internationally isolated. It was also thought to be an increasingly radical Islamic state, given its relations with the isolated Taliban regime in Afghanistan. After the Kargil episode and the subsequent military coup in 1999, the United States saw Pakistan as a highly worrisome, if not a failed state, whose

internal instability was likely to have harmful repercussions in the region.

9/11 and its Aftermath

Then came September 11, 2001, when the US was attacked on the mainland in a series of coordinated acts of terrorism, which shocked the entire American nation. 9/11 immediately altered the dynamics of regional security in South Asia. According to Teresita Schaffer, “The attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon turned US South Asia policy temporarily upside down, bringing Pakistan to center stage and putting parts of the US-India agenda on hold”.⁷ Pakistan’s support for US action won it the badly needed sanctions waiver in regard to those imposed on it as a result of the nuclear tests (as was given to India) and Economic Support Fund of \$600m as well as development aid and food grants. The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, an official document issued in September 2002, stated “that US-Pakistan relations had been bolstered by Pakistan’s choice to join the war against terror”. At the same time, the paper noted “India’s potential to become one of the great democratic powers of the twenty first century”. The security strategy paper thus seemed to indicate that in view of the emergent situation, the US planned to build a partnership with Pakistan without jeopardizing its plans for a strategic relationship with India.

Nevertheless, the incident of September 11, 2001, had changed the whole scenario of global and regional political and security situation. Washington decided to wage global war against terrorism and invaded Afghanistan in order to overthrow the Taliban regime due to its alleged support for Al-Qaeda leaders. Although India enthusiastically courted Washington after September 11, the United States chose reluctant Pakistan as its partner against the Taliban. Geographic access to the main theater of war in Afghanistan as well as the Pakistani army’s intimate knowledge of the Taliban were, of course, decisive in Washington’s choice to invite Pakistani Gen. Pervez Musharraf’s support for the new war. The pros of working with the United States outweighed the cons for Musharraf, and he made the fateful choice to support the U.S. war

on terror against the Taliban. Musharraf hoped that, by offering military bases and other support to the United States, he could salvage some gains from the situation and retain a little political leverage in Kabul; end Pakistan's political isolation; prevent U.S. targeting of our nuclear assets; and gain U.S. economic as well as political support, with hopes of US endorsement of Pakistan's Kashmir policy vis-à-vis India.⁸

The Bush administration managed the new challenge with an eye to the future. Whether it had a conscious strategy or not, it displayed a rare U.S. sensitivity in not undermining its new relationship with India even as it reached out to Pakistan. The United States conveyed to India that it would have to reset priorities in confronting the challenge but also hinted that, once the immediate threat in Afghanistan was tackled, India's terrorist concerns would also be addressed. On their own, these assurances had limited credibility, but the U.S. assurances gained legitimacy in New Delhi from Washington's response to a series of major terrorist incidents in India after September 11 i.e. on October 1, 2001, in Srinagar; on December 13, 2001, at the Parliament House in New Delhi; and on May 14, 2002, in Jammu and Kashmir. However, when India threatened to go to war against Pakistan in the summer of 2002, the United States moved to restrain Pakistan from supporting terrorist acts in India. The high-level political intervention of the United States in South Asia during May and June 2002 succeeded in that it ended, at least temporarily, the threat of imminent war. At the heart of the U.S. crisis-management strategy was the acquisition of a commitment from Pakistan to end cross-border infiltration permanently and a promise from India that it would engage in substantive dialogue on all bilateral issues, particularly the Kashmir dispute, when violence ceased.⁹

Resumed Interest in India

An Independent Task Force, co-sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations and the Asia Society brought out a report in January 2004 entitled "South Asia: US policy towards India, Pakistan and Afghanistan" which recommended that the US and India must (1) expand political security, military and intelligence

cooperation, (2) intensify dialogue on economic and trade issues, and (3) negotiate a trade agreement on services. On its part, the US should (1) ease restrictions on India in regard to cooperation in the civilian satellite sector; (2) grant India “friendly” country status in export licenses for transfers of defence equipment and (3) ease restrictions on the export to India of dual-use items of civilian and military uses. As regards Pakistan, the Task Force report noted that US-Pakistan relations had vastly improved since 9/11 because of Pakistan’s important role in the “war against terrorism” but felt that the interests of the two countries “coincided only partially”. It cited differing perceptions of the two countries about freedom fighters and militants in Kashmir, as well as Pakistan’s reluctance to restrain Taliban elements in Afghanistan from using its tribal territories as safe sanctuaries. It also mentioned US worry that continuing India-Pakistan disputes may adversely affect US relations with India.¹⁰

The Task Force report identified two major problem areas in the India-Pakistan equation : (1) It said “Kashmir remains the greatest single threat to regional stability” and recommended a long term “US diplomatic effort to facilitate and sustain a bilateral process that will gradually lead to resolution of differences, including the core issue of Kashmir” and (2) it cited the real danger of a conventional India-Pakistan conflict becoming a nuclear conflagration, and recommended that the US urge India and Pakistan to initiate nuclear issue discussions “without holding these hostage to progress on the Kashmir dispute”, and seek India-Pakistan agreement on nuclear CBMs, including the establishment of nuclear risk reduction centers, to lessen the chance that accidents, misperceptions or misunderstandings might trigger a nuclear response.

Soon after the Task Force report came out, a high-level US delegation visited New Delhi in June 2004 to hold negotiations with India regarding transfer of technology related to the missile defence system. The US also gave license to Boeing satellite systems to construct a communications satellite for the Indian Space Research Organization. In July 2005, visiting Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President Bush met in Washington and worked out a road-map for the transformation of bilateral relations

in a document entitled “Next Steps in Strategic Partnership” and decided upon its early implementation. The two most significant agreements signed in the meeting, within the new framework of the road-map, were regarding US military sales to India of high-tech items, and a civilian nuclear cooperation agreement. The nuclear cooperation agreement was unprecedented, as a NPT-signatory country was offering nuclear material and technology to a non-NPT signatory state. Through concerted efforts of several years, the US Administration got the deal approved by the IAEA, the NSG, and finally by the US Congress by 2008, despite reservations in all these bodies. Interestingly, Pakistan’s request for a similar nuclear deal has not been entertained by the US. Finally, to cap the considerably expanded US-India cooperation now under way, US President Obama has recently visited India in November 2010.

On the other hand, with Pakistan it continues to be a relationship of more of the same as has obtained in the preceding years. Of course there is a greater emphasis on Pakistan’s economic development, as manifest in the Kerry-Lugar-Berman Act that provides for a \$7.5 billion package of assistance to Pakistan, with a major component of economic development funds, as against earlier aid packages of military assistance. At the same time, the US continued to pursue its policy of consistent pressure on Pakistan to deal with terrorism and extremism. Its other concerns regarding democracy, drugs, human rights etc are also articulated on a regular basis. Lately, in the wake of the devastating floods in Pakistan this year, the US has diverted \$370m from the Kerry-Lugar package to flood relief assistance.

The US position on South Asia, as evidenced in our survey of the last two decades or so, is clear and well-defined. It sees India as a strategic ally and Pakistan as a tactical partner. As someone put it, it is not a policy of India only, but it is certainly a policy of India first. It considers India first for a whole set of reasons, political, economic and geo-strategic. Pakistan is of US interest also, but for two different reasons, one, in the context of eliminating the terrorist threat that the US fears ever since 9/11, and two, Pakistan’s potential of disrupting its strategic relationship with India, as Pakistan’s political instability and economic fragility can upset and overturn

the US objective of building up India. It sees Pakistan's long-standing hostility towards India as a danger for its grand design for South Asia. To deal with this situation, the US intends to do the following: (1) provide military help and assistance to Pakistan to combat terrorism, perceived by the US to be mainly caused by the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, and (2) provide economic assistance to Pakistan to strengthen its economy and its development efforts, and thus eliminate or reduce Pakistan's possible disruptive role in terms of regional peace and security. In regard to Pakistan-India relations, it began working hard, behind the scene, to bring about some kind of entente between India and Pakistan, lest the bilateral differences set back its grand design. The result of these efforts is the jerky resumption of the India-Pakistan dialogue that is currently underway.

Negative Factors that may affect Growing Indo-US Relations

The question that arises is whether the US strategy for the region is likely to succeed. There are a number of factors that can prevent the realization of American objectives and set back its plans. In the preceding paragraph, we have discussed what the US is trying to do in averting the possibility of Indo-Pakistan rivalry/animosity from escalating into a conflict. However, this policy is aimed at containment of the problem. It does not aim at resolving the differences between India and Pakistan. As long as the intractable problems between the two countries exist, particularly that of Kashmir, which is a festering sore that has remained unhealed for the last 63 years; the danger of an Indo-Pakistan conflict remains clear and present. In its latest mutation, this problem has developed another fearsome dimension. The growing tendency of the radical extremist groups of taking charge of the Kashmiri struggle, and their equally radical Pakistani supporters and cohorts colluding with them to launch a daring terrorist attack somewhere in India, may lead the Indian government to commence hostilities against Pakistan. Unfortunately, India already has a battle plan which can be disastrous for the sub-continent, the so-called Cold Start Doctrine.

The strategy embodying the Cold Start Doctrine was first enunciated in 2004 by the then Indian Army Chief, General

Padmanabhan, and was reiterated by his successor, General Deepak Kapoor in December 2009, when he made a speech in which he said that the possibility of a limited war with Pakistan under a “nuclear overhang” existed. Stating his reasons, he argued that South Asia along with West Asia had emerged as “one of the epicenters of conflict and instability”, and with the absence of a common consensus to combat this continuing threat the possibility of “territorial disputes, provocation by proxy wars, religious fundamentalism, radical extremism, ethnic tensions and socio-economic disparities”, were likely to further exacerbate the situation on the ground. This, the Indian Army Chief argued, would invariably link “sub-conventional” conflicts to situations leading to preemptive action/strikes under the ‘Cold Start’ doctrine. The aim of the new doctrine is to increase the Indian military strike options for possible retaliatory or pre-emptive strikes against Pakistan without provoking the Pakistani nuclear threshold. The doctrine envisages an increase in the Indian military options based on a situation where Indian Armed Forces can have military success that can be used to achieve limited political objectives before international intervention and before the conflict assumes a nuclear dimension.¹¹

The fact that the Indian government has already put in place an official doctrine envisaging an armed conflict with Pakistan at a future date is a serious matter. It makes a mockery of the entire exercise of undertaking efforts to reduce tensions between India and Pakistan, encouraged and supported by the United States. One can only draw the obvious conclusion from such a situation that an Indian initiated war against Pakistan is more likely than not. Furthermore, if it were to take place, it would throw up imponderables that could have adverse consequences for the Indo-US equation. Secondly, even if we hope that despite these ominous portends, war does not actually occur, the US strategy for the region is based on assumptions about the intentions of regional players that could be proved wrong over time. It does not take into account the possibility that Pakistan may not accept India’s elevation to a regional “hegemon” and the pre-eminent power in the sub-continent. Given the bitter history of India-Pakistan relations, it is naïve to assume that Pakistan will play ball (as the expression goes) to

whatever the US and India wish to do. US grand strategy should take into account of this variable in the equation.

Then there is the China factor. A Chinese analyst, Zhang Guihong, wrote that China is mindful of the US-Japan alliance in East Asia, and if there is a new US-India alliance in South Asia, it may fear encirclement and prevent it from taking shape. The Chinese have a historical memory of SEATO (South East Asia Treaty Organization) in the 1950s when the US had an anti-China security ring around its southern rim. Zhang says, a strong India-US defence engagement, perhaps leading to US preponderance in the Indian Ocean, may become a cause for concern for China. Therefore, it will see a solid Indo-US alliance as a de-stabilizing factor not only in the regional power balance, but also in the broader context of the Indian Ocean. China may then feel it necessary to build up Pakistan to re-establish the old balance of power in the sub-continent. Zhang concludes the argument thus: “The emergence of India – coupled with the decline of Pakistan since the late 1990s and the sea change after 9/11 - launched South Asia on the Chinese leadership’s agenda. Regional balance and stability in South Asia and Pakistan’s healthy development are two major interests for China.”¹²

In the years to come, China is likely to establish itself as a full fledged global power. It will then certainly feel irked by the US attempts to further strengthen its relations with India. Its reaction would be similar to the US reaction to the development of close economic and military relationship of the Soviet Union with Cuba in the 1960s. A global power seeks a comfort level on its periphery and that would be lost for China if the US and India forge ahead with their close relationship.

Secondly, the larger stake of China of dominance in the Indian Ocean will also be at peril. China will not, and could not, countenance US hegemony in the Indian Ocean. The Chinese fear of a likely US incursion into the Indian Ocean, through its military relationship with India, will again compel China to thwart the excessive growth of Indo-US military cooperation.

Third, India itself is unstable. It has active insurgencies in many of its states; it continues a policy of extreme repression in Indian-occupied Kashmir, which can conceivably boil over at some point. It has a huge population that lives in abject poverty, estimated at 450 million living at less than \$1.25 a day. As a result, widespread turmoil cannot be entirely ruled out, which could jeopardize its regional ambitions. According to George Friedman, in his book “The Next Hundred Years” India is unlikely to attain great power status because of its internal contradictions. Internal instability in India will again setback its external relationships, particularly that with the United States.

Thus, despite the US desire, and strategy, to build up a wide-ranging strategic relationship with India following the demise of the erstwhile Soviet Union, there are certain imponderable factors that may hinder its plans.

Options for Pakistan

It follows from the above analysis that Pakistan could find for itself enough room in this emerging scenario to carve out its own role and place in the geo-political configuration now taking shape. There are two factors that are strongly in its favor. In the first place, given its strategic location and abiding relevance for the United States, Pakistan cannot be ignored, nor can its concerns and interests be disregarded. If the US were to do so, it would not be able to proceed on its charted course with equanimity. Secondly, if it were to pursue its objective nevertheless, it would come up against Chinese resistance to its plans. The effect of all this would be that instead of bringing any power balance in the region, there would be a destabilization that may prove to be the undoing of all its plans and stratagems.

The long term prospects of a successful US-India relationship are clouded by a number of factors which may or may not allow the US grand design to materialize. However, Pakistan has to be prepared for the contingency in which this grand design does take shape. As the US has an abiding interest in India, Pakistan should not insist on hyphenation or some kind of parity with India.

Instead, it should aim at establishing its relevance to the US in the context of Afghanistan and perhaps Iran, and its partnership with the US in the elimination of transnational threats, be it terrorism or drugs or nuclear non-proliferation. To achieve this objective, Pakistan must continue to impress upon the United States its pivotal role in the region, and project its geo-political relevance to the government as well as the opinion forming circles in Washington.

Conclusion

The United States has manifested a clear and unmistakable intention of developing a strong strategic relationship with India over the years, but this geo-political design has also been frustrated by developments beyond its control (Communist expansion in the 50s and 60s, Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and the 9/11 episode), which obliged it to maintain an intermittent tactical relationship with Pakistan. The persistent hostility between India and Pakistan further complicated American objectives in South Asia. The American initiative of moving full steam ahead with building a wide-ranging cooperative relationship with India following the demise of the Soviet Union could create a new tension with China, which is fast emerging as a global power. Pakistan thus remains an important player in the game, given its special relationship with China. Only time will tell how these variables interact in the future. South Asia has a complex dynamic that is difficult for the outside world to comprehend and deal with. The United States is unlikely to achieve its ambitions in the sub-continent any time soon.

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Notes

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FATA: THE STRATEGIC DEPTH OF PAKISTAN

Dr A. Z. Hilali

Abstract

Since the eve of 9/11, Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) have become strategically vital region in the world and also for the security and defence of Pakistan. The area is landlocked and an important junction of South, Southwest and Central Asia and chessboard of great power politics. The war on terror and the US and NATO actions against the Taliban militants and al-Qaeda network have changed the fabric of FATA region. This situation has created challenging circumstances for the security and stability of Pakistan. Moreover, the US has given free hand to India in Afghanistan which is a serious matter to Pakistan's security concerns. However, the war seems to be "bleeding wound" for Pakistan because it is hurting more as compared to gains. So, the best strategy for Islamabad is disengagement from the war because it will protect FATA which is real strategic depth for the country's defence rather than Kabul and it will also strengthen internal stability and guarantee territorial integrity.

Introduction

In counter-insurgency, the population is not only the field of battle but also the prize.

– David C Gompert¹

Since 2001, the global War on Terror has dominated Pakistan's foreign policy and the country's elites have adopted zero tolerance national security strategy to eliminate the culture of Talibanization and Al-Qaeda network. The policy makers perceive that to fight against extremism is an important task because the situation not only invoked fears of an uncertain future of Pakistan but also injects urgency for Pakistan's state and society. For all these reasons, Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), situated in Pakistan's north western part (now called Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and previously known as North West Frontier

Province –NWFP), and border region between Afghanistan and Pakistan has become the spotlight of global politics. With the end of the Cold War and after the incident of 9/11 (2001), FATA has changed the US strategic dimensions. The violence in the region becomes contentious issue because the US declared “FATA, the most dangerous place in the battle against terrorism”² and has been of a paramount importance in the contemporary international politics. The US administration assumes that Pakistan’s tribal areas had become a safe haven for al-Qaeda and Taliban militants and the area is a sanctuary for several insurgent groups operating both inside Pakistan and Afghanistan.³

After the 9/11, US and Pakistan entered into opportunistic partnership with disparate objectives. The US made Pakistan one of its lesser allies in order to have access to its air, land and naval bases so as to expand the scope of its policy to contain terrorism in the border region of Afghanistan and Pakistan. On the other hand, Pakistan shake hand with the US in order to achieve three fundamental objectives: first to receive US military assistance to enhance position vis-à-vis India; second, to obtain diplomatic support for the protection of nuclear assets; and third, to receive massive US economic assistance to accelerate the growth of economic development. One believes that the US takes advantages of Pakistan’s strategic and economic weaknesses and uses its sensitive facilities in the war on terror, and Pakistan as a weak country sacrifices its national interests because the elites have failed to protect the country’s territorial integrity and FATA region, which is a natural border or barrier for the defence and security of Pakistan, has become the victim of great power politics. It seems that the tribal belt which is the buffer zone between Pakistan and Afghanistan has become the bleeding wound to Pakistan and challenges the national solidarity of the country. The situation further turns into worst position when the US escalates joint war with North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Afghanistan and FATA region across the Pakistani border and expands its military operations with modern military instruments, throughout the tribal areas, including robotic drones which continue killing innocent civilians and local insurgent leaders at very high rates and undermine the security of Pakistan in multiple ways.⁴ It is also

perceived that as long as Pakistan's alignment with the US continues, it will damage one of the impoverished countries in the region and will amidst a flood of bad news rather than relief and potential gains.

The Geopolitics of FATA

FATA has its specific tribal, geographical, socio-economic and religious characteristics but the region is a small landlocked tribal belt in the heart of South Asia and is sandwiched between northwest to southwest of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan and located around shred area of Oxus and Jumna which endowed its potential geographical importance and equally has historic value for the region.⁵ It is entirely surrounded by boundaries created as a result of British and Russian imperial policies. The Durand Line established in 1893 under the British empire border policy of "masterly inactivity" which essentially used the tribesmen as a buffer between British India's northern frontier and the Russian empire southward from Central Asia and were concerned that Afghanistan, the only geographic buffer between British India and Russia, did not have a defined boundary.⁶

After the partition of British India (1947), Pakistan also used Durand Line to prevent Soviet expansion and were no way successful to control the Afghan government from political exploitation. The region emerged as a kind of "tribal no man's land" over generations and areas were controlled through the loose political autonomy. The demarcation of boundary line has caused much dissatisfaction among some of the Afghan elites which eventually gave rise to political tensions between the two countries. In fact, the line was created as a result of formal agreement between Amir Abdur Rahman and Sir Mortimer Durand in 1893 and called the "Durand Line Agreement", which is one of the well defined boundaries in the world and also one of the longest borders stretching to 2430 km between Pakistan and Afghanistan. There was a consensus among the successive Afghan governments and Afghan elders who approved and recognized the demarcation of boundary and gained political and economic benefits from the British Indian government.⁷ However, after the creation of Pakistan, the Afghan

ruling elites with the inducement of Indian National Congress leadership were not prepared to accept the Durand Line and transmitted a fabricated interpretation about internationally legitimate boundary between Pakistan and Afghanistan for their paramount concern and vested interests.⁸ Interestingly, the people of FATA and their tribal elders (Khans, Malik, Sardars and Chiefs) never reacted against the demarcation of Durand Line because successive governments in Pakistan accommodated the feelings and wishes of tribal people and ultimately has shown satisfaction with the settlement. Moreover, from the historical discourse, it can be clearly observed that during the demarcation of Durand Line, the British empire pretended to take into considerations the historical background, natural topography and local considerations. So, the decision of the parties concerned was not arbitrary because no authority or group objected to the boundary settlement.

Strategically, FATA is located at the crossroads of global power interests as described by the renowned historian Arnold J. Toynbee that the region is the “cross-roads” of civilizations.⁹ The area has also attracted a succession of invaders ranging from Alexander the Great, to the former Soviet Union in the twentieth century because of its strategic location and it is a reality that the area is also one of the most sensitive zones in Pakistan and indeed in South Asia.¹⁰ The area spreads around 27220 square kilometers¹¹ which is approximately three percent of the total area of Pakistan and more than one-third of the area is covered by barreled Hindu Kush Mountains. So, FATA population is over 3.5 million and some 1.5 million refugees from Afghanistan have been settled in the region and the area continues to be the focal point of global attention in the event of the US invasion of Afghanistan. In addition, the British empire established administrative structure of tribal areas and divided tribal area from north to south into seven different administrative zones such as Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber, Orakzai, Kurram, North Waziristan and South Waziristan which lie in a north-to-south strip that is adjacent to the west side of the six Frontier Regions in order from north to south i.e Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Tank, Dera Ismael Khan (D.I.Khan). All agencies except Orakzai share border with Afghanistan and each has

a dominant tribe and economic base and physical characteristics that distinguishes it from the other regions.

The location of the region is becoming more volatile because of a number of border passes between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Its seven routes are well-known which run through its territory, i.e., Malakand, Khyber, Gandab route through Mohmand territory, Khyber and Kohat route through Parachinar, Bangash or Paiwar route through Kurram, Gomal, Tochi routes through Waziristan and in the south there is the famous Bolan route to Quetta in Balochistan province. These passes are corridors of invasion and commerce between the Indus plains and Central Asia. Moreover, there are many key passages through the mountainous Pakistan border, which include two from Paktika Province into Pakistan's Waziristan region: one at Angoor Ada, a village that straddles both sides of the border east of Shkin, and further south, the Gumal River crossing valley, which cuts through the Sulaiman Range and the Charkai River passage south of Khowst, Afghanistan, at Pakistan's Ghulam Khan village into North Waziristan. One of the busiest Pakistan border crossing is at Wesh, just northwest of Chaman, Pakistan, connecting Kandahar and Spin Boldak in Afghanistan to Quetta in Pakistan, is a flat, dry area, though this route involves Pakistan's Khojal Pass at 2,707 m (8,881 ft) just 14 km from the border.

Salient Features of Tribal Society

The Pakhtuns are the most highly segmentary ethnic group in Pakistan and always avoid subjugation and integration with the other communities of the country. Each tribe has a large number of clans or *khels*, descending from the others. So, Pakhtuns engage in social, political and economic activities within their own concentric rings and this engagement normally prevents each government or authority to gain control over the tribes.¹² This is one of the fundamental reasons that no foreign entity including Alexander, the British and the Soviets have been able to reconcile the Pakhtuns to external rule.¹³ Historically, during the nineteenth century the British Indian empire failed to subject the Pakhtuns to state authority.¹⁴ Even the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1979) also failed to subjugate the Pakhtuns, although they used brutal genocidal

tactics and killed 1.5 million people and drove approximately 7.4 million into exile which include 4.2 million in Pakistan and 3.2 million in Iran.¹⁵

FATA area is dominated by Pakhtoon tribes and basically has tribal or feudal structure. The region is still in the midst of the most critical transformation in the modern history but autonomous structures of local authority have long been existed parallel to the federal government. The federal structure continues to deal with local tribal chiefs through the Political Agents instead of establishing contacts with the people at grass-root levels. The region is inhabited by diverse tribes and its traditional institutions and social culture are based on the freedom (autonomy) of tribes which block the federal government access to the local authority. In fact, the tribal region has its own distinction and never strictly follows modern law and liberty but they permit the federal government to organize its political power and exercise its restricted authority.¹⁶ Moreover, the tribal belt is highly complicated and ethnically divided into tribal cleavages and linguistic and religious differences. The society is a mosaic of different Pakhtun tribes and all are traditional, primitive and religious. So, the tribal society is highly fragmented and factionalized and described as a living museum of martial races. There is a clear distinction between those who inhabit plains and those who live in mountains. In general, an inhabitant of highland lives in the rural area east of the plateau of Afghanistan and west of the plains of Pakistan. There are a countless number of tribes in the region but the more popular are Yusufzais in Malakand and Bajaur Agency; Mohmands in Mohmand Agency; Afridis and Shinwaris in Khyber Agency, Peshawar and Kohat; Orakzais in Orakzai Agency; Turis and Bangash in Kurram Agency; Khattaks in east and southeast of Kohat; Wazirs in North Waziristan Agency; and Mahsuds in South Waziristan Agency.¹⁷ These tribes are the backbone of the tribal belt and their culture is deeply associated with Arabs and Afghan societies and expressed in its social institutions. In general, they have common socio-cultural values but by nature they are hard, rigid and undisciplined.¹⁸

The Pakhtun prefer to be guided by a tribal code of behavior (Pakhtunwali) rather than by laws made by modern states for

running their domestic affairs. According to Shahid Javed Burki, the traditional code existed even before Islam entered the area; they have added some aspects of the Islamic laws (Sharia), which are not contradictory to their social values. Pakhtuns practiced social code for centuries and many of its features are in abhorrence to accept outside interference in their internal affairs, an equal amount of reluctance to be governed by a central authority that operates from a distant place and confidence in the ability of local leaders to provide protection to their communities and to provide an environment in which they can live according to their own laws and customs.¹⁹ In general, the tribes operate through their *maliks* or some are determined by the individual tribes themselves and other channels i.e., official *maliks* who are normally selected by the concerned Political Agent of agency and they are responsible for governance in their respective areas. The number of *maliks* varies on agency to agency bases inside FATA and the total strength is around 3616, in which only 1,600 *maliks* belong to North Waziristan and the rest are associated to other tribal agencies in which more than 630 tribal *maliks* have been killed in FATA by the Taliban militants.²⁰

Paradoxically, FATA Pakhtoons have enormous socio-cultural values and Pakhtoonwali or Nang-i-Pakhtoon (way or code of the Pakhtoons) still guides the “lives” of the tribal people. Each tribe has its own customs and traditions and remarkably rich with hospitality which is based on finest virtues and a sacred duty to honour the person. They have supreme values consisted of bravery for honourable life, freedom, courage and revenge. They also have several unwritten laws and traditions whose prime objectives are mediation or protection (*Nanawati*), retaliation (*Badal*) and hospitality (*Mailmastia*). So, *Nanawati* is like asylum and it must be given to all fugitives and even to the worst enemies if they come as supplicants. According to *mailmastia*, the host is responsible for hospitality and protection of the guest or guests. The *badal* is basically the responsibility of wiping out insult with insult: i.e. “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth”.²¹ In the same way, honour is the main cause of feuds and vendettas which may last for generations. It is interesting to note that Pakhtoons are religiously conservative although *Pukhtoonwali* and religion have no commonality. There is a loose definition of Islamic traditions mixed

with tribal customs normally dominated by interpretations by local mullahs (religious leaders) who belong to different sects or factions of Islam. Sunni sect is predominant in the region but the inhabitants are further divided between the Deobandi and Barelvi schools of jurisprudence. However, there is also a small and well-organized Shia minority in different parts of the province, particularly in Parachinar (Kurram Agency) which is the victim of worst sectarianism in the region. Moreover, tribal love with religion is undisputed because it serves as the central binding force of integration among the diverse tribes.²² This emotional attachment is also one of the core reasons to prevent the growth of a strong state system or sense of unified national identity. So, there is no central authority in the tribal area capable to achieve predominance over the traditional values. In the same way, the socio-cultural power in the autonomous periphery of tribal areas is in the hands of *khans*, *maliks*, *mullahs* and *tribal chiefs* because they have deeper influence than the state authority. Furthermore, the state has only a limited capability to compete for influence in the tribal belt. In general, the local traditional institutions have more power and they exercise complete authority over the individuals in their respective jurisdictions. In addition, the tribal social order is not strictly hierarchical like the modern state system. Social influence based on blood relationship and interpersonal interactions are more effective force to control the tribes than coercion and threat of power. Thus, tribes always oppose foreign domination and have shown their anger in the recent past and it seems that an external threat is the only source of integration among the diverse and disunited tribes.²³

The Role of Religious Clerics (Mullahs)

In general, religious oligarchy have no political authority in Pakhtun society and only *maliks* are perceived to be dominant in policy making or decision making and mullahs are out of the circle of tribal gathering or *Jirga*. They are economically dependent on the maliks who are responsible for looking-after their house hold and security of the mosques. But after the Afghan war compared (1979-1988), the social influence of mullah has increased as compare to maliks, khans or tribal elders. In this context, the incident of Iranian Revolution (1979) fueled in more and ultimately mullahs of the rural

areas with some political weight received tremendous importance. On the other hand, the social upheaval undermined the existing tribal structures and Pakistan's security establishment feared that the Soviets would exploit the Pakhtunistan issue (separate homeland for the Pakhtuns of Pakistan and Afghanistan) for the territorial control and access to the hot waters of Persian Gulf and provide unlimited privileges and access to the settled areas.

After the emergence of militant's culture, the influence of mullahs has increased and the mullah is perceived to be no more an isolated character in tribal society because his power has changed the socio-cultural fabric of FATA. The officially sponsored maliks and jirga both have lost their power and confidence. Initially, the mosque was prohibited to be used for political purpose but after the event of 9/11, the status of maliks has declined and mullah emerged as a supreme commander who has the leading position in the political and social activities. So, in the present circumstances, the status of maliks has collapsed and the personality of mullahs has dominated the Pakhtun society and maliks seen to be subordinate to the religious clergy. The tribal leaders who used to conduct political meetings in the *hujra* as a counterweight to the mosque are no more in existence. Mullah has received prestigious position and the traditional role of the mosque has changed and now it has dual function, working as *hujra* and religious ceremony. Before the Afghan war, jirga was normally held in the open place but after the culture of jihad, jirga meetings were used to be held inside madrassas and addressed by mullahs. In the traditional system, mullahs have no option to sustain because of lack of financial means but gradually they become financially sound and got access to financial sources.

In fact, the state policy is responsible to legitimize religious clergy in the society because ruling elites used religion as a tool for "survival of the fittest" and ultimately mullahs emerged as arbitrators between the tribes and the state and became an alternative leadership. So, Pakhtun society socially has been reshaped around the culture of religion and they have replaced all the traditional values and have been able to change the power structure of society.²⁴ According to Shuja Nawaz, mullahs capitalized on the local anger and used general lawlessness to challenge the writ of the

government and state legitimacy and became an alternative moral authority.²⁵ Thus, the Taliban of Pakistan have taken advantage of the judicial gap and prevailing injustice in different parts (Bajaur, Malakand, Swat and Waziristan) of the society and have established substitute centers for administrative and judicial justice to settle the disputes, displacing the tribal jirgas and the elders. Moreover, the Taliban leadership have successfully built power bases within the society, particularly among the new young tribals and also have established link with criminals and subversive segments of the society. As a result, a huge amount has been used to establish “official” *mujahideen* groups and after the end of the Afghan war these groups mutated out of state control.²⁶ Moreover, the same *mujahideens* were also used jointly by Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) when the Taliban phenomena was created in 1994 for the safe passage and access to energy rich Central Asia through Afghanistan. Pakistan trained madrassa (religious school) students in the second term of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto’s government (1993-1996). However, after the incident of 9/11 (2001), these radical militants are playing in the hands of Al-Qaeda and working as a “proxy army” against the United States and the state of Pakistan and have created lawlessness across the FATA and in the settled areas of the country. They have killed more than 600 maliks²⁷ since 2007 and are regularly targeting military, police stations and educational institutions.

Pakhtun Identity as a Race and Religion

It is a historical fact that Pakhtuns had never shown religious aggression in their history but after the Afghan war, they have become hostage to the strict Taliban religious interpretation. In general, Pakhtuns are secular or nationalist having deep affiliation with their language and culture but the Afghan jihad has changed the socio-cultural fabric of the Pakhtun society. This situation has also influenced the political culture of the province where leaders of the main parties have been Pakhtuns and ultimately their centre of gravity has shifted to the Pakhtun areas. All major religious parties with the exception of Jamat-i Islami are dominated by Pashtuns, and has some form of Sunni (Wahabist) orientation. Moreover, the resistance based its legitimacy on various forms of politicized Islam

and ethnicity is low on the overall political agenda. The fact is that Taliban militants' leadership is overwhelmingly Pakhtun and are religiously rigid and inflexible from the perspective of common people. Furthermore, Pakhtun nationalist leadership has failed to comprehend the changing environment of politics and has also failed to marginalize the situation.

In fact, the Afghan war radicalized Pakhtun society and its social fabric is further shredded by the returning commanders and militants who set themselves up in many cases as warlords outside the authority of the tribal elders. The immediate outcome is anarchy as militant groups, warlords and social criminals fight over the carcass of Afghanistan.²⁸ Furthermore, the religious dimension of this situation brings to the limelight as the militants seem to be a dominant factor in the contemporary war on terror and the ethnic factor is no more valid to build support and help from common people. In this regard, hundreds of foreign volunteers are harbored as "guests" in different areas of FATA the refusal of the local people has made the situation critical because the people claim that Pakhtun traditions and customs are the main hurdle to handover guests to others. According to the philosophy of Pakhtunwali, Pakhtun can die but never consider to handover guest to their enemy. For the protection of Pakhtun traditions, tribal people have fought against the federal security forces in the North Waziristan Agency (NWA) but have not compromised on their traditions.²⁹ In fact, A Pakhtun perceives that once hospitality is granted, to give it up under any pressure would present a wrong picture about Pakhtuns and that they have no respect for their own values and have lost their freedom of action as well. On the other hand, Taliban imagines that to fight with Pakistani forces makes them better Muslims and to justify their jihad against the American proxy forces who are killing their brothers and colleagues. In this regard, a small numbers of common people seems to be sympathizers with the militants just because of US military actions in FATA. However, majority of the people believe that the security establishment of Pakistan is involved in the war on terror to gain economic and military assistance from the United States.

History of Insurgency in FATA

Tribal Pakhtuns are warlike, brave and stoic people and revolt or retaliation is a common phenomenon in tribal society. Many jihadi organizations and religious leaders similar to the Taliban have arisen in that area who challenge the ruling authorities either they are residing in Pakistan or Afghanistan. Historically, Taliban leaders such as Mullah of Hadda provoked the Pakhtuns in 1897 against the British empire with the help of mysticism, and parlor tricks and believed to have turned the British bullets into water.³⁰ Fakir of Ipi known as “Haji Sahib”, also struggled against the British (1930-1940) and the Pakistani forces (1949-1960) on a frustrating chase around the north western region for the liberation of Pakhtuns. In the contemporary era, Mullah Mohammad Omar, Mirza Ali Khan and many other are fighting against the NATO troops and US forces in FATA and Afghanistan because they perceived that foreign forces are against the enforcement of Islamic Shari’a in Afghanistan and should pull out as soon as possible.

The radical state policy of militancy in Pakistan initiated in the early 1980s, when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan (1979) and the US used FATA region as a “cat’s paw” and established largest sanctuaries for Afghan rebels (*mujahideen*) and trained thousands of volunteers to fight against the Soviet Union. The US and Saudi Arabia also supported to establish religious *madrassas* in the border areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan, poured \$7.2 billion against the Soviets to stop the flood of communism, and among them million dollars were funded and paid by Osama bin Laden.³¹ Thus, ultimately socio-cultural structure of the society changed and the conservative politico-religious leadership including local mullahs known as “ulemas” has taken strict control over the common population. So, the Afghan compared jihad and Taliban regime in Afghanistan got free hand as compare to previous jihadi movements in the region and relatively they have got a lasting impact on the tribal structure and existing system. Although the jihad against communism was not the only factor which severely influenced the tribal culture but equally other factors such as chronic poverty, illiteracy and unemployment also become cause to fuel in tribal society. Another bankrupt western elites approach played an

important role to provoke tribal people i.e., misunderstanding about tribal culture and values. So, socio-economic factors developed the culture of violence and Taliban used these weaknesses as a trump card against the west and today insurgency in FATA and Afghanistan has grown steadily in intensity and lethality.³² Moreover, the western analyst has facile observation that FATA is “ungoverned” territory and there is an absence of western state structure of governance. Even in the presence of modern state system the people of the region are living under the local codes and domestic form of mechanism. Thus, the area is popular as a lawless land of endless feuds and bloodshed where human poverty, socio-economic backwardness, maternal and infant-mortality percentage are worst in the world.³³ Furthermore, the political and strategic developments in Afghanistan have grave impact on the other parts of the world including Pakistan.

According to National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) Al-Qaida with uninterrupted funding from Saudi Arabia has not only rebuilt its command and control structure in FATA but has also continued involvement to recruit and train operatives to infiltrate the national security of the United States and the free world.³⁴ The US security establishment perceived that since the US invasion in Afghanistan from October 2001 thousands of Taliban militants and their senior leaders have found safe sanctuary in FATA at the centre of the border and also along the province of Baluchistan to the west and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to the east and south.³⁵ During 2002, unaccountable Afghan Taliban arrived in Pakistan and radicalized the border area of Pakistan-Afghanistan and ultimately all seven agencies of FATA came under the strict grip of “Talibanization” and they consolidated their control in Waziristan. It was also reported that different Taliban groups such as Mullah Nazir (Ahmadzai Wazirs leader) and Mullah Omar (Uzbek religious leader) were fighting in FATA for their control in the region because approximately 90 to 95 percent of the 1,000 to 2,000 Uzbek militants are living in the area.³⁶ The *New York Times* has mentioned that the Taliban militants have taken sanctuary in FATA with an almost impregnable strength for command and control, fundraising, recruiting, training and courage for launching military operations against foreign forces.”³⁷ Thus, the tribal areas (de facto zone) have

become the centre of extremist activities and the land is used for murder, arson, and intimidation to avert the situation. In this regard, the dangerous situation emerged during 2006, when the ideology of Taliban expanded to the main urban areas of Pakistan and the common people assumed that Taliban are uncheckable and have got free-hand from the government to expand Talibanization to the other parts of the country.³⁸ In the same way, during the year of 2007, the culture of Talibanization spread outward from the FATA across northern parts of Pakistan which is normally Pakhtun dominated areas and they have targeted video stores, girls' schools/colleges, police stations, and people from civil-society and have also destroyed the public sector infrastructure because these were perceived as immoral.³⁹

However, the growing militancy and violence in the border region of FATA is under the grip of extremists, Sunni militants from central and southern Punjab and al-Qaeda is getting benefit from these insurgents.⁴⁰ The US administration perceives that FATA is the heart of the crisis and it is critical to the strategic victory of the NATO operation in Afghanistan and the political integrity of Pakistan and the success of US in Afghanistan is prerequisite or dependable on Pakistan. Ironically, the FATA's current misery is the product of the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan (1979) and the tragic incident of the 9/11 subsequently left the region in severe maul and in a disastrous position. So, in the contemporary time, the region is one of the flashpoints in the world and is also one of the most war-torn, frayed and dangerous areas. After serving as a chessboard for superpower politics, the area remains a battlefield because of the conflicting interests of different interests of regional and global powers. Since the 19th century, the region of FATA is under the grip of new "Great Game"⁴¹ because the imperial empire of the time has made it more contentious area than ever and presently, the region reflects chronic instability because of unleashed activities of non-state actors who penetrate state and society of the country.

Pak-Afghan Syndrome

The Durand line which was created between British India and Afghanistan with consensus in 1893 by the British team led by

Sir Mortimer Durand and the Afghan rulers helped to define the geographical features of the area rather than tribal identity. The demarcation did not divide the homeland of the Pukhtun tribes as exploited by some of the separatists or nationalist elements. This was not an imaginary boundary and never looked upon with contempt and resentment by majority of Pakhtuns or tribal elders of the both sides (Afghanistan and Pakistan) of the line. Afghan government since 1947 backed by New Delhi and Moscow called “unenforced and unenforceable”⁴² border for their vested interests. As a practical matter, the line has given identity to the Afghan state or nation rather than places the position of dispute with the Persian, Russian and British Indian empires. There are chances to deprive of legitimacy if someone believes to be an arbitrary and capricious boundary. During the colonial period, Kabul treated the Durand Line or border areas with India as a kind of Afghan Appalachia (measures of the region’s status), while the British empire on the other side controlled the tribal areas.⁴³

Afghanistan was not always a unitary state within its present boundaries like many other nation-states. The country is located over the Iranian plateau but Tehran gave up its claims to Herat in the 1857 Treaty of Paris,⁴⁴ under which the British empire agreed to arbitrate all conflicts between Iran and Afghanistan. Its southern and eastern borders are also demarcated with the consensus between Afghan rulers and Russia (1885 and 1895), British India (1893), and Persia (1905). The expert on Afghan history claimed that “the borders of Afghanistan have been drawn according to the desire of global order of the time and it certainly affects many other nation-states including Afghanistan but has given opportunity to strengthen the statehood.”⁴⁵ The identity of the divided communities did not suffer and most of the tribal people use better opportunities as compare to united aspirations. However, the division of communities was exploited after the partition of British India (1947) by Afghan ruling elites and the “boundary line became a political football”⁴⁶ and a major source of tension between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Ironically, Afghanistan opposed Pakistan’s entry into the United Nations in 1947 and Afghan Loya Jirga (Grand Assembly)

declared Durand Line invalid in 1949 without legal understanding and logical acumen that the treaty obligation of British India with respect to international law remained binding upon its successor states. Thus, the issue of Durand Line and “Pakhtunistan was more exploited by President Mohammad Daoud Khan (1973-1978) with the backing of Moscow and New Delhi but failed to threaten the solidarity of Pakistan.⁴⁷ Moreover, Pakhtuns side, Pakistan refused to cooperate with the “policy of suicidal” because they perceived that fragmentation of the country will contribute to nothing but destruction of the two states i.e., Pakistan and Afghanistan. Furthermore, any other border policy position would be a political suicide for Kabul because the country will suffer in its political and diplomatic support from the west because they almost accepted it as a valid international boundary in the world.⁴⁸ On the other hand, Islamabad is prone to see the sinister hand of India behind all Pakistani misfortunes and is convinced that it has funded and backed some political groups as a countermeasure to Pakistan’s diplomatic and moral support to some groups for the freedom of Kashmir. It is also perceived that the Indians have no humanitarian objectives in Afghanistan and they may boast about their putative pumping of funds into Baluchistan.⁴⁹ Both India and Pakistan are in competition to take lead in Afghanistan and New Delhi has taken vigorous attempts to limit Pakistan’s influence in the country and wants to bleed Pakistan in FATA and Baluchistan with the design to relieve pressure in Kashmir.⁵⁰ So, it is well acknowledged that the Indians have mucked around in FATA and Baluchistan with the diplomatic support and backing of US to deal firmly with cross-border militancy in Kashmir. However, Pakistan security establishment’s paranoia has legitimate concerns about Afghanistan and has feared that US might choose India over Pakistan to deal with the activities of Taliban and Al-Qaida in the region.⁵¹

Washington-Kabul-New Delhi Axis and Pakistan’s Reservations

Afghanistan has a long and tumultuous history of outside powers using its rugged terrain as a chessboard for the “Great Game” which has been revisited in Afghanistan but this time US backed New Delhi-Kabul are the most active players in the region. In the contemporary time, US-led “War on Terror” has created a

challenging situation for Pakistan because external involvement in the domestic affairs of the country has created an alarming situation particularly in the border areas of Pakistan. On the other side, the United States post Cold War priorities have created difficult situation for Pakistan and “the country is no longer a regional equal of India” because US perceives India an emerging regional great power and “Pakistan’s insistence on a bilateral calculus vis-à-vis India makes no sense anymore and is a patent obstacle to progress.”⁵²

According to Ashley Tellis, Pakistan has to recognize that it simply cannot match India through whatever strategies it chooses. The sensible thing, then, is for Pakistan to reach the best possible accommodation with India.⁵³ Moreover, the US in the wake of September 11 (2001) has marginalized Pakistan’s role in Afghanistan and has conveniently legalized Indian presence in Afghanistan. In the prevailing circumstances, India’s relief organizations and private security contractors patronized by Indian government would have a strong role in all economic and strategic projects. India has invested around \$1.2 billion in Afghanistan’s developmental projects and works in collaboration with the notorious Blackwater’s subsidiary United States Training Centre (USTC).⁵⁴ India has increased diplomatic presence and opened four consulates (Herat, Jalalabad, Kandhar, and Mazar-e-Sharif) close to Pakistan border regions and has a role in fomenting trouble in Pakistan’s tribal areas. India’s intelligence network is fully operational in Afghanistan and Pakistan’s security establishment perceives that it has an agenda of subverting Pakistan’s stability to provoke insurgency in FATA and Balochistan and somehow laying its hands on Pakistan’s nuclear assets.⁵⁵ Michele Flournoy (US Under Secretary of Defence) “appreciated India’s contributions for Afghanistan”⁵⁶ without even recalling Pakistan’s endless suffering in the war on terror. The news has also appeared that the US official has asserted for strong Indian military presence and has shown willingness to provide modern weapons to India to be used in maritime operations.⁵⁷ The US has accepted the special role of India in the strife-torn country as Richard Holbrooke (Special Envoy for Afghanistan) has clearly stated that the “US support for India is undiminished which has a central role in Afghanistan. The US

believes that India can play a very positive role in the search of stability in the region.”⁵⁸ He further argued that “Afghanistan is not a zero sum game between New Delhi and Islamabad. Pakistan is not going to take over Afghanistan, nor is the Taliban.”⁵⁹

Apart from the changing nature of US decision makers and law-makers, the political observers recognized Islamabad’s worries about India’s growing activities in Afghanistan which can jeopardize Pakistan’s legitimate vital interests. Shah Mahmood Qureshi (Pakistan’s Foreign Minister) when publicly questioned during a visit to the United States said that India “have to justify its interest” in Kabul. He argued that India’s “level of engagement [in Kabul] has to be commensurate with [the fact that] they do not share a border with Afghanistan, whereas Pakistan has the longest border...If there is no massive reconstruction [in Afghanistan], if there are not long queues in Delhi waiting for visa to travel to Kabul, why do you have such a large [Indian] presence in Afghanistan? At times, it concerns to Pakistan.”⁶⁰ In the same way, General Stanley McChrystal (former US commander in Afghanistan), also mentioned in his report to US President Barack Obama that India is “exacerbating regional tensions” via its activities in Afghanistan. He anticipated that Pakistan would take “counter-measures.”⁶¹ The western media has also emphasized that the US must care about Pakistan’s legitimate interests in Afghanistan because there will be no solution of Afghanistan if the West will not address the concerns, then no option will be left for the paranoia of Pakistan military and the intelligence services to continue to be fed for the protection of country’s interest.⁶² According to Christine Fair, there is a need not to dismiss the importance of Pakistani perceptions with regards to Afghanistan just because of exaggeration of Pakistani elite but there is a truth of real nature of the threat which Pakistan is facing from both India and Afghanistan.⁶³ During the Cold War, Islamabad sought to bring Afghanistan into their sphere of influence to extend Pakistan’s “strategic depth” and to protect her security interest vis-à-vis India. It also became evident that anarchy in Afghanistan was antithetical to a policy of strategic depth as well as potentially destabilizing to Pakistan. According to M. K. Bhadrakumar, “India is playing its decisive role in crushing the Taliban insurgency, without military

deployment in Afghanistan, which is extremely concerning for Pakistani military establishment.”⁶⁴ No wonder, Indian presence in Afghanistan is perceived in Islamabad as a great anxiety because India is co-opting the Northern Alliance “warlords” to fight against Taliban and Pakistan is sensitive to its concerns and is supporting southern Pakhtuns to counter Indian presence in Afghanistan. In this regard, Pakistan expects the US administration to be serious to its concerns vis-a-vis India but Washington does not want to annoy New Delhi and regard India as a friendly power in Afghanistan.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, in the prevailing situation, there are dim chances of Kabul-Islamabad equilibrium and in the same way, Islamabad-New Delhi accommodation is a sine-qua-non for controlling transnational terrorism which, without the solution of Kashmir dispute and peace of the region, will be jeopardized and the region will never find real peace as the people have desired.

Myth of Strategic Depth about Kabul:

In the literature of security studies the term “strategic depth” is basically considered “non-military strategy” and is associated with small and weak states which are situated around the hostile environment and have narrow geographical shape to counter the adversaries, attack. The term is normally used by security establishment of the concerned countries to achieve the military objectives through diplomatic means and this is one of the political purposes of the war. So, its objectives are for buying time for strong defence against rival and over a period of time, attacker should not disturb or halt the country’s industrial and logistic lines.

Historically, Pakistan’s security has come under grave threat because the country is flanked by India in the east and Afghanistan in the west and ultimately the legacy of imperial policy makes its relations with her neighbours far from friendly. In fact, it was the fault of security planners who harshly formulated the defence policy to protect north western border on the foot-steps of the British and that policy strategically has proven vulnerable. British Indian empire was acting as the guardian of the Khyber Pass against Russian expansion through the buffer zone of Afghanistan but after the emergence of Pakistan, the country’s elites seemed to be locked in a

perennial conflict with Kabul and the result was nothing more than the loses. In reality, Pakistan's security elites ignored the ground realities that the country was no more under the colonial structure and "its strategic importance towards Southwest Asia was commanding"⁶⁶ and cordial relations with Afghanistan were the need of the hour. According to C. L. Sulzberger, the "geographically absurdity" has given immense strategic and geopolitical value to Pakistan and it is a potential asset for the defence of free world.⁶⁷ Thus, in the changing scenario the security establishment of the country paid no attention to the new geopolitical realities and imprecisely developed inappropriate defence policy for Pakistan which served the purposes of great powers rather than the country. On the other hand, the friction intensified between Afghanistan and Pakistan after the partition of British India and later Cold War politics, military alliances, propaganda wars and complex political, economic and ideological factors created more distinct differences between the two countries and prevented them from reaching a mutual understanding. During the Cold War era, Afghanistan came under the severe influence of former Soviet Union. India and consequently, New Delhi-Moscow nexus became one of the main irritants in establishing cordial relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan. As a result of Afghan-Pakistan antagonisms (1947-1990), the Kabul government clearly sided with New Delhi and Moscow and their close political and military associations were concerned for Islamabad. At that time, Pakistan faced two front threats to its territorial security and became a sandwich between hostile India and unfriendly Afghanistan and this critical security situation was never faced by any country of the world. In fact, India found Afghanistan as a strategic asset against Pakistan and perceived that in future war with Pakistan, Kabul would be able to open the second front against Pakistan and the country would not be able to use tribesmen against India. In that situation, New Delhi successfully used anti-Pakistan sentiment in Afghanistan, most notably in the Dari (Persian) speaking belt (western and northern provinces of Afghanistan) to destabilize Pakistan. In this context, Dari speaking Afghan community and their elites have deep shared close socio-cultural relations with Iran and Central Asia and have cordial ties with India who has ethno-religious differences with the

majority of Sunni Pakhtuns who are dominant in Afghanistan's eastern and southern provinces and are closer to Pakistan.

Thus, the country's security establishment is determined to protect borders through the British colonial strategy and less engaged with Afghanistan in a defensive capacity in order to resolve disputes. So, the defence planners followed the British concept of "strategic depth" which they prepared to contain Russian advancement to India and Islamabad elites adopted to counter India in Afghanistan. On the other hand, Pakistan's policy makers perceived that geographically the country is relatively small between east to west distance, especially in the middle and the British strategic policy will be productive to secure the country. According to Michael Scheuer (former chief of CIA), policy makers of Pakistan believe that India's expensive, extensive and growing Afghan presence is a direct and even existential strategic threat to Pakistan and after the incident of 9/11 (2001), this area of limitless strategic depth has been transformed into a second military frontier with India.⁶⁸ Moreover, the growing Indian presence in Afghanistan is making the Pakistan army more worried because its policy of "strategic depth" is becoming shallower by each passing day.⁶⁹ Moreover, Pakistan's anxiety has been recognized by Washington when General David Petraeus, (Commander of Central Command in Afghanistan), in an interview expressed his understanding of "strategic depth" and mentioned that "Pakistan's strategic depth in Afghanistan is legitimate because the country is very narrow".⁷⁰ The defence experts and strategists also agreed that "for Pakistan "strategic depth" in Afghanistan is a dead-end street."⁷¹ The sensitivity of the issue can also be realized when General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani (Chief of the Army Staff) acknowledged to the Western quarters that "Pakistan wants strategic depth in Afghanistan but does not wish to control it"⁷² and this distress reflects Islamabad's rising concerns over Indian influence in Afghanistan.

On the other hand, India is pursuing long-term policy of "strategic encirclement" of Pakistan but in response to that Islamabad does not have effective counter diplomatic and security policy for its western border. By all means, Pakistan wants its influence in Afghanistan which seems to be strategic liability

because no other options are available to protect the vital interests of the country and the existing policy will remain an asset. However, the real motives behind Pakistan's commitment to Afghanistan are moral and ethical because majority of Southern Pakhtuns of Afghanistan share virtually all of the same values as the Pakistani side of Pakhtuns and Islamabad steadily strengthened the scale of its commitment through moral and diplomatic support to preserve the Pakhtuns superiority over others minorities. In addition, Pakistan cannot afford the destabilization of Pakhtun majority in Afghanistan which is actually working as security shield for Islamabad and is considered extended human deterrence against other regional actors. Moreover, Pakistan's policy makers must realize that the security of the country is much more important as compare to pursuing the old fashion policy which has entirely failed to achieve results. It will be in the interest of the country that security elites must review their policy towards Afghanistan and only pursue the level actually required and limit the political and strategic actions which should not increase high-risk for the security of Pakistan.

FATA as a Strategic Depth of Pakistan

FATA is an inseparable part of Pakistan and is a legitimate area of the country's territories. The region is neither a "no-fly zone nor a no man land" and belongs to Pakistan since the partition of British India. But the region begins to appear as a sandwich when the great power politics begins in Afghanistan, and then after the incident of 9/11 the situation was further complicated and the region has become a bone of contention in the world. It is for the first time in NATO's history (1949-1990) that its forces are used out of Atlantic periphery (Afghanistan) and the US justifies the military involvement in the border region of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The war on terror has converted FATA into a never ended war area as part of the worldwide anti-terrorism struggle and Islamabad seems to be more active to contain India's growing activities in Afghanistan and is helpless in safeguarding the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. It is a pity that neither Washington nor most American political observers have really tried to fathom the depth of Pakistani feelings about drones attacks and

violation of its territorial integrity. In fact, protecting each and every part of Pakistan's land and securing borders has been the major preoccupation of the country's foreign policy but Islamabad's economic dependence and military vulnerability often compels to compromise on its national objectives. It is significant in this regard that the security of the entire country significantly depends on the protection of FATA which is the gateway of country's territorial integrity and governance. It is also clear that stability of Pakistan depends on peace in the tribal areas and continued disturbance will corrupt the rest of country. All this has happened because of the inappropriate policies of the security vanguard and never assessed ground realities. In reality, the strategic policy of Pakistan is an extension of the centuries old fortress mentality or fighting from fixed positions, which resulted in unprecedented outcomes in the Western borders. Thus, the defence policy with regards to Afghanistan had neither been consistent nor part of any comprehensive strategic plan. The planners did not refresh the colonial policies to secure the country and rarely used diplomatic and economic means to settle the matters. As a result the country suffered more as compare to gains. In this regard, the country's history has witnessed that "offensive-defence policy" erroneously has not given any advantage to the country rather enemies have taken more benefits from the weak corridors of the policy.

It is an undeniable truth that the tribal Pakhtuns have always supported Pakistan and have played an important role in the protection of Pakistan and have proved to be the backbone or iron shield to its security. During 1948 when Pakistan army was unable to send their troops to Kashmir because General Douglas Gracey (Army Chief of Pakistan) refused to send troops to the Kashmir front and also rejected to obey the order of Muhammad Ali Jinnah (Quaid-i-Azam), as a Governor General and justified his position by arguing that the Indian forces had occupying Kashmir represented the British Crown and he could not order the military to encounter with the Indian forces.⁷³ This situation ultimately helped India and Pakistan faced grave trouble because Indian forces had taken control of approximately two thirds of Kashmir area. At that critical time, the tribal "volunteers" (around 5000) came forward at the call of Pir of Wana, South Waziristan Pir Ghulam Dastagir and Malik Akhya

Jan and waged jihad under the organized Lashkar (Afridi, Mahsud and Waziri tribes) and launched operation against the Indian forces and despite all the drawbacks the Lashkars brushed aside the Dogra forces and captured thousand miles area which in the present day is called Pakistan-administered Azad Kashmir.⁷⁴ Furthermore, during the Indo-Pakistan wars (1965, 1971 and 1999), the tribal people backed Pakistan rather than India and Afghanistan. In the same way, after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1979), FATA attained a paramount geo-strategic importance and the United States declared Pakistan a “frontline state” against Soviet aggression and the US-used tribal areas as a training camp and a channel to provide military assistance to the Afghan *mujahideen* to prevent the flood of communism.⁷⁵ At that time, US promoted the culture of Talibanisation in the tribal areas to teach a lesson to the Soviet Union and ultimately, the decade-long war brought a culture of guns and drugs and the economy of the tribal areas, which was already underdeveloped, suffered enormously.

In the current, there is a need that the country’s planners must review the security policy which basically did not help to protect every square inch of the country’s territory. According to Edward Luttwak, “effective defence policy will be free from external pressure and should be based on country’s security priorities.”⁷⁶ John Garnett also describes that “war is not only a military activity conducted by soldiers, but rather a social activity that involves entire nations.”⁷⁷ In this regard, the passions of people are necessary to endure the sacrifices inherent in war because people supply the blood and treasure required to prosecute war and without that no war can be won. Machiavelli once wrote to the prince that “if it is necessary to resort to certain brutalities, that must be carried out in the most energetic fashion and in the briefest possible time because the masses will not tolerate the prolonged application of brutality.”⁷⁸ As the war of terror begins its tenth year (2001-2010) and FATA is severely under the fires of US and NATO attacks, it is perceived that the war in FATA is worth fighting for only if it can be justified in terms of national interests. The present security establishment has failed to articulate any such justification and “the use of force on a large scale over a protracted period of time did not reduce the level of threat.”⁷⁹ If anything, the past decade shows the

continued attacks on FATA areas by the international forces, in fact, serves to exacerbate antagonism towards the West. On the other hand, by waging war against terrorism means playing into the hands of enemies. **Expending** scarce resources at a prodigious rate and sacrificing irreparable human and material sources gradually weakens the country's position.

Moreover, the contemporary war on terror has been imposed on the tribal people and the FATA becomes a "buffer" between Pakistan and Afghanistan and the debate is closely related to the controversy over whether the problem is primarily political and economic or military. In fact, the US adopted the incorrect strategy to precede the matter and assumed that the problem in FATA can only be resolved through military means. In reality, the United States military efforts basically provoke local people and create serious affects on the tribal region. Thus, the war in FATA is between an insurrection by indigenous trained man-power, and an invasion by the regular army such as NATO and the US forces. It is a war of snipers and ambushes, booby traps and pitched battles. The location of the fighting ranged from FATA to Afghanistan inhabited "gun basket" in the remote mountain areas. Thus, it is in the greatest interest of the US that they should not prolong war in FATA regions and as soon as they leave the area, they will be safe from their human cost and material losses.

Disengagement is the best solution:

Given the historical and conventional facts about the FATA, the best strategy for Pakistan to manage the ongoing war on terror is the disengagement because the war has created unbearable anarchy, provoked fiercer and more widespread resistance and disengagement will strengthen peace and stability. The crisis is not simple and required to be handled with careful and skillful planning because the country's economic and military dependence is miserable and on the other hand, India and Afghanistan are playing un-healthy role to destabilize Pakistan. In the present scenario, experts have an opinion that complete withdrawal of forces from the war torn areas will be suicidal because this attempt can create more harassment and insecurity for people.⁸⁰ It would primarily require an intense

political and diplomatic effort to prepare and conduct parallel negotiations with all the concerned quarters or stake-holders for stable peace in the area. All have much to lose or gain depending on exactly how the security establishment of Pakistan will cash the country's geopolitical situation and this would give Islamabad a great deal of leverage that could be used to advance Pakistan's national interest.

Pakistan cannot afford anarchy in the country in order to provide unprecedented facilities to the United States and NATO forces at the cost of country's vital interests. The elites of the country must chalk-out the strategy to manage the US pressure because the strategy of disengagement certainly requires bold, risk-taking statecraft of a high order, and much political competence in its execution. It would be soundly based on the most fundamental of realities that the war has expanded violence and it has also reduced the popularity of the civil government. The plain fact is that Pakistan cannot afford the US partnership which is undoubtedly dangerous and the stability of the country has already been threatened and each passing day experiences new cycles of resistance, repression and violence. According to Luttwak, a retreat is notoriously the most difficult of military operations to pull off successfully. It will be worst without well-calculated retreat because it will not only extricate a force from a difficult situation but also can turn the tide of battle by luring the enemy beyond the limits of its strength until it is over-stretched, unbalanced and ripe for defeat.⁸¹ So, Pakistan is badly engaged in the war and is paying irreversible cost and could be the cause of exhaust, political instability and only distance from war can protect the country's security and it will also reduce the level of hatred and regional nationalism.

Conclusion

The horrific incident of September 11 (2001), radically changed the pattern of international politics and as a consequence, the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) has also changed the dynamics of global politics and almost overnight, the remote and fiercely independent tribal societies have fallen into the world's spotlight because the US perceived that Al-Qaeda and the Taliban

are using tribal region as a safe-haven for training fighters to launch attacks against American and NATO troops in Afghanistan. So, the United States, which as an invincible and immortal state felt ominous fear and perceived that its national security has become under severe threat and has described FATA one of the dangerous zones in the world.

The US administration has introduced a new war strategy along the Afghanistan-Pakistan bordering region to handle Taliban militants and has stepped up its unmanned aerial (Drones) bombing campaign in the tribal areas of Pakistan to thwart Taliban insurgents. The US special operations commanders have also been updating plans for cross-border raids and have prepared to launch ground operations in FATA, in case if Islamabad hesitates to dismantle militant network. In fact, the US administration desires that Pakistan should confront Taliban, not with rhetoric and empty promises but with action and not by vacillating, half-hearted measures but through strong and consistent Pakistani military action wherever required and at whatever cost. The US media has propagated that Pakhtuns never negotiate from a position of strength, as such negotiations and “peace deals” are simply seen as a sign of weakness by the militants.

However, it has been observed by majority of Pakistanis that war has not only threatened the country’s stability but also its territorial integrity. There is no doubt that the people detest the extremists, do not want the name of their country and its illustrious founder associated with terrorists and suicide bombers and need more assertive military action if it is done with cautious regard for innocent people because they are not in favor of militant’s brutality as they feel that war has damaged the state and society. It has also been observed that war is not profitable for the country and the cost is irreparable.

In the realm of action, however, it has been perceived by the majority of Pakistani people that there is no end to war and as long as it continues, it will create more fear rather than opportunities. The common people have opined that FATA is the integral part of Pakistan and it is the natural border between Pakistan and

Afghanistan. The strategists and experts argue that US strategy will be the worst for the country and it will back-fire to our natural strength (FATA), which is the real “strategic depth” of Pakistan.

The country’s elites must remember that the fate of Pakistan will be decided on the chess-board of FATA and not in Kabul. Thus, there is a sound reason of disengagement from the war on terror as Machiavelli clearly advised to prince that never to be involved in the great power politics because the weaker always be the loser. More and more, the war has marginalized the influence of Islamabad vis-à-vis India and it seems to be that New Delhi and Washington are benefiting more as compared to Pakistan. It is also important to remember that anarchical Pakistan would be dangerous for the long-term state’s interests and only peace and stability can encourage/open up the possibilities for significant improvement.

Nevertheless, in the light of past experiences, engagement is associated with heavy cost and disengagement will strengthen the country’s position and it will also enhance the credibility of leadership and forces. According to Luttwak, “in engagement, the chances of survival will be much higher and it will evoke continuing hostility both for local and foreign troops and end will be remote desert rather ensure bright future.”⁸² So, there is no doubt that the strategy of disengagement would require much skill than the indefinite military operation. An anarchical Pakistan is a far greater danger and it will be better to move towards the logical end with the choice to avoid dangerous losses because development and prosperity will be the good option. The country elites must remember that the policies of the stronger ally will most likely prevail at expense of the weaker ally’s vital interests.

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Notes

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⁴¹ The term "The Great Game" is usually attributed to Arthur Conolly (1807–1842), an officer of the Secret Service of British East India Company's Sixth Bengal Light Cavalry. But the word was introduced into mainstream consciousness by British novelist Rudyard Kipling in his novel *Kim* (1901). The author first published his ideas serially in McClure's Magazine (1900-1901) as well as in Cassell's Magazine (1901) and book published by Macmillan & Co. Ltd (London) in October 1901.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 68; and see also Mujtaba Razvi, *The Frontiers of Pakistan* (Karachi: Pakistan Council of World Affairs, 1968),

⁴⁴ Heart was the city of Iran and birthplace of Shah Abbas of Safavi dynasty. Iran claimed Heart from Afghan rulers under Qajar dynasty in 1838 and 1852 and reclaimed on October, 25, 1956. However, under the French mediation Iran signed a peace treaty in Paris (March 4, 1857) waiving Iran's rights to Herat.

⁴⁵ Barnett R. Rubin, "Regional Issues in the Reconstruction of Afghanistan," *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Spring 2003), pp. 30-38.

⁴⁶ Thomas H. Johnson and M. Chris Mason, "No Sign until the Burst of Fire: Understanding the Pakistan-Afghanistan Frontier," pp. 43-48.

⁴⁷ Hafeez Malik, *Soviet-American Relations with Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan*

(New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), pp. 43-87.

⁴⁸ Thomas H. Johnson and M. Chris Mason, "No Sign Until the Buirst of Fire: Understanding the Pakistan-Afghanistan Frontier," p. 69.

⁴⁹ Sumit Ganguly, "What's The Problem With Pakistan," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. III, No. 2 (March 2009), pp. 9-24.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Shaun Gregory, "What's The Problem With Pakistan," *Foreign Affairs*, (March 2009), pp. 9-24.

⁵³ Ashley Tellis, "What's The Problem With Pakistan," *Foreign Affairs*, (March 2009), pp. 9-24.

⁵⁴ *The Nation* (8 July 2010), and also see *Los Angeles Times* (July 6, 2010).

⁵⁵ M. K. Bhadrakumar, "Pakistan warns India to 'back off'," *Asia Times* (October 10, 2009).

⁵⁶ See *The Times of India* (July 7, 2010), and also see *The Nation* (July 8, 2010).

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ See *The Hindu* (July 23, 2010).

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ See *Los Angeles Times* (6 March 2009).

⁶¹ See M. K. Bhadrakumar, "Pakistan warns India to 'back off'," (October 10, 2009).

⁶² David Miliband, "How to end the war in Afghanistan", *Daily Telegraph* (June 25, 2010).

⁶³ Christine Fair, "What's The Problem With Pakistan," *Foreign Affairs*, (March 2009), pp. 9-24.

⁶⁴ See M. K. Bhadrakumar, "Pakistan warns India to back off," *Asia Times* (October 10, 2009).

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⁶⁶ Lord Bordwood, Reflections on Pakistan in International Relations," *Pakistan Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Spring 1955), p. 6.

⁶⁷ See C. L. Sulzberger, "Pakistan: A Geographical Absurdity," *The New York Times* (February 5, 1955).

⁶⁸ Ibid. See Michael Scheuer, "Will India, Pakistan come to blows over Afghanistan?," *The Diplomat* (August 31, 2010).

⁶⁹ Ibid. See also Michael Scheuer, "Will India, Pakistan come to blows over Afghanistan?,".

⁷⁰ *The Nation* (March 7, 2010).

⁷¹ *Dawn* (March 14, 2010).

⁷² *Dawn* (February 2, 2010).

⁷³ Ishtiaq Ahmad, "Did Jinnah Know about the Kashmir War," *Daily Times* (March 24, 2010).

⁷⁴ Maj Gen Akbar Khan, *Raiders in Kashmir* (Karachi: Pak Publishers Ltd, 1970), pp. 23-56.

⁷⁵ See A. Z. Hilali, "The Cost and Benefits of the Afghan War for Pakistan," *Contemporary South Asia*, Vol. II, No. 3 (2003), Pp. 329-310.

⁷⁶ Edward N. Luttwak, *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 18-89.

⁷⁷ John Garnett, *Problems of Modern Strategy* (New York: Praeger, 1970), pp. 15-55.

⁷⁸ Machiavelli, *The Art of War* (London: Macmillan, 1968), pp. 7-18.

⁷⁹ Andrew J. Bacevich, "Is Afghan War Still Worth Fighting?," *CS Monitor*, October 18, 2010.

⁸⁰ Shah Mehmood Qureshi (Foreign Minister of Pakistan) Speech at 45th Munich Security Conference 2009, See *Dawn* (February 10, 2009).

⁸¹ Edward N. Luttwak, "Iraq: The Logic of Disengagement," *Foreign Affairs* (January/February 2005), p. 31.

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THE PROBABILITIES OF NUCLEAR WAR IN SOUTH ASIA

Muhammad Shafiq ur Rahman

Abstract

Both India and Pakistan are traditional rivals since their inception and both are nuclear powers, and this thing has made the South Asian region a nuclear danger. After becoming nuclear states, nuclear weapons have occupied center stage in the India Pakistan security debates. The centrality of nuclear weapons has entirely changed the strategic approach in the South Asian region. The probabilities of nuclear war are obvious due to the poor culture of conflict management and elite mind sets of both the countries in the region. Any miscalculation or misinformation can drift towards nuclear war. After comparing US-Soviet and Indo-Pak situations, it can be observed that both the countries are at the brink of nuclear war. However, both the countries proved to be the responsible states during Kargil and in 2001-2002 military standoffs, but it is not assumed that Kargil would be the last crisis in between them. The Kashmir dispute could be the tinderbox and a flash point for a nuclear conflagration. After analyzing the different probabilities of nuclear war in the South Asian region, the present study has suggested recommendations for avoiding the nuclear risks. Nuclear deterrence by itself does not ensure peace between two hostile neighbors unless the root cause of possible conflict is removed.

Introduction

The chances of nuclear war in the world are unlikely to happen in future because it is assumed that the nuclear arsenals are simply for the deterrence only. The fear of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) would prevent it as it did in the past. It is assumed that humans seek individual and collective survival rationally and would not attempt to destroy their adversaries if they are sure that they will be destroyed in the process. From these premises, some of them conclude that the presence of nuclear weapons can assure global peace rather than threatening it.

The fear of MAD, in which the untested deterrence theory is based, provides weak grounds for preventing a nuclear war indefinitely. In certain situations, some humans such as suicide bombers willingly choose to destroy themselves in order to destroy their enemy. In some other situations, a group and nation can adopt this self-destructive behavior for reasons similar to the individuals.

Indeed, the capacity of nuclear weapons to cause destruction at much larger scale and in a very short time makes them different in their consequence. But seen from the perspective of a suicide bomber, or a country having the mentality of a suicide bomber, it is inconsequential if the weapon used for self destruction is a cyanide pill or nuclear weapon, as their only concern is to cause the greatest possible damage to the enemy. Nuclear weapons are more suited to achieve such a goal than conventional weapons.

In the South Asian region, India and Pakistan have extraordinary status because India has more than 70 percent area and population and Pakistan has more than 18 percent area and population. Due to its hegemonic size, Indian political elite especially Hindu nationalist parties conceive the South Asian region as a single political entity. “George K. Tanham, of Rand Corporation, having visited India several times came back with impression that Indians consider the whole of the South Asian region as one political and strategic entity and that they intend to deny Pakistan the potential to challenge this claim. Most Indians strategists assume that Pakistan is a main hurdle in the Indian way for becoming the regional power in South Asia”.¹

There are number of people, groups of people and political parties in Pakistan seeking the conquest of India or its disintegration. Some of them are not adequately aware of the consequences of such an act to their own country or, may be they are willing to pay the necessary price.

Peace and security of South Asia is now an international concern and it can be achieved by adopting the effective ways of conflict management. The track record of conflict management in the presence of nuclear weapons is very poor in the region. Conflicts

can be resolved through innovative ideas that will offer tangible and effective substitutes to violence and hostility.

No doubt, both India and Pakistan are nuclear states and it is the need of time to analyze the mindset of the political elite of both the countries and to motivate them to resolve their disputes peacefully because nuclear war may be happened due to aggression of any one country.

Differences between US-Soviet and Indo-Pakistan Situations

Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) assured “no war peace” between USA, former Soviet Union and Europe during the Cold War, the geo-strategic and socio cultural environment in South Asia differs considerably from the region of the globe.

- The Communist and the Western world differed in their ideologies. They were involved in containing each other in various parts of the globe. They were known to be rational in their behavior. So when ever crisis of major proportions occurred, they were averted. Any flare-up during the Berlin Blockade in 1948-49, the Taiwan Straits crisis in 1954, and the China-Soviet conflict in 1969 was averted because the adversaries behaved in a rational manner and pulled back from the brink of war in the nick of time. Neither of them was prepared to see the destruction of their societies for the sake of temporary gains”.²
- It is not assumed that leaders in Eastern world show a greater sense of responsibility than those in the West. There are political leaders in both India and Pakistan whose behavior is based on emotions rather than on rationality. “One can not deny that the leaders of the two nuclear giants took strategic decisions in a deliberate and calculated manner. Both had stable governments though their ideologies differed. During the Cold War, four out of five Kremlin chiefs are reported to have died in office,

of old age. Nikita Khrushchev, who failed to act in a sensible manner, was removed”³.

- The USA and former Soviet Union have no common border. Mighty oceans separate them from one another. Their forces have not come face to face in any part of the globe throughout their 50 years of bitterness. The chances of direct conflict between them were remote and nuclear deterrence held. There was no history of direct clashes between the American and the Russians. They have remained at a distance from each other and preferred proxy wars to achieve their political goals. Direct conflicts were avoided at all costs.
- India and Pakistan have a long common frontier which is occasionally violated. No natural feature of any significance separates them. Indian and Pakistani troops sit eyeball to eyeball along the entire length of the line of control in Kashmir and frequently get involved in an exchange of fire. They have fought wars for resolving their disputes. “An undemarcated border in an insignificant piece of territory in the Rann of Kutch led to a conflict in 1965. An internal political issue encouraged Mrs. Indra Gandhi to send her troops marching into East Pakistan and make full use of the opportunity provided to her by an inept political and military leadership in Pakistan in 1971. The temptation to go for war between India and Pakistan like the two superpowers during the Cold War.”⁴
- The political instability is observed in India and Pakistan. There is no chance of overnight change of the Governments in USA and in former Soviet Union. Street power did not topple their regimes. No military coups took place. State structures remained stable and government policies did not revert with the change of the governments.
- “Pakistan has faced three military coups. Governments have been dismissed and constitutions abrogated several

times. Policies have shifted from joining US sponsored military pacts to condemning Washington's interference in our internal affairs. The world's largest democracy has not stable regime after the assassination of Mrs. Indra Gandhi in 1984. The BJP government reversed the policy of secularism and has adopted a very aggressive posture towards China and Pakistan. Political instability in India and Pakistan can breakdown nuclear deterrence."⁵

- Both USA and former Soviet Union did not enter an all out war due to both having the MAD capability. They have developed latest anti ballistic missile systems. Will India and Pakistan not fall into a similar spiraling arms race? Security does not come through weapons alone. It comes through solving disputes and removing tension through peaceful negotiations.

Nuclear Doctrine of India and Pakistan and Drift towards an International War

Even it is assumed that such people will not come to power during the period, the two countries possess nuclear weapons. A very precarious assumption indeed, the two countries can drift into an international war due to the thrust of their nuclear doctrines. "India is expanding its nuclear program continuously and has attained second strike capability. On the other side, India proclaimed that it has no intentions to use nuclear arsenals against Pakistan. However, Pakistan declared that it can utilize nuclear arsenals for the sake of its survival and integrity."⁶

Many Pakistani and Indian strategists know that due to having smaller conventional forces, Pakistan can initiate a nuclear strike. For avoiding such strike, India may initiate pre-emptive strike. Pakistan will not hesitate to use nuclear bomb to counter such pre-emptive strike. All these possibilities create a highly unstable situation in which nuclear war can erupt."⁷

Both the countries have made a number of threats of using nuclear weapons against each other after the nuclear tests. If the security environment between the two countries was free from

jingoism and brinkmanship, such threats could be treated as empty and rhetorical and attempt to please their local hawkish constituencies. However, in the situation as it is between the two countries, such threats can only heighten the war hysteria pushing them towards a nuclear exchange.

The Kargil Episode and the Crisis of 2002

During the Kargil episode, the two countries were heading towards such an exchange. According to the assessment of a British Foreign Minister Peter Hain, “the two countries were very close to a nuclear exchange during these crisis”⁸. The Kargil conflict took place just one year after the nuclear tests in Pokhran and Chagai in summer 1999, and a few months after Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajapayee’s visit to Pakistan in February 1999. Kargil was history’s most powerful negation, and such negation was ever needed, of the irrationality of the doctrine of nuclear deterrence, which proclaims that leave alone a nuclear confrontation, even conventional conflict between nuclear weapons-states, is impossible.

The Kargil conflict was a serious mid-sized military engagement and a shooting war. “It involved at least 40,000 troops from India and thousands of soldiers disguised as *mujahidin* from Pakistan. Both militaries used top of the weaponry. India used a great deal of air power during the two months-long conflict.”⁹.

Kargil was the first military conflict in nearly 30 years between any two nuclearised rivals in the world and the largest-scale conventional military engagement ever between any two nuclear states. “The Usuri River conflict of the late 1960’s and early 1970’s between China and USSR never involved air strikes nor had the same escalation potential. Kargil took a (combined) toll of nearly 1,300 lives (according to Indian government) and over 1,750 (according to Pakistan).”¹⁰

The Kargil war held a serious potential for escalation of the nuclear level. “Both the countries exchanged nuclear threats 13 times within 35 days during Kargil war. This is an indication that both the countries would not hesitate to threaten each other with

nuclear arsenals in future. The Kargil conflict was rooted in the hubris generated by South Asia's recent nuclearization. This created a false sense of complacency in India, coupled with greater willingness in Pakistan to embark on a military misadventure.¹¹

Many political and military leaders and strategic experts in the two countries permitted themselves the dangerous image of invulnerability on account of their nuclear bombs. Their disreputably arrogant claims of superior military-nuclear power are part of a mind set which drives the temptation to raise the conventional danger threshold, to see how far each can irritate and harass the adversary at the sub-war level.

Specifically, nuclear lessons of Kargil are also clear that in future, the South Asian region would be the most dangerous place where nuclear war can be happened. It is when war-time or near war-time conditions prevail, that a nuclear outbreak becomes most likely whether because brinkmanship is practiced, and hostile emotions and suspicions get out of hand, or because the dynamic of military escalation careens out of control.

Soon after the Kargil incidence, "an equally strong refutation happened after the terrorist attack on the Indian parliament in 2001; India planned for pre-emptive military action against Pakistan and rose to extraordinary levels through most of 2002. India banned the communication channels of Pakistan and the bilateral relations of both the countries reached at the lowest level after the Kargil incidence. Both the countries mobilized their forces on their borders, and became red alert for war for ten months. It was extremely dangerous situation. It was the second time that South Asian region again came close to a nuclear war. Involving a million troops, this was said to be one of the world's greatest military mobilization since World War II."¹²

During the hair-raising stand-off, India and Pakistan came close to the brink an actual armed conflict at least twice in January, and than again in May-June 2002. India threatened a "limited" conventional strike at alleged terrorist training camps across the LOC. Pakistan openly warned India that any conventional attack by

India, however limited, would precipitate an all-out confrontation, with a nuclear escalation potential. The stand-off was eventually defused through Western intervention, including visits by high US officials.¹³

Nuclear War Due to Kashmir Issue

The drift prone mindsets of the elite in the two countries, the festering dispute over Kashmir can suck them into an un-intended nuclear war. In past, neither of them wanted war particularly in 1965. Pakistan believed that “India would not cross the international borders, but it did and the two countries involved in to a three week war.”¹⁴

Kashmir issue has become a nuclear flash point between the two countries. Both the countries have nuclear capabilities, and the violence intensity over the Kashmir issue may reinforce the two countries to trigger a nuclear war. According to Richard Nixon, “there is no possibility of war in between the nuclear states but in the context of South Asian region, where India and Pakistan can experience the nuclear war”.¹⁵

According to Robert M. Gates, after analyzing the Pak-India relations, “I am afraid that if both the countries come to a war, it will be a nuclear war.”¹⁶ According to Bruce Riedel “Pakistan army mobilized its nuclear arsenals against India in July 1999.”¹⁷ Many of the Pakistan army officials have categorically denied Riedel’s assertion.¹⁸

It can not be assumed that both the countries would not fight in future. According to Lt. General (retired) Kamal Matinuddin, “nuclear arsenals could not assure peace between hostile neighbors unless the root cause of possible conflicts is removed.”¹⁹

Political Culture and Elite Mindsets in India and Pakistan

The way their culture has evolved and is presently structured, humans invariably respond to any threat of their perceived personal and collective survival with violence. However,

the intensity of such violent response is not universally constant. In such a situation, the elite and non elite are in its grip equally. The present history of Hindu and Muslim communities and the post partition developments particularly three wars, the Kashmir issue and other smaller conflicts between the two countries have sustained and stimulated such response continuously. Victories over the enemy and martyrdom for achieving it have become two important values.

The martial qualities such as bravery in causing the greatest damage to the enemy and martyrdom are glorified. The nuclear tests of May 1998 have further strengthened this culture. The elite in both the countries hold highly negative images of each other. They rationalize their policies and actions with reference to the past behavior and fault of each other and often blame each other for the partition of India. The consequences that flowed from it the Pakistani elite repeatedly assert that the Indian leaders continue to be un-reconciled to the existence of Pakistan wanting it collapse.

The Indian elite assume that Pakistani elite has the intentions for further fragmentation of India and reduce its international status. Both blame each other for starting the three wars fought between them. They also hold each other responsible for internal turbulence and terrorism in their countries.²⁰

Reinforcing each other, the dominant strains in this culture create a fertile ground for starting or drifting towards a nuclear war. In a conflict situation when intense emotional frenzy seizes, both the elite become ready to use nuclear weapons. They must be afraid of mutual destruction rationally and the desire to live. Some evidence detailed later suggests that such frenzy during the Kargil crises had brought the two countries near to the nuclear precipice.

Some political extremists in India and Pakistan are willing to be deterred with nuclear arsenals for the security of their ideological concepts. They would not hesitate to use force to achieve their objectives despite the knowledge that the opponent has nuclear weapons. "They carelessly talk of destroying Mumbai and New Delhi to the ground or talking the so called Pakistan-occupied

Kashmir by force of arms, unmindful of the devastating effects on their own population in the event of a nuclear exchange. They are ready to pay whatever price is needed to protect and promote their objectives. Religious animosity and the hysteria that can be built up around it have often resulted in irrational behavior by the extremists in both countries.”²¹

The Hindu-Muslim hatred, which was at its height at the time of independence, unfortunately continues unabated in the minds of the religious extremists on both sides of the border. The demolition of 16th century Babari Mosque in Ajodhya by the BJP in 1992 and the vengeance with which they went about their task was indicative of the latent hatred between the two communities which can be whipped up by leaders motivated by narrow self-interest. The religious parties in Pakistan can also work up similar destructive emotions against perceived enemies of Islam. The religious sectarian and ethnic violence which have plagued the country of late shows short tempers in South Asia.

The jingoistic political culture is fed, sustained and expresses itself in a more extreme form in the declared or undeclared political agenda of a number religious groups and political parties in both countries. According to Rashtriya Sevek Sangh (RSS), “the dropping of nuclear bombs over Pakistan is a solution to the longstanding Pakistani hostility and belligerence against India.”²²

Conflict Management in Nuclear Environment

Disputes between nations can be put into three categories, each requiring a different mode of solving.

- “A dispute can be in existence for a very long time but the issue is such that the parties concerned are willing to wait for it to be resolved while maintaining normal bilateral relations. The India-China dispute over territories in adverse occupation in the Himalayas falls in this category.

- A dispute can be so vital that the stronger party is willing to settle it by military means as soon as it occurs.
- When there is a core issue for both parties but they have not such military capability for resolving the issue by force. The longer such a dispute lasts without a settlement in sight the more chances, there are of nations using unconventional means to achieve their objectives.”²³

The dispute over the status of Jammu and Kashmir falls in the third category. If this issue remains unresolved mistrust and suspicion is likely to grow. Dislike turns to hatred and nuclear weapons are a dangerous mix.

Though “George Perkovich has disclosed that Indian policymakers had considered the option of attacking Pakistan’s nuclear installations in January 1987”,²⁴ the option of going to war to solve a conflict in a nuclear environment is unthinkable. There are military leaders in India who have been floating the idea of limited attack against Pakistan. “They cite Siachin and Kargil as examples where limited attacks have been carried out dispute the fact, both countries had nuclear weapons. Still, the objective of compelling the opponent to give up their policy on Kashmir was not achieved because both armies remained intact and the area occupied was not of that vital importance to force the opponent to submit to the aggressor’s demand.”²⁵

Many analysts in Pakistan believe that the option of a low intensity conflict can be exercised even in a nuclear environment. According to them, “without military pressure, India would not be willing to come to the negotiating table.”²⁶ They believe that a policy of low-intensity conflict, “if properly arranged, may one day tire out the Indians and compel them to come towards the political solution of Kashmir and to satisfy all the three parties’ concerned.”²⁷

However, in the changed international environment after 9/11, world capitals no longer differentiate between freedom movements and acts of terrorism. India has chosen a policy of brinkmanship against Pakistan. The motivation seems to be to

enhance the tension.²⁸ In a nuclear environment, this is a dangerous game to play as matters can get out of control.

Conflict resolution in a nuclear environment requires very careful handling. The steps to be taken by both parties to the conflict include reduction of tension, lessening the bitterness and rivalry, making expectations more realistic, being sensitive to others concerns, avoiding conflicts which might get out of hand and avoiding being isolated.

Nuclear War due to Miscalculations and Misinformation

The superpowers are living under a perpetual fear of nuclear weapons. This fear becomes double in the presence of ballistic missiles which minimize the reaction time against nuclear attack. During the Cold War, the nuclear weapons states set up early warning systems for their protection against the nuclear attack.

The USA and former Soviet Union relied upon sophisticated early warning systems. By this way, they were informed within two to three minutes of the possible launch of nuclear arsenals. They confirmed the information and decided to retaliate within six to seven minutes. The missile flight time in between USA and former Soviet Union is almost 25 minutes. By this way, they had enough time to prevent themselves from any accidental launch of missiles.²⁹

The USA spent a lot of financial resources to make the early warning systems fool proof but it can not be trusted because during the years of 1977 and 1984, the 20,000 factitious indications were received and 1000 indications showed serious threat.³⁰ In November 1979, the US warning system indicated a sudden attack and the concerned forces became alert, but it was wrong alarm because the computer was not switched off properly.³¹ There is an interesting example, in June 1980, the system warned US, about the launching of two missiles and some other missiles following the first two. The US administration was ready to retaliate. That was not true due to the fault in computer.³²

There is limited information about the early warning systems of former Soviet Union, but one thing is clear that its warning system does not compete the US system. In January 1995, the Norwegian government informed Russia about the launch of a rocket. The rocket was traced by the Russian radar. The Russian became red alert, but after the investigations, they were known that the signals were wrong.³³

The early warning systems in South Asian region can not be compared with the US-Soviet systems due to poor technology. For example, USA fired a cruise missile from Arabian Sea to Afghanistan; there was a long distance which missile flew over Pakistan. Before the launch of missile, an American General visited Pakistan for assuring the Pakistani authorities that the target is Afghanistan not Pakistan. But unfortunately that missile was not detected by the Pakistani authorities.³⁴

There are a lot of possibilities of miscalculations and unauthorized use of nuclear weapons due to the absence of sophisticated early warning systems in the South Asian region. Both India and Pakistan are neighboring countries and missile flight time in between their cities is very limited. For example, the ballistic missiles take only five minutes from New Delhi to Sargodha³⁵. By this way, both the countries have a very short reaction time against any attack³⁶. For overcoming minimum reaction time and faults of early warning system, both the countries must deploy Launch of Warning (LOW) system. The deployment of this system is not possible in the near future because of its high cost and technological complications.³⁷

Neither India nor Pakistan has the ability to watch over each other's activities in peacetime. The RAW and the ISI, their intelligence agencies, do intrude into each other's country and, besides other secret activities, keep themselves informed of their movement of troops and weapon systems towards the borders but there are a lot of gaps in the intelligence reports they send to their authorities. Correct and timely information is either not available to them or they fall a prey to faulty conclusions. Chances of decisions taken on false premises are more likely in the India-Pakistan context

than in the case of the better equipped nuclear opponents. Nuclear deterrence is more likely to fail in context of South Asia due to faulty intelligence of the intentions of the enemy.

Steps to Reduce Nuclear Danger

To keep the South Asian region away from nuclear war, certain measures are suggested below:-

- Continue the bilateral strategic dialogues that began with Strobe Talbott's discussion after the May 1998 nuclear tests and were resumed by the Bush administration. However such dialogues should not simply be seen as a forum for the US officials to preach nuclear and missile non-proliferation. Rather, the goal should be gained a greater mutual understanding of the perceived requirements of deterrence stability and strategic restraint, and to help India and Pakistan build greater stability and restraint into their strategic competition.
- Accept Indian and Pakistani compulsions for the development of a relatively small number of survivals, second strike nuclear forces-at least in private, if not formal policy pronouncements. There are two critical challenges here.
 - India and Pakistan might not be content with minimum deterrent capabilities. Many of same forces that drove the United States and the Soviet Union to stockpile numbers and kind of nuclear weapons well in excess of any plausible strategic need probably also will operate in South Asia.
 - India faces a strategic competition with China as well as Pakistan; thus New Delhi might, even though it could far exceed the requirements for deterring Pakistan.
 - Encourage India and Pakistan to see arms control as a vital element of national security, much as the US

and the Soviet Union did after the 1962 Cuban missile crises. Previous non-proliferation measures disguised as arms control such as the CTBT and FMCT might be useful starting points, but meaningful arms control in South Asia probably has to be initiated from inside the region, not imposed from the outside. That is why it makes sense for the US to discuss the process of arms control and linkage between arms control and national security, rather than proposing specific arms control initiatives for India and Pakistan³⁸.

- Examine options for bringing India and Pakistan into the nuclear non-proliferation regime as nuclear-weapon states. Because the NPT does not permit the recognition of additional nuclear weapons states beyond the first five (the US, Russia, Britain, France and China), this will not be an easy process but the costs to the regime of continuing to ignore the reality of a nuclear South Asia are likely to climb in the future.
- Sharing information on “best practices” for ensuring the safety and security of nuclear weapons, but not only, during storage, transportation, and possibly deployment to operational positions. However, such information sharing should not take place by itself. It should be tied to meaningful bilateral dialogues about the requirements of effective nuclear deterrence, for best practices are “best” if they satisfy military as well as political needs.³⁹
- The role of mediator is obvious in the South Asian region. For example, Indo-Pak agreement at Sharm el Sheikh (Egypt) in July 2009 was happened due to a mediator that was USA. A more direct role for a mediator would perhaps be able to help in crisis prevention rather than escalation control. Washington should begin planning now for assertive diplomatic actions to discourage nuclear escalation of India and Pakistan to find themselves at war for the fourth time in their history.⁴⁰

- Discuss with Indian and Pakistani government officials, concrete steps that could be taken to work out solutions to their bilateral disputed, especially regarding the political status of Kashmir. Arguably, this is the most important task, but it also is the hardest. The point is that, while a meaningful peace process is long overdue, measures to improve strategic stability should not be held hostage to what would surely be a long and painful process. At the very least, these interactions would ensure that troop deployment plans are put on hold until all avenues for rapprochement are exhausted. For example, if India planned to mobilize in response to a terrorist attack on its territory; Pakistan could provide proof of its innocence or agree to specific measures to ratify the situation within a set time frame.
- A problem may happen due to nuclear signaling. It can be resolved with the help of communication links between the Director General Military Operations (DGMOs) and foreign secretaries of both the countries. A binding agreement stating that these channels would remain open during crisis. By the help of these channels, misperceptions could be sufficiently reduced.
- For avoiding any nuclear holocaust, there should be a binding agreement on non-deployment during times of crisis or conflict. Pakistan has previously offered to formalize an agreement guaranteeing “non-deployed deterrence” with India. However, the latter rejected it. Pakistan still maintains that it will not initiate deployment.⁴¹
- Both the countries should learn from the experiences of avoidance during the Cold War, and learn generic accident-avoidance techniques and reduction of technological errors, such as electromagnetic radiation, computer fallibility⁴².
- Another risk reduction measure in South Asia is “Cooperative Ariel Observation (CAO)”. It is essentially

a verification mechanism, which theoretically could help in crisis prevention as well as escalation control.⁴³

- Both countries need to ensure that a fail-safe command and control system is operational. A clear chain of command on paper does not necessarily mean that it will hold during conflicts. Safeguards must be built to ensure that the chain of command is fully respected under all conditions. Moreover, even when conflict necessitates dispersal, predeligation should be avoided.
- A composite dialogue on trade and economic issues must simultaneously commence and cover trade related issues such as most favored-nation status, formalizing informal trade, energy pipelines, cultural exchanges and people-to-people contacts besides enhancing business by regular interaction of respective chambers of commerce. This will positively compliment and also bring incentives to secure peace.

Conclusion

South Asia demands an approach that leads for parallel processing of different issues, disputes and wrangles. There is no better way of stabilizing nuclear deterrence than opening up many channels of communication at different levels between the two traditional adversaries. It is the responsibility of the leaders of both the countries to respond to each other, not only in terms of warlike statements and scoring the points for political gains but responding to each other for normalization of relations in a true sense. There is a need of time for institutionalizing a nuclear dialogue between the two countries. There must be more transparency in the nuclear doctrines of both the countries for avoiding any accidental use of nuclear weapons and steps should be taken on nuclear risk reduction measures.

It is not possible in the South Asian region to become nuclear free as neither India nor Pakistan would be ready to roll back their nuclear weapons program. However, it can be made

nuclear safe by taking all possible steps to ensure that unintentional nuclear exchange does not take place.

India and Pakistan must change the nature of their relationship as nuclear neighbors. The international community must seek early resolution of their conflicts. Though conflict resolution and end of terrorism in the region are very complicated issues, there is an urgent need to prevent formal nuclear or increased conventional force deployments. Aggressive military policies and engagement in an unrestricted arms race with no communication and fewer safety measures are recipes for nuclear instability. Greater cooperation and construction of a mutually acceptable network for a stable nuclear regime will not happen without regional resolve and facilitation and constant encouragement from the international community. It will India and Pakistan that must decide the best course for stability in the region.

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INDO-PAK RELATIONS AND PAKISTANI MEDIA

Dr. Saqib Riaz & Saadia Anwar Pasha

Abstract

Pakistan and India, the two largest nations of South Asia are continuously in a war state from the very first day of their separation. Several wars have been fought between the two countries. But at the same time, efforts have been made for good bilateral relations. The two countries spend a huge budget on defence which could be otherwise utilized for the betterment of their people. Pakistani media has played a great role in establishing bilateral relations between the two countries. This study is aimed to investigate the agenda setting role of Pakistani media regarding the issue of Indo-Pak relations. It was found that the Pakistani media has played a positive role in creating good bilateral relations between the two countries.

Introduction

Being the two largest countries of South Asia, India and Pakistan are linked with several political, geographic, cultural, and economic links. However, diplomatic relations between the two states are defined by numerous military conflicts and territorial disputes. Historically, almost the whole geographic area of the two countries came under direct control of Britain in the late 18th century and remained its part for almost 150 years. Majority of the population of this region were either Hindu or Muslim.

The Muslim League, headed by Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, proposed the Two Nation Theory in the early 20th century. According to the theory, Muslims and others shared little in common, and British India should be divided into two separate countries, one for the Muslims and the other for the Hindu majority, which he feared would suppress the Muslim minority. The Partition of India in 1947 created two large countries independent from Britain: Pakistan as two wings in the East and West separated by India in the middle. Soon after Independence, a great number of

conflicts emerged between India and Pakistan. The war in 1971 resulted in another partition of Pakistan. The eastern wing was separated and emerged as a new country named Bangladesh, while the western wing continued as Pakistan.

History of Conflicts

Unluckily, the history of the both countries is full of conflicts. The conflicts started right from the first day of the creation (or separation) of the two countries. Millions of Muslims were killed by either Hindus or by Sikhs during their migration from India to Pakistan. The conflict of Junagarh was perhaps the first dispute between the two new countries when the Muslim ruler of the state announced to be a part of Pakistan but India became hurdle and the state was included in India. Kashmir dispute is the biggest bone of contention between the two countries. Being the largely Muslim dominated area it should had been included in Pakistan but India got its control against the will of the people. The problem is still unresolved even after a period of 63 years.

Pakistan maintains Kashmiris' rights to self-determination through a plebiscite in accordance with an earlier Indian statement and a UN resolution. Pakistan also indicates to India's failure of not understanding its own political logic and applying it to Kashmir, by taking their opinion on the case of the accession of Junagadh as an example (that the Hindu majority state should have gone to India even though it had a Muslim ruler), that Kashmir should also rightfully and legally have become a part of Pakistan since majority of the people were Muslim, even though they had a Hindu ruler. Pakistan also states that at least, the promised plebiscite should be allowed to decide the fate of the Kashmiri people.

The two countries fought several wars including the war of 1965 and 1971. As a result of the 1971 war, the eastern part of Pakistan was separated. It was all because of the Indian intervention and conspiracies against Pakistan. In the war, the Pakistani army fell to India, forcing the independence of East Pakistan, which separated and became Bangladesh. The Pakistani military, being more than a

thousand kilometer away from its base and surrounded by enemies, was forced to give in.

Since the 1971 war, Pakistan and India have made only slow progress towards the normalization of relations. In July 1972, Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Pakistani President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto met in India. They signed the Simla Agreement, by which India would return all Pakistani personnel (over 90,000) and captured territory in the west, and the two countries would “settle their differences by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations.” According to Budania (1995), diplomatic and trade relations between the two countries were re-established in 1976.¹

Towards Bilateral Relations

Friends can be changed but neighbors can't. The countries realize that an atmosphere of tension and a race of weapons is not a solution of their problems. Therefore several efforts have been made to normalize the relations between India and Pakistan. Some of the international powers including the US have also played their role in this regard. In December 1988, Prime Ministers Benazir Bhutto and Rajiv Gandhi concluded a pact not to attack each other's nuclear facilities. Agreements on cultural exchanges and civil aviation were also initiated.

In 1997, high-level Indo-Pakistan talks were started after a time of three-year. The Prime Ministers of Pakistan and India met twice and the foreign secretaries conducted three rounds of talks. In June 1997, the foreign secretaries identified eight “outstanding issues” around which continuing talks would be focused. The dispute over the status of Kashmir, an issue since Independence, remained the major problem in their dialogue. India maintains that the entire former princely state is an integral part of India, while Pakistan insists that UN resolutions calling for self-determination of the people of the state must be taken into account.

When Manmohan Singh became the Prime Minister of India the Punjab Provincial Government declared it would develop Gah, his place of birth, as a model village in his honor and name a school

after him.² There is also a village in India named Pakistan, despite occasional pressure over the years to change its name the villagers always resisted.³

In October 2005 Pakistan suffered a huge earthquake and it was a time of great difficulty for Pakistan. At this moment of trouble and difficulty India offered a great help to Pakistan. Indian and Pakistani High Commissioners consulted with one another regarding cooperation in relief work. India sent 25 tonnes of relief material to Pakistan including food, blankets and medicine. On October 12, an Ilyushin-76 cargo plane ferried across seven truckloads (about 82 tons) of army medicines, 15,000 blankets and 50 tents and returned to New Delhi.⁴

The efforts for the bilateral relations between the two countries again started in 2004. There were two main reasons for this: warming of relations between New Delhi and Islamabad which consequently lead to a ceasefire between the two countries in 2003 and the fencing of the Line of Control (LOC) being carried out by the Indian Army. In this year, the two countries also agreed upon decreasing the number of troops present in the region. Furthermore, Cricket Diplomacy was also started and it played a significant role in bringing the two nations closer to each other. Five one-day matches were played in the Indo-Pak series from March 14 to April 17, 2004 in different cities of Pakistan. A large number of Indian citizens including the daughter of the Founder of Pakistan visited Pakistan to watch these matches. Some media researchers and University Professors from India and Pakistan conducted a joint research study to analyze the content of the newspaper coverage of some of the leading newspapers of India and Pakistan Their study of published in the African journal of International Affairs Nigeria in 2006 under the title: *Role of Sports in International Relations: A Cross Cultural Study of Reflections of Sentiments through Newspapers*". The authors found that the newspapers of the both countries played a pivotal role in bringing the people of the two nations closer to each other.⁵ Both India and Pakistan have launched several mutual confidence-building measures to ease tensions between the two. These include more high-level talks, easing visa restrictions, and restarting of cricket matches between the two. The

new bus service between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad has also helped bring the two sides closer. Trade activities including import and export of different commodities and food items between the two countries has also increased the trade relations. Both countries have also decided to co-operate on economic fronts.

Pakistan also took some measures to show its passion for the good relations with India. On March 3, 2008, an Indian spy Kashmir Singh held in Pakistani prisons since 1975 was released unconditionally by Pakistan to improve relations between the two countries.⁶

With the help of some British tourists a campaign was launched in 2006 which was named as “Friends Without Borders”. The idea was that Indian and Pakistani children would write friendly letters to each other. The idea was so successful in both countries that the organization found it “impossible to keep up”. The World’s Largest Love Letter was recently sent from India to Pakistan.⁷

Mumbai Attack 2008

The Mumbai attack in 2008 was a big event in India which again resulted in adverse relations. It was a terrorists attack on Taj hotel in Mumbai in which over 173 people were killed and 308 persons were wounded. India blamed the Lashkar-e-Taiba, a Pakistan-based militant group, for planning and executing the attacks. Islamabad resisted the claims and demanded evidence. India provided evidence in the form of interrogations, weapons, candy wrappers, Pakistani brand milk packets, and telephone sets.⁸ The only arrested terrorist Ajmal Qasab has been convicted by the Indian court. Pakistan has assured several times that as a state, it has nothing to do with the attacks. On the other hand, India is continuously blaming Pakistan for Mumbai attacks. The Indian government has given a long list of their “wanted persons” to the government of Pakistan and demanded to hand over these persons to them for investigation. The Pakistan government is committed to conduct investigation at its own but it will not handover its any citizen to some other country for so-called investigation. According to some media reports, the Pakistan ambassador in New Delhi has

received threats of death from some group of extremist Hindus called as “Anti- Terrorist group”.⁹ The group threatened the all Pakistanis living on the land of India to leave the country or otherwise to be ready for death.

Some of the international scholars consider India as a failed state that could not deliver peace and security to its citizens. The reports of the international agencies (including Transparency International) on the state of human rights in India are a big proof in this regard. The leading Indian journalist admitted this fact in these words in his article titled as “The Weave of India”, “In India all citizens were promised justice, liberty and fraternity. It is a long story of failures in many ways. Where the republic has failed the most is in the domain of pluralism. Muslims want to join the mainstream but are kept away. The narrow-mindedness of the Hindu community is at fault”.¹⁰

One of the sensitive points is that both India and Pakistan are atomic powers and a war between them can lead to a major world disaster which must be avoided at any cost. Yet, the Pakistani people are of two opinions about relations with India. One opinion is in favor of bilateral relations to make the region safe for the future generations and to reduce defence budgets for the prosperity of the people. But the other people don't accept these arguments saying that India can't be our friend. India is our enemy forever and we should not trust on the enemy. This view point is supported by most of the religious political parties of Pakistan. The interesting thing is that the largest media group of Pakistan Jang group is supporting the first point of view and they have launched a campaign along with Hindustan Times named as “Aman Ki Asha”. But the other big media group Nawa-i-Waqt group is not only supporting but leading the other point of view which is against the bilateral relations. Their Urdu and English newspapers and TV channel are continuously producing content against India.

No doubt, Pakistan is facing a number of internal and external problems including the world wide issue of terrorism but at the same time it is a country of brave, bold and strong people who love their country and have courage to sacrifice their lives in

defending boundaries of their motherland. At the same time, Pakistanis are a peaceful nation and they want to establish peace and stability in the region. A Pakistan based freelance journalist Yousaf Alamgirian stated that despite of all the Indian conspiracies, battles and wars against Pakistan during the last sixty years, the people and the governments of Pakistan desired their wish to establish peace in the region and to develop good relations with the neighboring countries especially with India. Pakistan has played a tremendous role in promoting good bilateral relations with India in different eras.¹¹ The launching of Dosti Bus Service from Lahore to Delhi, release of hundreds of Indian prisoners from Pakistani jails especially the release of an Indian spy Kashmir Singh, official talks with Indian authorities to resolve different issues, beginning of trade with India, were some of the steps taken by the Pakistani governments to establish good relations with India.

Previous Research

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of Pakistani media in Indo-Pak relations. Today, we are living in a global village where media is an integral part of the society. People and the governments are influenced by media in making opinions and decisions. As compared to Indian media, the Pakistani media has played a much positive role in promoting bilateral relations. A study was conducted jointly by the Indian and Pakistani scholars in 2004 in this regard and was published in the African Journal of International Affairs and Development Nigeria. The study was conducted during the cricket match series between India and Pakistan held during March and April 2004 and the content of the major newspapers of the both countries was analyzed. It was also found in the results of the research study that media can play a vital role in bringing the two nations closer to each other.¹²

Significance of the Study

The role of media and especially, print media has been accepted throughout the globe. We can't live without media. We perceive the picture of the world, as the media present to us. We have some specific pictures of the world issues in our minds because

of media. This study has been designed to investigate whether and to what extent Pakistani print media play its role to influence public opinion regarding the issue of the Indo-Pak relations. The study also focuses on the role of Pakistani print media in promoting bilateral relations.

About this Study

The purpose of this research project was to investigate the relationship between the public and print media agendas on the issue of Indo-Pak relations. Content analysis as well as the survey research was adopted for this study. Content of the two newspapers, daily Jang Rawalpindi and daily Dawn Islamabad was analyzed for this study for one year. (From May 1st 2007 to April 30th 2008). This time period is considered as some of the best time for bilateral relations. The reason for the selection of these newspapers is that the former one is the largest widely circulated newspaper of Urdu in Pakistan while the later one is the largest widely circulated English daily of the country. Both newspapers have a strong professional reputation covering almost all of the important issues of the country as well as the important issues of the world. They have engaged a sufficient number of highly qualified senior and professional journalists in their organizational structures. The main reason for the time period is that the issue of the study remained dominant in the Pakistani print media almost constantly throughout the period of the research study. The content analysis of the front and back pages of the newspapers was done on the alternate days. The content analysis of the daily Dawn was conducted of the newspapers published on even dates (2, 4 6, etc.) and the content of the daily Jang was analyzed on the odd dates (1, 3, 5, etc.). Hence the content of a total number of 182 copies of daily Dawn and 183 newspapers of daily Jang was analyzed thoroughly and the news on the issues of the study were counted and their length was measured in centimeters per column.

Variables of the Content Analysis

- **Frequency and Length.** News stories published about the issue of the study on the front and back pages of the

sample newspapers were counted and their length was measured in centimeters per column.

- **Slant.** The slant of the news stories published about the issues was also analyzed in terms of favorable, unfavorable and neutral. The slant was measured by analyzing the coding unit of analysis that is paragraph.
- **Frame.** It means how a news story was framed. Whether it was depicting India as our friend or foe or neutral etc? The frames of the news stories were measured in terms of friend, foe, and neutral. These were measured on the basis of the contextual unit because the whole news story was a contextual unit.
- **Source.** The source of the news stories was also recorded as official, unofficial and others etc. This variable was included because of the vital role of the gatekeepers in the news making process.
- **Placement.** The placement is also a very important factor in agenda setting study. It means where the news story was placed in the newspaper. In this study, the placement was divided into four categories. These are as under:
 - Front Page upper half
 - Front Page lower half
 - Back Page upper half
 - Back Page lower half

The paragraphs of the news stories were the coding unit of the content analysis. These were counted in terms of favorable, unfavorable and neutral. The whole news story was the contextual unit of analysis in this study and frames were measured on the basis of this unit. Framing was measured through contextual units of analyses.

A survey of three hundred (300) regular readers of these newspapers (150 readers of each newspaper) was conducted in Islamabad. The list of the regular subscribers was obtained from the management of these newspapers. The sample of 300 respondents was selected equally among the seventeen residential sectors of Islamabad. Although the sample was selected from Islamabad and

not from the other areas of the country but even then it represents the trend of the whole country. The residents of this city have come from nooks and corners of the country and they virtually represent the population of the whole country. Keeping in view this fact, it can be said that to a greater extent, the sample of the study represents the newspaper readership of the whole country. The results of the survey research were then compared with the results of the content analysis.

Variables of Survey Research

- **Source of Information.** The respondents were asked to tell the most important source of information about the issue of Indo-Pak relations. The options were given among print media, electronic media, interpersonal channels and any other source of information.
- **Formation of Opinion.** Formation of opinion of the newspapers' readers was measured through a question and its results were correlated with the slant of the newspaper coverage.
- **Discussions with Family and Friends.** This is our every day experience that we discuss the important issues of the day with our family members, colleagues and friends. The respondents were asked whether and to what extent they discussed the issue of Indo-Pak relations with their family, friends and colleagues.

Findings of the Study

Frequency of the News Stories Published. During the study period of one year the daily Jang published 52 news stories on its front and back pages about the issue of Indo-Pak relations while the daily Dawn donated the number one coverage to the issue by publishing 104 news stories on its front and back pages during the period of one year (on alternate days).

Length of the News Stories. The space (length) given to the news stories about the issues of the study was measured in centimeters per column. The normal width of a column in the

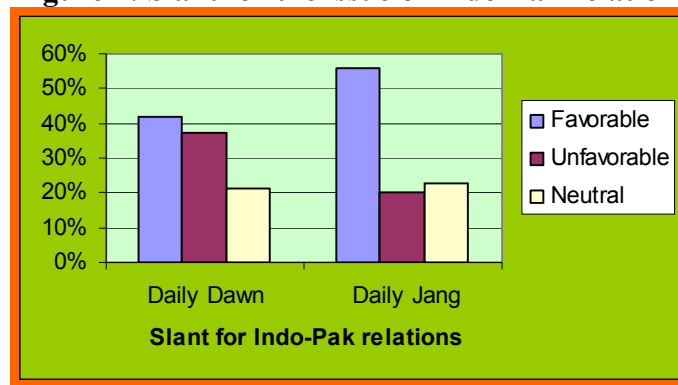
Pakistani newspapers is four centimeters. This is important to mention here that the visual coverage of the issues in shape of pictures was also included in the measurement of the length of the news stories. The daily Jang donated a space of 1013 centimeters column to the issue of Indo-Pak relations while the issue got coverage of 2451 centimeters column in the daily Dawn.

Slant for the issue of Indo-Pak Relations

The issue of the Indo-Pak relations always remained an important topic in the country for several reasons. Two wars and several battles have been fought between the two countries. Now the Pakistani media are playing their role to change enmity into good relations. The figure 1 is evident for this struggle.

As the figure shows, the daily Dawn gave 42 percent slant in favor of the bilateral relations, 37 percent coverage for the slant unfavorable for the relations while 21 percent news coverage was found as neutral. The daily Jang donated its 56 percent slant in favor of the bilateral relations, only 20 percent slant against the Indo-Pak relations while its 24 percent coverage was neutral.

Figure 1: Slant for the issue of Indo-Pak relations



Most of the news stories favorable for the bilateral relations were about the exchange of delegations, meetings of the officials to discuss the issues, exchange of prisoners, statements of the politicians and ministers for good relations, traveling facilities, visa relaxation etc. The negative news were about the issue of Kashmir,

threats to each others, killing of the prisoners, blaming of terrorist activities and bomb explosions on each other, etc.

Framing of the Indo-Pak Relations

Regarding the framing of the issue of the Indo-Pak relations, the Dawn published 48 news stories giving India a frame of friend while it was framed as foe and enemy in 56 news items published in the front and back pages during the year of the study. On the other hand, the daily Jang published 36 news items in the frame of friend and 16 news items portrayed India as foe. On the basis of this finding, it can be said that the daily Jang has a tilt towards bilateral relations with India.

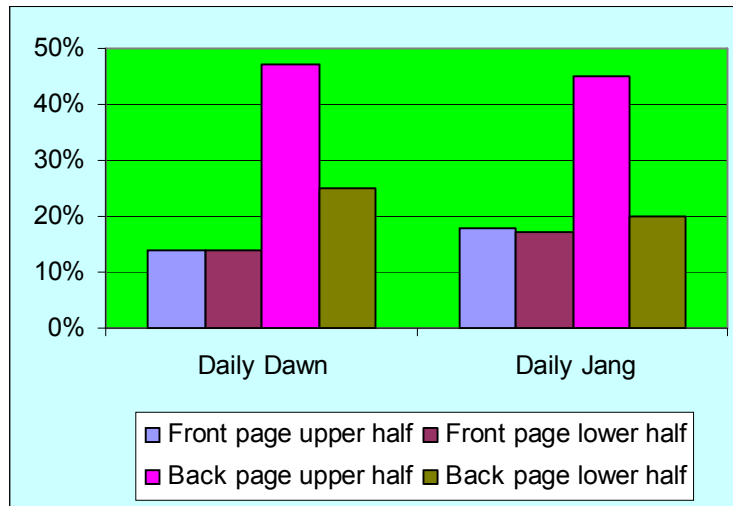
News Source

The newspapers relied heavily on the official sources for the coverage of the issue of the Indo-Pak relations. The Dawn published 85 news items about this issue received from the official sources while it accepted only 16 news stories for publication based on the information received from the unofficial sources. However, three news items were received from other sources. The daily Jang published 30 news items received from official sources and 15 news items received from unofficial sources on the issue of the Indo-Pak relations. The newspaper published seven news items received from other sources including analyses and media reports etc.

Placement of the News Stories on the Issue of Indo – Pak Relations

The figure 2 elaborates the placement of the news items relating to the coverage of the issue of the Indo-Pak relations. Here, it seems a great similarity in the coverage patterns of the two newspapers. The Dawn and the Jang published 14 and 18 percent news items about the issue on their front page upper half and 14 and 17 percent news about the issue on the lower half part of their front pages respectively.

Figure 2: Placement of the news stories on the issue of Indo-Pak relations



The Dawn published 47 percent news stories about the issue of the Indo-Pak relations on the upper half portion of its back page while the Jang donated 45 percent space of the total coverage of the issue on the same position. There is only a slight difference in the coverage pattern on the lower half portion of the back page where the Dawn published 25 percent news items about the issue while the Jang published 20 percent news on the issue under study.

In other words, the Dawn published 28 percent news items about the issue on its front page and 72 percent items on the back page while the Jang published 35 percent news stories on its front page and 65 percent news items on its back page about the issue of the Indo-Pak relations.

Public Opinion about the Issue of Indo-Pak Relations

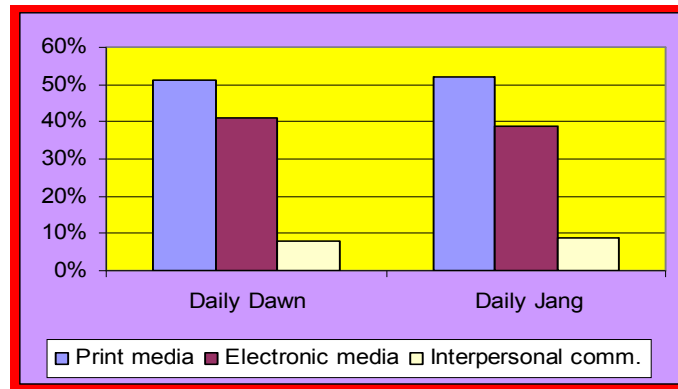
A great similarity can be seen among the readers of the two newspapers. Fifty two percent readers of the Dawn and 54 percent readers of the Jang were found in favor of the Indo-Pak relations while 27 percent readers of Dawn and 35 percent readers of Jang were found as against the bilateral relations. They might have a number of reservations in this regard. Twenty one percent readers of

the Dawn and eleven percent readers of the Jang were found unclear about the issue of the Indo-Pak relations. These results strongly correlate with the results of the content analysis of the slant about this issue which supports the hypothesis of this study. During the survey, some of the respondents suggested that we should develop good relations with India but with certain conditions including the solution of the Kashmir issue.

Source of Information for the Newspaper Readers

During the survey of the newspaper readers, the respondents were asked about the most important source of information about the issue of the study. The majority of the readers of both of the newspapers termed the print media as the major source of information for their information about the issue of the Indo-Pak relations. 51 percent readers of the Dawn and 52 percent readers of the Jang stated the print media as the most important source of communication. However, 41 percent readers of the Dawn and 39 percent readers of the Jang reported electronic media as the most important source of information. Some eight percent readers of the Dawn and nine percent readers of the Jang informed that the interpersonal communication was the major source of information for them regarding the issue of the Indo-Pak relations.

Figure 3: Source of Information for the newspaper readers about the issue of Indo-Pak relations



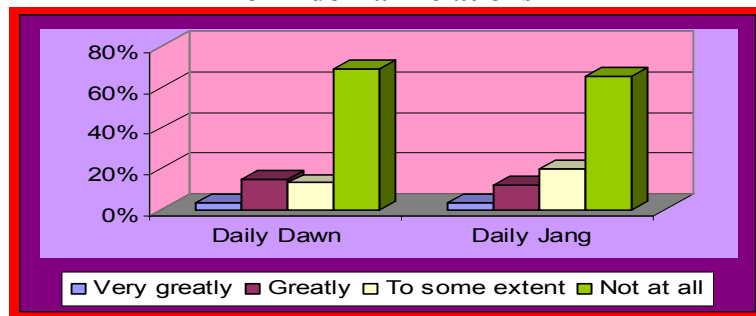
It is clear that there is a minor difference between the print and the electronic media as the most important source of

information about the issue of the Indo-Pak relations. The figure 3 elaborates the responses of the respondents regarding their source of information about the issue of the Indo-Pak relations.

Discussion with Family and Friends regarding the Issue of Indo-Pak Relations

One of the important things about this study is that the survey of the newspaper readers was conducted in May 2008, almost six months before the incident of the Mumbai attacks. Therefore the results about the component of discussion with other people may be greatly different from today's situation. However, at the time of the survey research, the majority of the respondents said that they did not discuss the issue of the Indo-Pak relations with their friends, family members and colleagues. As the figure 4 elaborates, 69 percent readers of the Dawn and 65 percent readers of the Jang stated that they did not discuss this issue at all with their friends, family members and colleagues. However, 13 percent readers of the earlier newspaper and 20 percent readers of the later one said that they discussed this issue with these people to some extent. Fifteen percent readers of the Dawn and 12 percent readers of the Jang stated that they discuss this issue greatly and only three percent readers of the both newspapers said that they discuss the issue of the Indo-Pak relations very greatly with their friends, family members and colleagues.

Figure 4: Discussion with family and friends regarding the issue of Indo-Pak relations



The issue of the Indo-Pak relations has become a hot issue of discussion after the Mumbai attacks and now the it has become the

issue of the most widely discussion among the people of the country. It may be due to danger of a possible atomic war between the two countries.

Conclusion

The Pakistani nation and the Pakistani media are struggling for good bilateral relations with India on equality basis only to establish peace and stability in the South Asian region. Although the Indian media has continuously been engaged in anti-Pakistan activities, the Pakistani media has not left its mission to promote bilateral relations. Although most of the Pakistani public has strong reservations about India, even then their majority is in favor of the Indo-Pak relations. No doubt the event of the Mumbai attacks was a great tragedy for India, but it was also a threat for the bilateral relations. The biggest causality of the atrocity was the peace process between India and Pakistan. War is not a solution to the problem. The solution lies in some kind of sincere efforts from both sides to resolve the disputes. One thing is clear that the stability and peace in the South Asian region will play an important role in establishing peace and stability in the world and the war between the two countries will lead the world to a very big disaster.

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TOWARDS HARMONIZATION OF PAK-IRAN RELATIONSHIP

Dr. Raja Muhammad Khan

Abstract

(Strapped in a historical correlation, Pakistan and Iran not only share geography and religion, but culture and civilization as well. For centuries, the area now constituting Pakistan remained the hub of the Indo-Persian civilization that produced remarkable works of art, poetry, literature and great intellect. After the creation of Pakistan, the natural affinity and closeness shared by these two neighbours was enhanced further and mutual ties of both flourished to the paramount level. For the last two decades, owing to some minor irritants, the two countries have been unable to take full advantage of available opportunities to bolster the Tehran-Islamabad relationship. Apart from the enormity of differences between two brotherly Muslim Countries, external powers and non-state actors have played a very significant role in undermining their ties. Nevertheless, notwithstanding these setbacks, there is a way forward to consolidate and revitalize their relations. Through an in-depth analysis, a sustained long-term strategy has been worked out to strengthen confidence between Pakistan and Iran with an aim to resolve their bilateral issues. This will result in further enhancing regional integration and developing a better understanding between the two states. The strategy, if espoused by both countries in letter and spirit as a guideline, may prove as a catalyst in minimizing trust deficit between two Muslim nations.)

Introduction

Besides being a neighbour, Iran is the only country with which Pakistan has “had age-old relations, based on cultural, ethnic, and spiritual links”¹. Pakistan shares over 900 kilometres of border with Iran. Traditionally Pakistani frontiers with Iran have always been peaceful, safe and secure. Both countries are bound by a strapping relationship and Iran was the first country which recognized Pakistan upon its emergence as an independent country

in August 1947. Indeed, there have been historical linkages between the people of Pakistan (then India) and Iranian people². Iranian migrants and Islamic preachers had left long lasting impression on the people and civilization of Indian Sub-continent.

The Muslim Sultanate of Delhi introduced the Persian influence in the subcontinent in 13th Century. This Persian cultural influence remained dominant till the end of Mughal Empire in India and thereafter, it gradually declined. Apart from Delhi, two additional Persian cultural centres were established at Lahore and Uchh in the initial days of Islamic history. Under the Mughals, the Persian language was adopted as an official language. The language was later adopted by the smaller and successor states of the Mughal Empires. The language and culture remained popular in subcontinent until late 19th Century³.

Since Iran had its security concerns arising from the expansionist designs of former Soviet Union and an uneasy relationship with Arab World, therefore, emergence of a non-Arab Muslim country (Pakistan) in its neighbourhood provided it respite and reinforced its security. Whereas, Pakistan, otherwise agonized over by Indian aggression and hostile Afghanistan, took Iran as its strategic partner and Iranian soil as its strategic depth. Iran, indeed demonstrated this by providing all out assistance to Pakistan during 1965 and 1971 Indo-Pak wars. First Pakistani Premier Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan visited Iran in 1949 and Iranian Shah reciprocated in 1950, as the first foreign head of state.⁴ Pakistan's national anthem was played for the first time on the eve of the visit of Shanshah-i-Iran, Mr. Raza Shah Phelvi in March 1950⁵. In a way there came to exist a relationship of interdependence between both brotherly Islamic countries right from the inception of Pakistan. Thereafter both countries maintained their bilateral relationship in an atmosphere of Islamic brotherhood and as good neighbours, with mutual acceptability.

Along with Turkey, Pakistan and Iran established Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD), an inter-governmental organization for socio-economic development in the member countries in 1964⁶. The organization was renamed as Economic

Cooperation Organization (ECO) in 1985 and its membership increased to ten in early 1990s with the integration of Central Asian States and Afghanistan. Following the Islamic revolution in Iran⁷ in 1979, Pakistan was the first country, which recognized Revolutionary Iranian Government. Besides sending a high-level delegation under Foreign Minister, the then President, General Zia ul Haq himself, visited Iran as a good will gesture in 1980 and 1981⁸.

During Iran-Iraq war, Pakistan made hectic efforts to negotiate a deal between the two Islamic countries to end the war. Pakistan also made its utmost efforts for the normalization of relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries.⁹ Moreover, Pakistan persuaded the United States away from a hostile stance on the issue of its hostages. Unfortunately, both countries developed minor divergences over the interim setup in Afghanistan upon withdrawal of Soviet Union and later on the issue of the support to Taliban by Pakistan and Northern Alliance by Iran. Considering these differences, Iran did not support Pakistan on the issue of Kashmir, once the latter was presenting a resolution in United Nations on Human Rights violations in Kashmir in 1996. It was a serious setback to Pakistani efforts and India which had already developed its relations with Iran, got an opportunity “to fish in troubled waters,”¹⁰ for its own strategic interests.

Pakistan however continued maintaining its brotherly relations with Iran and, on a number of occasions, pushed it towards reconciliation and shunning differences. Pakistan whole-heartedly supported Iranian viewpoint on the issue of its nuclear programme and maintained that Iran has the right to develop its nuclear programme within the ambit of Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Through a progressive reconciliation and chaotic diplomacy, both countries come closer to each other in last few years. Unfortunately, on October 18, 2009, a suicide attack, allegedly of Jundallah militant group, killed over forty people in Sistan-o-Balochistan. Those killed include senior commanders of Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) and tribal elders of the Province. The people and the Government of Pakistan strongly condemned the attack and shared the grief and sorrow of the Iranian

people over the massive loss of innocent lives. Regretfully, immediately after the terrorist attack, a circle of Iranian high-ranking officials and leaders pointed fingers at Pakistan. Pakistan Government however strongly negated its involvement in the attack and assured Iran for its all out support to trace and punish all those responsible for the attack if they were found on Pakistani soil. After clearing the doubts, both brotherly countries have resumed progression in their relationship and have finalized a number of bi-lateral deals including Iran-Pakistan Gas Pipeline of \$7.5 billion, signed on May 28, 2010¹¹.

Fissures in Pak-Iran Relationship: Whom to blame?

In the initial years of Russian invasion in Afghanistan, 3.3 million Afghan refugees crossed over to Pakistani territory. Iran, however, hosted two million refugees. By 2002, the number of these refugees in Pakistan increased to five million¹². Still there live over 2.5 million Afghan refugees in various parts of Pakistan. Because of their traditional linkages, both countries tried to secure their interests in the post war Afghanistan during the closing days of the Russian withdrawal¹³. Since Pakistan played a major role during the conflict and in the eviction of Soviet Union, therefore, it had more influence over the Afghan warring factions. Moreover, Pakistan also played a major role in the interim setup of Afghanistan in 1990; therefore, Iran felt that perhaps, its interests had not been addressed with the appropriate consideration. Later Pakistan's support and recognition of Taliban Government and Iranian support to Northern Alliance¹⁴ has further deteriorated the bi-lateral relationship.

Nonetheless, it is a reality that the chill in the Pak-Iran relationship had its origin in Afghanistan, mainly because of inability of both to accommodate each other's interests. It was expected that following the US invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, which resulted in a momentary retreat of the Taliban, Iran and Pakistan would put aside their decade-old frosty relations for working together "to accommodate each other's strategic and economic interests in Afghanistan."¹⁵ Unfortunately, this did not happen. In the words of Sartaj Aziz, the former Pakistani Foreign Minister, "In the future shaping of things in Afghanistan, both

countries do not have much role to play. Pakistan has been saying repeatedly that it is for the Afghans to decide about their future. So now the environment is conducive to enhance economic and commercial cooperation.”¹⁶ Since Afghanistan became the cause for the gash in Pak-Iran relations, therefore, it should now become a factor for their convergence.

Prevailing Security Environment in Southwest Asia

Traditionally, Pakistan has always been worried about the security of its eastern borders with India. However, it was only after 2001, that an equal threat was perceived from the western borders with Afghanistan. Nevertheless, Pakistani frontiers with Iran are still considered to be peaceful. Indeed, with the passage of time, the security concerns of Southwest Asian countries have become extremely complicated. Since October 2001, Afghanistan is under foreign occupation in the garb of so-called global war on terror. The ill-fated country otherwise had a dreadful past of Soviet invasion and civil war since late 1970s. Security and stability in Afghanistan is indeed a linchpin in the security of Iran and Pakistan¹⁷. Owing to the presence of foreign forces in the region, Iran’s security concerns are primarily towards Gulf region and West Asia, with secondary threats from its north and east. Apart from intense terrorization, Pakistan is facing from within; it is managing security challenges on its eastern as well as western borders simultaneously. However, any development either from the Persian Gulf or from the Southwest Asia would seriously affect the security situation of Iran and Pakistan alike.

Vicissitudes in Pak-Iran Relations: The Current Phase

Following the unfortunate incident of a terrorist attack on IRGC by Jundollah outfit, President Asif Ali Zardari assured President Ahmadinejad that Government of Pakistan would provide all out assistance in arresting all those responsible for the attack if they are found on Pakistani soil. President Zardari declared the incident as, “gruesome and barbaric and bore the signatures of a cowardly enemy on the run”¹⁸. He said Pakistan would continue to support and cooperate with Iran in curbing militancy and fighting

extremism and terrorism. President Ahmedinijad though remained guarded in his statements about the carnage, however, Iranian Foreign Minister without naming the group responsible for the attack said, “They cross into Iran illegally. They are based in Pakistan ---and the hands of those behind the crimes in southeast Iran must be cut.”¹⁹

Following the attack, Iranian Interior Minister Mr Mostafa Mohammad Najjar, visited Pakistan, where he was clearly told that Pakistan would never think of aiming such attacks against the territorial integrity of its traditional friend and that Abdolmalak Rigi, the head of militant outfit Jundullah, was not in Pakistan. Upon developing the consensus, both countries have inked a number of agreements to strengthen the security on both sides of the Pak-Iran border. The Foreign Office spokesperson of Pakistan, Mr. Abdul Basit later clarified that this attack was primarily aimed to damage the relations between two brotherly Muslim countries of the Southwest Asia. He said, “There are forces which are out to spoil our relations with Iran. But our ties are strong enough to counter these machinations.”²⁰ While dismissing the charges that Pakistan was being used as a springboard by Jundullah to launch attacks inside Iran, the spokesperson said; “There is no question given the excellent relations between us, that Pakistani territory be allowed to be used for terrorist act against Iran.”²¹ Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi, while further elucidating the Pakistani position assured Iran that, “We have a good relationship with Iran and are committed in the fight against extremists. Why would we do anything that would damage and jeopardize our relationship?”²²

A few months prior to this deadly attack, Pakistan had handed over six militants including Hamid Rigi, brother of Abdolmalak Rigi, the head of Jundullah militant outfit. This Pakistani gesture was an ample evidence of its sincerity towards Iran. Otherwise, how could Pakistan support such outfits to destabilize Iran, once it is already in the grip of terrorism and militancy from all sides? This is believed to be the same terrorist organization that has killed many in Pakistan, including an attack on the motorcade of the former Corps Commander Karachi, who escaped the attack, while many others died. Moreover, Pakistan

cannot afford to destabilize its only safe and secure border running with Iran. Another consideration is that over the last few years, both countries have been hectically working for a gas pipeline, which was initially scheduled to run from Iran to India via Pakistan. The region of Jundullah attack and such terrorist acts might have been an attempt to impair the project that Pakistan can ill afford. In February 2010, the head of the Jundullah outfit, Abdolmalik Regi was arrested while en-route from Dubai to Kyrgyzstan.²³ It is heavily conjectured that he was arrested by Iran on the toe of Pakistani intelligence agencies or else arrested by Pakistani intelligence setup in Dubai and handed over to Iran. On June 20, 2010, he was hanged in Iran²⁴, after Iranian court declared him guilty of being involved in many criminal cases in Iran. His brother and some arrested militants of his outfit were also given death penalties by Iran.

Genesis of Jundollah and Implications on Pakistan-Iran relations

Both Iran and Pakistan view Jundollah as a terrorist organization. This outfit is officially banned in Pakistan. It originated in Sistan-o-Baluchistan but later stretched its network to the borders of Pakistani Balochistan and other cities. This militant outfit is fighting for the “greater autonomy for Baluchis in Iran and Pakistan.”²⁵ Iran strongly feels that the militant outfit was raised and is being funded by United States and Britain with the mandate to create internal split in Iran²⁶. This organization has so far claimed eight attacks in Iran, killing over 100 innocent people²⁷. It also carried out a number of attacks in Pakistan, including murder attempts on former President Musharraf, ex Corps Commander Karachi and recent attacks on the Shiite processions in Karachi, killing dozens of followers of Hazrat Imam Hussain. Regarding the October 18, 2009, attack of this militant group, Mr. Mohammad Ali Jafari, the Commander-in-Chief of the IRGC, said, “Behind this scene are the American and British intelligence apparatus, and there will have to be retaliatory measures to punish them”.²⁸ Another commander of the Guard said that; “The base of the terrorists and rebels has not been in Iran. They are trained by America and Britain in some of the neighboring countries.”²⁹

Nevertheless, the head of this militant outfit, Abdulmalick Rigi, before his arrest and death penalty by Iran, had categorically said that, “he considered himself an Iranian and the Baloch grievances must be settled within the present day Iran.”³⁰ He explicitly clarified his grievances and objectives of his outfit with Rooz News agency of Iran. Indeed this terrorist outfit has an indigenous Iranian origin and later stretched its activities into various parts of Pakistan too. It is just like Taliban, who had their origin in Afghanistan in early 1990s and post US invasion, made their way to the Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan in 2002/3. Thereafter in the form of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), as the terrorists renamed themselves in 2007, they are playing havoc in various parts of Pakistan under the direction of spying networks of various extra-regional countries.

The organization indeed comprises of locals of the Sistan-o-Balochistan who considered that Iranian Government has ignored them in every sphere of life. Guised in the Sunni sectarian group, the organization indeed has elements that are professional criminals and are part of drug barons having strong linkages with foreign intelligence agencies. As per an Iranian intelligence officer, the people of the drug baron had even offered Iran with \$1billion annually³¹ if unhindered flow of the drug and narcotics is allowed to pass through Iranian borders.

Pertaining to overcoming the domestic problems in Sistan-o-Balochistan, the province “poses a set of historical and strategic challenges that the IRGC - despite its best efforts - is unlikely to be able to overcome on its own. The province has been a headache for the modern Iranian nation-state for the past century and any multi-faceted strategic response must take stock of this troubled historical heritage.”³² Moreover, the border stretch of over 900 kilometers between Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan is a rough terrain, making patrolling and surveillance extremely difficult.

Drugs and weapons smugglers are quite rottenly using this stretch. Because of the inhospitable terrain, Pakistani border guards might not have been able to monitor the activities of this terrorist outfit, which probably provided Iran the excuse of pointing fingers

on Pakistan. But whether Iranian border guards and highly trained troops of IRGC succeed in monitoring and bringing an end to the activities of Jundollah militants within Iran is a big question mark. After all, they must have crossed through them to reach inside Iran for undertaking this terrorist act. There are all the likely chances that someone from within could have known about the schedule of meeting on the fateful day of October 18, 2009. Otherwise, there are remote chances that someone had moved all the way from Pakistani soil to Zahedan.

IRGC as the Main Target of Jundollah

So far, most of the Jundollah attacks have targeted IRGC. In fact, over the years, because of the continuous disturbances in the province, Iranian Government has almost handed over the security of the province to IRGC which in turn has imposed strict security measures there. In some cases there are reports that the operatives of the group have been pushed up to the borders of Pakistan and Afghanistan, from where they then carry out their terrorist activities all along the border and inside Iran especially targeting IRGC. There is no permanent stay of the Jundollah terrorists in the bordering areas, rather they follow the policy of hit and run. A dozen soldiers of IRGC even tried to find and reach the so-called bases of the Jundollah in November 2009, under the guise of hot pursuit, but were caught up by Pakistani guards on their way back. They however, could not find any such base in Pakistan.

It is pertinent to highlight that apart from 350,000 regular Iranian Army, the IRGC comprises of 125,000 all ranks.³³ It was established in 1979 and has components of all three services; Army, Navy and Air Force. It has played a very significant role in the development of Iran's advance missile system, Shahab-3 with a range of 2,000 km³⁴. Initially, its mandate was restricted to domestic security under the direct control of Supreme leader, but later its mandate was extended to external security duties as well. It contributed substantially during the eight year long Iran-Iraq war from 1980 to 1988. It is widely believed that IRGC has a major role in the development and safety and security of Iran's nuclear programme.

Other Contributing Factors in the Destabilization of Pak-Iran Relations

Obstinate Roles of Extra Regional Forces. Apart from the aforementioned security scenario, there is yet another dimension of the relationship of the Southwest Asian countries, seriously impeding their bilateral relations. This particular aspect deals with their relationships with extra regional countries, who indeed ‘are not friends of friends,’ thus do not enjoy similar relations with all other countries of the region. These alliances indeed have been the main sources of deformation in the bi-lateral relationship of Southwest Asian countries. As an example; the closer partnership and strategic nature of Indo-Iran alliance³⁵ does not sound well for Pakistan and over the period has taken the form of an irritant in the Pak-Iran relationship. Indo-Iran relationship indeed started developing after 1971 and reached to excellence in early 1990s³⁶. In fact, India never missed a chance to harm Pakistan in the region as well as at the global level.

Throughout its post independence history, India has created numerous problems for Pakistan, which include; its internal destabilization as well as external threats to the extent of Pakistan’s disintegration. The ever-growing Indo-Iran relationship over the last two decades has undermined the Pakistani position in the region. On January 25, 2003, on the eve of Iranian President Mohammad Khatami’s visit to India, both countries signed “The New Delhi Declaration”³⁷ which states that “the two sides recognize that their growing strategic convergence needs to be underpinned with a strong economic relationship. Cooperation in the energy sector was identified as a strategic area of their future relationship in which interests of India and Iran complement each other. India and Iran also agreed to explore opportunities for cooperation in defense in agreed areas, including training and exchange of visit.”³⁸

Iran’s tacit support of Indian role in Afghanistan also creates angst in Pakistan. Indeed, while being in Afghanistan, India is abetting the elements creating internal instability in Pakistan. India has unyielding plans to create a situation in the Balochistan province similar to that in East Pakistan by supporting the sub-nationalists

and anti-Pakistan elements, nurtured under its intelligence agency since many years. Nonetheless, these sub-nationalists are quite few, but they force their way by pushing the poor of the area to take up arms to challenge the writ of the state, while themselves remaining under Indian shelters, outside Pakistan. Indian consulate in Zahiadan is said to sponsor the sub-nationalist network operative in Balochistan³⁹. There have been reports where even Rigi's network had been found getting funds from the Indian spying elements active in the Sistan-o-Baluchistan⁴⁰. It suits India (whose motive is to work against Pakistani interests anyhow) that the basic aim of this group is to create a rift between Pakistan and Iran. Therefore, Iran should be mindful of Indian motives, which are cloaked in the garb of friendship.

Apart from causing the Baloch turbulence, Indian spying network is sponsoring militancy and terrorism in FATA, NWFP and other areas of Pakistan. A number of the militants arrested for their involvement in the bomb blasts, attacks on security forces and other sensitive installations and public places have confirmed their connections with Indian spying network, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW)⁴¹. There is solid evidence about huge inflow of financial capital and latest Indian weaponry for the use of terrorists operating against Pakistan under the guise of Islam. Pakistani Prime Minister, Yousaf Raza Gillani has handed over the proofs of these Indian activities to his counter-part during Sharm el-Sheikh Meeting in July 2009, on the sidelines of NAM conference⁴². It was based on this evidence that India got ready to delink the terrorism from the Indo-Pak dialogue process.⁴³ Indeed, over the years, Pakistan has been critically viewing the Indo-Iran alliance, because it feels that behind the scene India is playing a dangerous game of blemishing the Pak-Iran relationship.

Another irritant in the bilateral relationship of Pakistan and Iran has been the former's closeness with United States. Although both Pakistan and Iran have been the allies of U.S until Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979, however, in the post revolution era, there erupted a tension in the bilateral relationship of Iran and US. Pakistan, however maintained its essential relevance for the US, initially because of the Russian invasion in Afghanistan and

subsequently owing to the ongoing global war on terror. The prolonged Pak-US partnership has become an irritant for Iran. Besides, Pakistan's relations with Arab World, particularly Saudi Arabia, and the chill in Iran's relationship with Gulf countries also had an undesired and negative impact on Pak-Iran relationship. Iran however, should have realized that Pakistan's relationship with US, Arab World or Saudi Arabia, has been a stabilizing factor for Iran. In 1980s, owing to a chill in US-Iran relationship, Pakistan was persuaded the western world to support them against Iran. Nevertheless, then President General Zia ul Haq strongly refuted the plan, at the cost of spoiling its strategic partnership with US and western world for which Pakistan had to pay in the form of repeated economic and military sanctions as well as denial of market access until 2002.

During the recent Iran-US nuclear standoff, Pakistan supported the Iranian stance and clearly told US that it will neither allow its territory to be used against Iran nor would it support any action against it. On the other hand, its strategic ally, India has voted against Iran in the Security Council on the nuclear issue, which paved the way for imposition of additional sanctions on Iran in 2008-2010. In order to espouse its strategic partnership with US, India has decided not to become part of IPI gas pipeline. Conversely, Pakistan adopted a clear policy of providing all out support for having a peaceful nuclear programme by Iran and at the global level stressed for the peaceful resolution of Iran's nuclear crisis, as per the provisions of NPT.

The Ethnic and Sectarian Factor

Historically, neither Iran nor Pakistan has ever posed a security threat to each other. The configuration of Iranian population is as such that over 50% people are Persian and remaining includes; ethnic Balochis of Sistan-o-Balochistan and Arabs of Khuzestan, located in the southwest of Iran, bordering Basra Province of Iraq⁴⁴. According to Mustafa El Labbad, Director of the Cairo based research institute; "With regards to Sistan-Baluchistan area, there is an ethnic and sectarian nature to the issue, ----there is the Baluchi versus Persian, and there is Sunni versus Shiite."⁴⁵ In such a

polarized society, there is always a possibility of ethnic or sectarian violence, similar to Jundallah attacks. In the October 2009 attack, Jundalloh killed over thirty Sunni tribal chiefs' along with the personnel of IRGC for having negotiations with Iranian authorities. The militant outfit was apprehensive of the Iranian authority's strategy for a possible "plotting 'to sow divisions among Baloch tribes and clans.'"⁴⁶ In this context, the group though veiled in sectarian dress, but in reality, has ethnic grievances against the Government in Tehran. In all eventualities, Pakistan cannot possibly shore up any ethnic or sectarian divide in Iran, especially when it is fully aware of the consequences of such actions. Pakistan, in the past, has faced and is still encountering security and political crises in Balochistan and in other parts of the country as well as a consequence of the spill-over effects of Taliban insurgency. Therefore, common enemies of Iran and Pakistan may have agendas to exploit the volatile situation to their advantage.

The Gulf between People and Governments

For an astute dealing with the issues like Jundullah attacks in Iranian territory, or the anti-state activities of sub-nationalists in Pakistan, authorities of both countries must realize that, "If the Balochs were taken on board in the first place, possibility of infiltrating the harsh terrain of Balochistan by foreign actors would have been a much difficult, if not impossible, a task."⁴⁷ Hence, accommodation of all political, ethnic, and religious forces active in the politics of Baluchistan is mandatory to ensure stability in the region. This would, inevitably, stabilize affected areas of both Balochistans. Like Iranian Balochistan, over past few years, there has been a widening of the gulf between the successive Federal Governments and the people of Baluchistan in Pakistan. Adequate preference has not been provided to social development, political participations, and poverty alleviation of the people of Baluchistan. Provincial governments and provincial representatives in the federal governments were mostly feudal who preferred their personnel interests rather than the social and economic uplift of the people of Balochistan. These biases subsequently gave way to deprivations, which were effectively cashed by handful self-centric sub-nationalist sardars on the provocation of the foreign spying networks.

Exploitation of Masses

These poverty ridden people over the years felt deprived and became an easy target available to be exploited, either by the foreign powers through their intelligence apparatus, or by some of the local Sardars, who otherwise had historical connections with outside powers since the colonial rule in the region. Quite a few of those Sardars were even enjoying the status of the heads of autonomous princely states, therefore had the anguish of losing the power to a central authority. There have been similar problems in the Sistan-o-Balochistan of Iran. Being outlying and tribal society by nature, Iranian Government like Pakistan could not pay worthwhile attention for the improvement of the living standard of the people of Sistan-o-Balochistan. Hence, both provinces; Pakistani and Iranian Balochistans are sparsely populated with poor infrastructure and vast inhospitable areas, difficult to be maintained without keen interest by the local representatives.

In spite of being the subjects of two sovereign states, the masses of both provinces still maintain their historical linkages and therefore share their common distresses⁴⁸. Over the years, both have become conscious of the fact that they are being exploited, and no serious efforts have been made by either government to improve their living standard through the development of the area. The unremitting sentiments of deprivation led them to be used by sub-nationalists, whose real agendas were anything but not the local development and uplifting of the Baloch masses. Similarly, the religious organization like Jundallah, who indeed maintained its connection with international spying agencies, is being used for numerous purposes like; creating a rift between Iran and Pakistan, domestic destabilization of Iran and finally harvesting ground for the unification of both provinces as an independent state of Balochistan. Some of the think tanks and strategic analysts of United States⁴⁹ have already envisaged such a scenario, and the Indian spying agency along with its partners is on its way to pave way for the implementation of that planning.

Isolation and Alienation in Nobody's Interest

The question arises that for how long non-state actors and extra-regional powers, particularly those who have been friends to none but portraying as such, would drive Pak-Iran relations. At the governmental level, why cannot the wisdom prevail and both countries reconcile the bad patch in their mutual relationship for taking a fresh and more promising start. It is pertinent to mention, that at the level of the people, there have been no differences at all. Rather, the less-warmth in their bilateral relationship at the level of governments, have been taken unenthusiastically by the masses on both sides, who because of religious and cultural affinities desire an easy access to either country.

Indeed, with the post-Taliban Government in Afghanistan, there is hardly any basis left for maintaining animosity between Pakistan and Iran for any long. NATO and U.S forces are pursuing their interests and they have taken along India, a geographically non-contiguous and non-Muslim country to become their successor state, if at all they like to leave Afghanistan in a foreseeable future. Otherwise, it appears that U.S and NATO have a long-term plan to stay in the region. The situation thus calls for an enhanced level of cooperation and joint strategy between Iran and Pakistan to tackle with the challenges, rather getting embroiled into blame game without any logical conclusion.

Areas of Cooperation in Pak-Iran Relationship: Meeting Common Challenges

Indeed, the presence of NATO and United States in the region contiguous to Pakistan and Iran is not only keeping both countries under watch but is pressurizing them on various gambits. Iran is being pressurized to give up the development of its nuclear programme and anti-Israeli policy, whereas, Pakistan is being pressurized for the safety and security of its nuclear weapons from getting into the hands of the terrorists. Moreover, Pakistan is repeatedly asked to do more in the so-called global war on terror. Through a number of misleading electronic and print media reports, many misgivings have been spread against Pakistani nuclear

programme in a systematic manner. The extra regional forces, from ground as well as through U.S naval armada, are surrounding both countries. “Given the military links between the US and India, as well as the Indo-Israeli military nexus, the threat is multiplied for both Pakistan and Iran. In addition, along with the military build-up, US will also try to re-assert its economic interests in the region, especially in the energy sector. This will also impact both Pakistan and Iran.”⁵⁰

Participation in Afghan Reconstruction.

In order to meet the common challenges, Iran and Pakistan in coordination with Karzai Government, should take active part in the re-construction of the Afghanistan and make long-term investments in various projects for the human resource development and boosting economic activity in that country. Both should assure Afghan people that they have not abandoned them and are making earnest efforts to rehabilitate them. Through a close collaboration of Afghan Government and its masses, Afghan territory should be constricted for all extra-regional forces, which in the guise of supporting the Afghan people are indeed, promoting their own long-term interests at the expense of region’s interest. In such an equation, Iran will have to say good-bye to its trailblazer ally India, and Pakistan will have to limit its ties with its seasonal friend, the United States of America.

The admirable aspects of the Pak-Iran relationship are such that, even during the period of less camaraderie of 1990s, there has never been a diplomatic impasse in their bilateral relationship. In order to perk up the old warmth in this relationship, former President General Pervaiz Musharraf visited Iran in December 1999. On that occasion, Iranian President, Mohammad Khatami, declared the relationship between the countries as, “profound and unbreakable, noting the two countries’ common cultural and Islamic foundations, -----undoubtedly, the two countries’ national interests are linked to one another and together we must strive to safeguard these interests”⁵¹. President Khatami further accentuated that both countries should be able to “neutralize divisive conspiracies”⁵² against them. Earlier in May 1998, upon Indian nuclear tests, Iran

showed its concern and President Khatami in a statement said that; “We regard your security seriously and understand your position and the position of our brother, Pakistani nation. The security of Pakistan, as a brother, friendly and neighbouring state, is crucial to us. We consider their issue to be extremely important and will stand by you.”⁵³

More so, once Pakistan conducted its nuclear tests, Iranian Foreign Minister Mr. Kamal Kharrazi was the first foreign envoy who visited and congratulated Pakistan on successful conduct of its nuclear tests on June 1, 1998. He said that “now, they (Muslims) feel confident, because a fellow Islamic nation possesses the know-how to build nuclear weapons.”⁵⁴ Mutual visits of the heads of states and high officials of both countries continued thereafter. In December 2002, Iranian President visited Pakistan and later Pakistani Premier Zafarullah Khan Jamali visited Iran in October 2003 and Finance Minister, later Prime Minister, Shoukat Aziz in 2004. More recently, President Asif Ali Zardari and Speaker of National Assembly Dr. Fahmida Mirza, have also visited Iran and both countries signed a number of agreements of the mutual understandings. President of Iran Ahmedinijad visited Pakistan in April 2008⁵⁵. Both sides reiterated that future of Pakistan and Iran is linked with each other; therefore, more cooperation is needed to boost economic and strategic relationship.

Joint Ventures in Central Asia.

Apart from Afghanistan, both countries have been pursuing their strategic interest in Central Asian region. By virtue of their membership of ECO and Islamic Character, CARs have to be supported by their nearest neighbours and they have to decide their future course of action accordingly. As Dr. Shireen M. Mazari provided an accurate spot-on analysis in the beginning of the global war on terror that, “Within this new environment, it suits both Pakistan and Iran to build a closer, strategic relationship. Given the manner in which the strategic map is currently unfolding in Afghanistan and Central Asia, there are now common issues of concern for Pakistan and Iran. The major issue is the military presence of the US and its Western allies not only in Afghanistan

but also in Central Asia. It is clear that the US bases in the latter are going to be of a permanent nature – at least for the foreseeable future. At the same time, the external presence of naval forces has also increased tremendously in the Persian Gulf region.”⁵⁶

Prospects of Revival of Pak-Iran Relations

Considering the historical references, the current situation, and the ground realities, there is no way that Pakistan and Iran would continue living in seclusion. More so, their divergences are of insignificant nature hence can be alleviated with mutual consent. Both are the prominent and leading countries of the Islamic World. Harmony and synchronization among Tehran and Islamabad would act as a bridge in bringing the dotted Muslim World together, which is the need of hour. In their bi-lateral relationship, they have to shun their minor differences, created by external forces, indeed friends to none or because of their vested interests, centred elsewhere. Adoption of a joint strategy for the security of common border, trust building, and increase in the volume of bi-lateral trade through economic cooperation would act as the catalyst in bringing them together. Failure to reconcile would provide space to extra regional countries and non-state actors to exploit both countries in the areas of respective weaknesses. Some recommendations are underlined below as a guideline to be followed by both countries for their better and harmonious future.

The Recommended Future Course

Following steps can help revive Pakistan-Iran relations in the right direction that would benefit both the countries politically, economically and strategically.

- **Restoration of Trust.** The most critical phase in the Pak-Iran relations is the restoration of trust, which for one reason or another has been a missing link since late 1980s. Restoration of trust is of paramount importance because the level of trust determines the perception of the two capitals about each other, and that perception works as a guideline during policy formulation stage. And for

the restoration of the trust, it is a prerequisite to respect each other's sovereignty in true sense. The recently concluded agreement on joint monitoring of the border should be implemented in true letter and spirit. There should be no recurrence of deliberate incident of border crossing by the forces of any country as a hot pursuit. To avoid the chances of illegal trade and smuggling by criminal gangs, there is a need to enhance the legal and formal trade between both countries. The enhanced volume of trade would increase the stakes and bring interdependency between both states. In this regard, perking-up the 1949, 'Treaty of Friendship to Initiate Trade Relations'⁵⁷, between both countries will be a step in the right direction.

- **Promotion of CBMs.** In spite of differing point of views of the two counties on some issues, there have been innumerable confidence-building measures (CBMs), both at the level of states and the masses. Indeed these measures did not let the derailment of the Pak-Iran relationship. Strategists in both countries acknowledge that, owing to factors like religious affinity, cultural linkages, and economic compulsions, both nations cannot afford detachment from each other. In the changed strategic environment emerging from the concentration of global players in the region, Pakistan and Iran must come closer to each other for taking a common stance on issues of strategic significance, like security that impinge both with different faces. There is a requirement that both countries should undertake steps for deeper cooperation in the field of economy and security. Signing of project like Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline in-spite of Indian refusal at the critical stage is a very welcoming one. Pakistan has also refused to accept any Western/ US pressure on the subject. Even in the event of US unilateral sanctions and a repeated number of UN imposed sanctions on Iran; Pakistan has decided to go ahead with the project.
- About Afghanistan, both countries are maintaining good relations with the government of Mr. Hamid Karzai,

who has been re-elected as President of Afghanistan. Furthermore, President Karzai, has recently initiated a reconciliation process with Taliban and would welcome the help from Pakistan and Iran at this crucial moment. Both countries also recognized that people of Afghanistan should have right to decide their future as per their own wishes. Dealing with sectarianism in Iran and Pakistan may be left at the discretion of both governments as their domestic matters. Otherwise, people of both countries have never considered inconsequential difference of opinions in religious matters as a hurdle in their bilateral relations. In all eventualities, had wisdom prevailed, the anti Muslim lobby should not have been allowed to play among the Muslims of various schools of thoughts (sects).

- **Cooperation in Defence Production.** Cooperation in the field of defence production is yet another area that can be jointly undertaken by both countries and would address the security concerns of each. This cooperation can be extended to the Gulf countries on a later stage, which would bring them closer to Iran, thus the existing differences between Iran and Gulf region would be abridged amicably. Depending upon the level of cooperation, the existing dependency on western weapon system by these countries could also be reduced in a future scenario. For the provision of technical expertise, China could also be incorporated in the joint venture of defence production as a partner.
- **Stabilization of Afghanistan.** Afghan Government and people should be taken into confidence by redressing their years old grievances with Iran and Pakistan. Through their cooperation, Iran and Pakistan must contribute in the re-construction of the war-ridden country. This step would help in stabilizing the region and minimizing the chances of sporadic violence of each other's territorial limits. Moreover, this would also keep the extra regional forces away from the region. In the reconciliation process, each state must respect the national interests without compromising the Afghan

interests. The nut results should be that; ‘diplomacy must get supremacy over the rhetoric and peace over the conflict’.

- **Cooperating Apparatus.** Think tanks, academia, and media are some useful means that can play a very positive role in bringing Iran and Pakistan closer to each other. Scholars must visit each other’s country more frequently. The existing level of people-to-people contact must be enhanced for the development of confidence among the masses. The platform of the ECO should be mobilized for the regional interaction, economic harmony, and overall prosperity of the region. Over and above, the existing low profiled security and confidence building measures need to be set off on war footings.
- **Regional Integration.** Over the years, Afghanistan has been considered as a ‘strategic rear’ both by Iran and Pakistan, which perhaps misled both in 1990s, as they were endeavouring to secure their respective interests. Now once that phase is over, there is a need to learn from the past for a positive forward-looking approach through consensus building. Under the changed global environment, there is a growing need for both countries to forget past annoyances and “forge a new long-term common vision reflecting their common security and economic interests.” The fleeting rip in the Pak-Iran relations has no sound basis, thus can be revamped through enhanced interactions at all levels including masses from both sides. Renaissance of cultural and religious affinities would go a long way.

Conclusion

The long and arduous route to defeat organized criminals, armed secessionists, political and religious extremists along Pak-Iran and Pak-Afghan borders lies in enhanced cooperation, trust building, respecting each other’s sovereignty and cooperative security measures by the Southwest Asian countries. Upon consensus building, between Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan, there would be a requirement of active lobbying for the gradual exit of

foreign forces from the region and enhanced level of understanding on the long terms basis. Since Afghanistan is under foreign occupation, therefore, there is a need that Pakistan and Iran being the sovereign states should put all their energies with positive attitude for the revival of their mutual relationship while incorporating Afghanistan by adopting a regional approach.

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**“DOING MORE TOGETHER”:
STABILIZING AFGHANISTAN AND BEYOND**

وما ارسلناك الا رحمة للعالمين

(*wa ma arsalnaka illa rahmatan lil-`alamin*):

“And We did not send you (Muhammad PBUH) except as a
Mercy to the worlds” (21:107) – Al-Anbiya

Muhammad Athar Javed

Abstract

The article focuses on the current stability strategy of the United States and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Afghanistan. The contextual character of “Do More” is linked with the US and NATO pressure on Pakistan to utilize more human and material resources to reconstruct a weak and badly governed Afghanistan. Without “Doing More Together”, it is argued, cannot serve the purpose of stabilizing Afghanistan and the wider South Asian region. From the operational perspective, it is stated that the US and NATO’s assignment to stabilize Afghanistan lacks a clear vision about the cultural knowledge of Afghanistan. Further, the character of prevailing mistrust between Pakistan, the US and the NATO demonstrates the lack of supporting Pakistan’s technological and economic advancement. The trajectory of Pakistan, the US and NATO partnership is considered crucial to establish stability in Afghanistan and beyond, but, a systematic media campaign to implicate Pakistan’s military and security institutions; is considered detrimental for a future cooperation between Western powers and Pakistan.

Objectivity

Let me begin my reflections on the subject of “Doing More Together,” with presenting a comprehensive “set of reasons”, as to why it is the imperative to work with other nations and countries to bring peace to this world. First and foremost, the Holy Quran provides a solid foundation for going beyond violence. Allah Almighty sharply Condemns aggression against fellow human

beings, and destroying life, whatever the delusive argument and rhetorical devices supporting such action may be advanced. The Quran urges to deter the wrong-doing with self-control and reconciliation.

The “togetherness,” which I intend to discuss is related to the fact that human/ideological diversity can never be ignored or stopped, and should not provoke hostility, killing or obstruct reasonable communication among fellow human beings. It is this pressing duty of tolerance toward other religions, societies, ethnic communities and countries, which demand a special attention from the most powerful to the developed nations, and from the most Islamic societies to modern religious segments in the Muslim World. The burden of history of wars, bloodshed, and the immense socioeconomic, security and political challenges enforces a sense of responsibility on the United States and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to deliver the promised gift of peace, stability, development and democracy to Afghanistan.

Introduction

To address the challenges of instability it facing, Afghanistan will need a coherent and focused plan from the United States, NATO and other regional partners. This characterizes, in particular that the states joined in NATO must remain committed to reconstruct social and political institutions there. Pressurizing only Pakistan to “Do More” will not bring the desired results of stabilizing the war-torn Afghanistan. The issues of common security can be resolved through a revised and a more Modern Security Strategy (MSS).

The most important aspect of this strategy is based on two interconnected policies: implementing the new strategic concept of NATO in the greater interest of stability, and building a long-term “Strategic Partnership” between Pakistan and the US.¹ At the core of Modern Security Strategy, there is a focus on centers of gravity, and a clear emphasis on long-term local participation in program designing and implementation of local socioeconomic agenda. This new vision will not only require huge material resources, but a “real

plan” to redress the issue of trust between Pakistan and the US, which is increasingly in short supply.

In the coming decade, the US and NATO need to develop better capabilities of Pakistan, and it seems to be the only solution to achieve the shared strategic goals. Transferring modern technologies, especially military/information technology to Pakistan. Improving operational capacity of Pakistan’s military, in order to exploit the advantages better planning and cooperation provides on the battlefield. Offering short-long term training programs to personnel of Pakistan’s armed forces by NATO member states the US, with a special focus at improving technical skills need to prosecute a campaign against the non-state actors, and militant outfits. Avoid drawing on wrong conclusions from any civilian unrest about the stability of Pakistan, (Ex. Pakistan would become a failed state etc.), rather than encourage more participation of Pakistan in wider consultations to stabilize Afghanistan.

The talk about “the long war,” and the notion that the United States and Muslims will be fighting for a century basically holds no proof, as the al-Qaeda and other terrorist networks have failed to create “confusion” between the US and the Islamic World. As usually the case, what appears permanent is only a passing phase. While the conflict in Afghanistan may end, the window of opportunity to stabilize and rebuild Afghanistan is closing.

Shifting responsibility on Pakistan to craft a stable environment in Afghanistan does not automatically give pretext to “turn the guns” on its territory. Today, the most common argument is that first Pakistan should be dealt with in terms of eliminating al-Qaeda and other terrorist networks, and then returning to establish peace in Afghanistan. Such a consideration to entrap Pakistan’s territory would not only jeopardize Pak-US Strategic Partnership, but will also directly impact the on-going peace and stability efforts.

There are strategic challenges, which both the US, NATO and Pakistan are facing. The nature of current confrontation is unique. The Pak-US alliance to stabilize Afghanistan and the region is standing at the crossroads of victory and a deep political

embarrassment. By only generating colossal documents and sophisticated language, the US and NATO cannot draw on any strategic and geopolitical perspective to elaborate on lofty objectives, rather, they must synchronize their understanding of how to stabilize Afghanistan with their strategic partner Pakistan.

Aim

The article aims at correlating the new strategic objective of NATO and the emerging patterns out of the Pak-US strategic dialogue, with a view to examine the previous failed strategies to stabilize Afghanistan, and what can be done to refrain from repeating the similar strategic miscalculations by the US, NATO and its frontline partner, Pakistan.

Impact

Without elaborating a deep insight on the social impact of radicalization and terrorism, and how media narrated the state of victim of terrorism, it would be impossible to untangle the complex question of how terrorists impact a society, which in turn undermines the peace and stability efforts in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Hence the article is divided into three unequal, but interconnected parts: Part-I deals with the stability strategy of NATO, Part-II analyses the Pak-US strategic challenges and Part-III examines the social impact of radicalization and terrorism keeping in view the role of media.

NEW STRATEGIC CONCEPT OF NATO

Stabilizing Afghanistan: Tasks and Challenges

Throughout the history of its development, NATO's political and military capabilities outgrow its old "zone of hostility". The emergence of new conflict zones, especially Afghanistan is considered necessary to create a "new" NATO. With every decade passed, a new strategic concept replaced the old one. The single most paradox of these regular changes is that NATO never provided a sustainable strategy to demonstrate a formal competence in

stabilizing and reconstructing war zones. Conversely, the report titled “NATO 2020: Assured Security: Dynamic Engagement” urges that NATO engage dynamically with countries and organizations that are outside the Euro-Atlantic region.

The proposal also urges that NATO’s enhanced mandate should include military roles, expand its boundaries of activity, changing its operational methods and functional priorities. Counterinsurgency operations (COIN), combating emerging threats such as terrorism and the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), NATO would need strength of an industrial scale to continue neutralizing Taliban, and working through to stabilize Afghanistan.

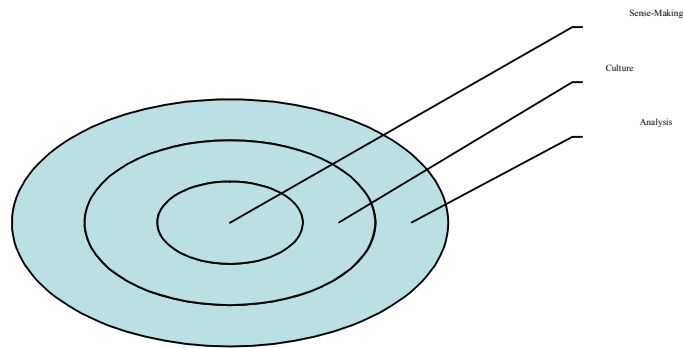
It must also be stated that NATO’s current “operational capacity” would require creating a functional government, using military capabilities to control a rugged terrain, train the Afghan police, army and judiciary, enhance anti-narcotics campaign, develop a market-structured economy and finally suppress the Taliban. Contrary to the script, the new strategic concept seeks to ensure energy security, to prevent global warming and protecting water and other natural resources. It is this lack of connection between the resume of a military alliance and international governmental/non-governmental institutions, which have raised the hopes higher.

Obviously, not achieving such high objectives in a stipulated period of time does not automatically warrant a “bad news,” the lack of integration, of these goals, however would raise serious questions. Beginning with, how NATO will protect its own members, if it is misplaced out of European boundaries, as NATO does not want a partnership with Russia. Also, it is not willing to give full membership to its chief ally, Pakistan, which ultimately limits its ability to manoeuvre under a “close-door policy,” although its venture to expand eastward have generated some temptations among former Soviet states. However, if to stabilize Afghanistan is not NATO's primary concern, then all the problems besetting the US and NATO’s capability would be a difficult scheme to share problems and concerns of the Afghan people.

Swinging the Balance: Role of Culture and Language

NATO's complex assignment is compounded with lack of knowledge about language and Afghan culture to complete the mission at hand. It also lacks a clear vision about how the NATO member states can improve the cultural and linguistic knowledge of the region, and thereby missed out on a major operational tool. In the case of Afghanistan, it has been widely believed that the knowledge of culture within the Military Intelligence (MI) organization supports the Operational Planning Process (OPP) in a complex battle space.² Traditionally, MI has been dominated by positive theories of sense-making.³ The concepts such as culture, identity and norms that have played a role in understanding international environment in which we had made security policy for over decades. Profiling personalities or governments, such as assigning them an ideological position as a radical, moderate or reformer has been used to help predict which positions are relevant. Based on those norms, predict patterns of leadership behaviour and a conclusive assessment about the future role of the respective political personality and party.

(Fig. 1) Constructive Sense-Making: Use of Cultural Intelligence



Adopting a constructive sense-making framework and assessing the cultural intelligence supports military leadership in their decision-making. By all accounts, it is not a new idea as one would like to think. It was for the most part the mainstay of the British & French Colonial Empires. From crossing into family

matters to establishing communication with powerful centres of a society, the main motto of gathering cultural intelligence has been to “learn all about Ashraf and Bedu. Get to know their families, clans and tribes, friends and enemies, wells, hills and roads.”⁴ Here a few troops could maintain a colony through the knowledge of local cultural norms and identities: “... captains, lieutenants and sergeants must perform with excellence in areas such as local politics, as well as social, education and economic development of the population”.⁵

The combination of cultural awareness and exploiting cultural intelligence is one useful way to strengthen modern security strategy. Furthermore, such capacity directly contributes to sense-making, at every level of decision-taking in any situation. It is my position that the management of uncertainty is always help searching better knowledge, which in turn provides distinct reference within the logic of strategic choice.⁶ Considering the typical case of Afghanistan, the application of this strategic choice is mainly related to the way Taliban, the US and NATO seek to propagate their vision of victory.

The use of rhetorical devices, media, cultural symbolism and other communication tools are being utilized to achieve maximum results. Taliban define victory in two different, but interconnected terms: a) based on their historical nature of fighting against the foreign occupying forces and, b) to de-legitimize the Afghan government. Conversely, NATO’s two pronged strategy is based on promoting security and development. NATO plans operations to legitimize the Afghan government. The character of both Taliban and NATO logical strategic choices reflect a gap between comprehending sufferings of the ordinary Afghan people, and their needs in terms of everyday routine.

The lack of public campaign to promote the “good” that is done by the US, NATO and Pakistan in terms of stability, has seriously damaged the “strategic thinking” of the US and NATO. Most decision-makers in the western military quarters⁷ are still not sure whether the purpose to combine military operations and development is fruitful in Afghanistan. In contrast, Taliban is out to dismantle the building structures, police and army posts, the

consequences of which are more related to morale of the Afghan and western governments, rather than to destroy the newly-built infrastructure.

On the other hand, Taliban's ability to challenge and continue to impede reconstruction programmes is an indication of their "outreach" and objective to inflict minimum damage, but at a consistent pace is a preamble of an alarming future situation in Afghanistan. It is this lack of planning and cultural misunderstanding of the US and NATO forces that swing the balance in favour of the "war-loving" forces including the al-Qaeda and foreign militant organizations.

Stabilizing Afghanistan and Changing the World

Every age has its compulsions and follies, perhaps the folly of the twenty-first century could be identified as an overstretched ambition to change the world, without even gathering a fair deal of details and understanding it first. Pursuing a deliberate strategy of social cloning of different cultural societies is one of the most unfortunate outcomes of the modern world. The lack of readiness to enter into a dialogue with those who are different and overprotected of their national and local heritage is considered a major risk and source of conflict. As earlier indicated that the Taliban are not only fighting to expel the foreign troops, but the organization is also seeking to unseat the current Afghan government. This objective in itself suggests that the opinion of a major part of population is either ignored or being selectively utilized.

The US and NATO on the other hand is convinced that the "good, bad and ugly" cannot co-exist. Hence, first we have to filter all those socio-political forces which support the current format of governance, and only then a process of reconciliation can commence. The problem with this argument is that in a complex battle-space such as Afghanistan's expanding war-dimensions will strengthen asymmetrical operational capabilities of Taliban and al-Qaeda. Since lack of sharing intelligence and slim technical and material resources that Pakistan possess cannot match high standard of the US and NATO forces, and thereby can never meet the

extraordinary demands of creating stability in Afghanistan, and guarding its own borders against internal and external enemies.

The complexity surrounding this misperception is tactically missing out the wider picture, and the long-term strategic disadvantages that would emerge in the post-Afghanistan conflict. This reflection is cemented by the argument that Afghanistan’s numerous stabilization strategies and plans have suffered deep flaws. Let me now list those reasons on the basis of which the short and long-terms plans failed to address the need of Afghan people.

Essentially, there are two sets of internal and external reasons, which is causing instability in Afghanistan:

Internal Reasons: The Lack of Performance by,

- Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS),
- Afghanistan Compact, (AC)
- Anti-Corruption Strategy, (ANCS)
- High Office of Oversight (HOO)

External Reasons

- The inward/outward movement of foreign fighters, especially from the Central Asian States and Arab countries has further inflated the issue of instability in Afghanistan. These fighters have now started crossing into Pakistan territory, doubling the difficult task of counterinsurgency campaign of Pakistan Army.
- Other militant fighters, radical Islamists, foreign nationals including the newly converted muslims from the US, Britain, France, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Australia have now become the new targets for recruitment. The respective governments however have been unable to stop the flow of funding and this new assembly line of young western radicals. Not sharing intelligence and vital information with Pakistan is another fundamental reason for failing to control the radical elements in western societies.

- The disgruntled young European Muslims are brainwashed by their local religious leaders to launch a Jihad, which they believe is aimed at protecting their Islamic cultural heritage in the US and in other western countries.
- The Indian and Bangladesh based militant organizations have long been sources of instability in Afghanistan and Pakistan, unless a comprehensive strategy to openly deal with these organizations is not forwarded, these instability factors would develop into a very dangerous threat to peace and stability efforts of the US and NATO forces. The western superpowers must give-up the fear to “offend” big Indian economic power, and admit the gripping danger of home-grown terrorism and radicalization in India.
- The menace of “Reverse Terrorism”⁸ (Ex. The former Afghan Police and members of Afghan National Army, who were underpaid and untrained, have now joined the disgruntled unemployed youth, militant outfits, and the Taliban, and are accusing the government authorities of corruption, and holding responsible the Afghan government for all the instability there.

Common Characteristics

- Most programs are based on a “wish list”, with essentially no framework of implementation,
- Less effective, less accountable, with no transparent oversight at all levels,
- Most programs relating to stability strategy are thought, planned and executed by the foreign consultants, with no or minimum local-inputs, hence;
- No local demand is applied into any planning of programs (Ex. Danish local community leaders seek to build a model “Danish City” Viborg in Helmand province, the question is how, and are there enough Danish environmental resources and cultural behaviour to establish city? The simple answer is “NO”! It is better to reconstruct what has been destroyed, because

whatever is being built in the service of foreign identity may well be destroyed in the name of protecting the Islamic-Afghan culture.

The short-supply of real strategies, especially in terms of “rethinking” the US and NATO vision is compounded by the complexity of designing a country specific” strategic policies (Ex. enhancing Indian presence in the shape of human and material resources in Afghanistan), while ignoring the security and strategic concerns of other regional states that have less-friendly relations with India

The most crucial productive measure is to avoid any strategy that might become a source of inspiration for the anti-American and anti-western powers in the South Asian region. It would be unhelpful if this section do not mention the consequences of Israel-Indian strategic partnership, which is a growing phenomenon, especially in terms of transfer of Israeli arms/missile, communication, and nuclear technology to India. This argument does not suggest that states must establish their friendly relations under dictation from neighbouring countries, rather than it underlines the negative consequences of offensive diplomatic behaviour of India.

It has long been the “cry” of ordinary Pakistanis that the Israel, India and the US are ought to destabilize, weaken, and destroy Pakistan’s socioeconomic, political and strategic fabric, and ultimately are aiming to dislodge Pakistan’s nuclear arsenals. These reflections are not merely a common man’s view or media generated fears, rather than, the most qualified, and even western-based Pakistani Diaspora have also expressed their fears about the usage of Indian “underhand strategic” tactics in weakening Pakistan may well become the “new instrument” to disintegrate Pakistan.

According to news reports, the Pakistani military have discovered a large amount of Indian-made arm cache, and telecommunication equipment that further strengthened the evidence of foreign involvement in supporting anti-stability elements. The Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, (TTP) and other militant groups certainly

cannot continue fighting Pakistani security forces until and unless they have a consistent supply of arms, money and propaganda material from unfriendly states in the region.⁹

ANALYSIS OF THE PAK-US STRATEGIC CHALLENGES

Pak-US Relations: “A Journey of Misperception and Hate”

Top Pakistani and American defence officials have completed a four-day dialogue (June 7-10, 2010) in Islamabad to boost defence cooperation. The working group is continued discussions held during the US-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue on March 24-25, 2010 in Washington D.C. These strategic talks are aimed at intensifying and expanding dialogue in the fields of defence, economy and trade, energy, security, strategic stability and non-proliferation, law enforcement and counterterrorism, science and technology, education, agriculture, water, health, communications and public diplomacy. The U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan, Anne Patterson stated that “these working groups are an important step towards broadening and deepening the comprehensive cooperation and friendship between the U.S. and Pakistan. We look forward to fostering goodwill between the people of Pakistan and the United States and working together to effectively address Pakistan’s political, economic, development and security challenges.

It is fundamentally important for the US to redress its system of relationship with Pakistan, because nearly all the past governments in Pakistan wittingly or unwittingly played on the tune of the US while the people of Pakistan hated the US. Despite this dichotomy, the US always helped Pakistan in time of need.

May it be natural calamities like earthquakes or floods, or concessions in debt servicing or getting new loans from world financial institutions, the US had always been the first to reach with material and financial help in the event of any national disaster. It also offered helping hand in getting loans from IMF/World Bank or getting the payable loans re-scheduled. Still, it remains the most hated nation by the people of Pakistan. The causes of this hatred are

not the ingratitude or ungratefulness of Pakistani people but, it is the lack of education and information reaching the common man. The Pakistani nation has been dragged into the hate syndrome, which serves the interest of a few radical leaders and fanatics.

From their childhood, a sizeable segment of Pakistani youth is taught to hate: Hate India, Hate Israel, Hate Americans, and Hate the West. Nations propagating hate cannot sustain a steady progress; rather they very soon plunge into the hate nostalgia themselves. The consequences of this “hate syndrome” are now obvious. It has become a dreadful routine that everyday people die because of a suicide/car bomb attack, widespread destruction, attacks on minorities, and always the blame is placed on “some hidden hands.” Most of it, if not all are still unproven, however, the involvement of Indian Security Service, Research and Analysis Wing, (RAW), and other foreign security services including the Israeli in these terrorist activities are not ruled out. Since Indian involvement in creating strategic confusion and mistrust between the US and Pakistan is not the subject of discussion in this paper, therefore, it precludes any further analysis and references on this matter.

Returning to the subject of “reaching back” to help Pakistan in the time of natural calamities and terrorism related issues, it is the US that always among the first to provide words of consolations and condemnation of the terrorism occur anywhere in Pakistan. Still the level of misperception is so high that nothing has changed the position of an ordinary Pakistani.

Corruption, Allegations and Inactive Policy Approach

For decades, the Pak-US relations have languished at the margins of a trust-worthy friendship. With the exception of a few years, particularly those focused on Pak-US joint venture against the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, the successive governments in both countries failed to emphasize on a long-term strategic relationship. Yet this ever widening trust deficit formed a collective route to impede the radicalization of youth living in Pakistan and in the US, and in other western countries, an objective if not accomplished, may undermine the US activism in the South Asian

region. This situation is marked by a poor and corrupt socio-political and education system in Pakistan, and a failure of the modern forces in the US to spread social understanding about the importance of its economic and military aid to the only nuclear power of Islamic world.

Whereas, the Pakistan's political and religious elites exploited emotional and unemployed youth to spread anti-American sentiments, the US policy-makers have also failed to play any noticeable role to address this "inactive" policy approach. While key security and political policy interventions presented more swiftly, in practice, the US Administration fell short of highlighting the specifics about how the US had helped Pakistan in the times of need. More importantly, how well the future US administrations intend to focus on maintaining broader objective of strategic partnership with Pakistan.

The character of such efforts could have an immediate effect on the younger generation, who by all accounts consider US economic and military aid as a mean to colonize Pakistan. In the post-9/11 world, the lack of mutual trust between the muslims in general and Pakistanis in particular has engulfed the already deteriorating relationship. The consistent US accusations that the Pakistani government is swindling and misusing the economic/military aid barely reflect any trust building scenario. It is also an irony that there have been troubling lapses in the oversight of US aid to Pakistan. By all accounts, such pre-conceived notions of mistrust only added to cause for concern, and thus stretching the surface of deeply flawed assistance program to Pakistan.

Strategic Partnership, Radicals & the US Aid

Without a doubt, it is a fact that a stable, democratic and prosperous Pakistan is not only considered vital to the US interests in South Asia, but it will also have a positive impact on the counter radicalization strategy. Considering the scope and dimension of misperception about the US financial/foreign policies, the Obama Administration stated intentions to continue pursuing close and mutually beneficial relations with Pakistan. As part of its "new

strategic partnership”, tripling US non-military aid to Pakistan, so that ordinary citizens can have a better life. This makes Pakistan among the world’s leading recipients of US aid, obtaining more than 5.3 billion US dollars in overt assistance since 2001.

Despite all the stated and existing facts about a clear picture of US aid, and its support to Pakistani military and educational institutions, the radicals has sought to direct the Pak-US relationship. Using rhetorical devices, printing anti-American handbills, distribution of propaganda CDs and DVDs, and obstructing operations of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), the radicals in fact have managed to build a “sub-state” within a state.

Of course, only appreciating what the radicals have achieved in the service of anti-Americanism will not serve the purpose of explaining consequences of misperceptions about the US aid. The poor state of public relations campaign by the previous US administrations and the persistence xenophobia and anti-Muslim sentiments in some quarters of the US administration have impeded a way forward in this long and jerky friendship.

Therefore, the current US administration needs to be sensitive to the Islamist nature of Pakistani society and their diplomatic jargon needs to be tailored accordingly, so that the radicals do not contemplate on any misunderstood expressions of the US aid (Ex. negativity about the Kerry-Lugar Bill). The language/wordings of the “aid related” drafts must not be used to communicate with the radicals; rather than its main focus should be the young Pakistanis, who are the future wealth of both countries. Contrary to the script that it is vital to openly support “secular segments” in a country where an overwhelming majority abhors them, can only lead to generate more misperceptions and ultimately exploited by radicals to hire and rent more recruits.

There has never been a consistent public acknowledgement of Pakistan’s enormous sacrifices both in terms of loss of precious lives and economic/property by the people of the US, and other western countries. The international electronic/print media have also

not been generous in appreciating the role of Pakistani military and security forces including Police, Frontier Core (FC), Rangers and intelligence services , rather than the role of media has been partial, critical and in some ways the mainstream media chose to publish reports based on the pre-conceived notions and stereotypes.

It is entirely possible that in the service of their national interests, the US and NATO forces acquire ammunition for public consumption, but, in a fair assessment, such media campaign has also been negatively impacting the Pak-US relations, and thereby prompting inconclusive results of previous Pak-US dialogues. Hopefully, the current format would exclude any such results. The history of misperception about the US aid to Pakistan follows a predictable script, but if this time around the objectives are similar to the previous one, and aid is tied to several different security imperatives, then it can become an effective tool in the hands of radicals and terrorists.

The warning signals about how such misperceptions have increased the likelihood of the Pakistani youth being caught in the “hate syndrome” is evident. The US has to choose between continuous supporting Pakistan, in order not only to stabilize Afghanistan, but also stabilize the wider South Asian region or embarrassing a wide array of radical concepts. The ensuing analysis of consequences of mistrust between the US and Pakistan show that the strategic partnership will require to balance the pendulum of power, especially vis-à-vis Indian in South Asia, and this perception must not be ignored.

SOCIAL IMPACT OF RADICALIZATION & TERRORISM: ROLE OF MEDIA

Radicalization & Terrorism

No amount of condemnation and criticism is enough when it comes to the social impact of radicalization on both Afghanistan and Pakistani societies. In the wake of September 11 attacks and subsequent events in Afghanistan and elsewhere, the world’s focus has turned to how best to tackle the increasing menace of

radicalization and its links with terrorism. This focus will fade away with time – and probably quicker than many of us believe – but for now the issue of how best to understand the state of victim of terrorism, and how to resolve the conflicts that have become source of generating acts of terrorism, is the main subject of concern.

One clear certainty at this point is that if such a situation continues for longer than it already is the social impact of radicalization and terrorism will force the respective governments to surrender to the chaos and catastrophe. The character of this claim is directly related to the quality of solutions and research presented to resolve the issues of radicalization and terrorism. In examining the quality of research and reporting, it is estimated that ‘as much as eighty-percent of the literature is not consisted of research-based in any rigorous sense, instead it is too often narrative, condemnatory, and perspective.’¹⁰

A review of post-2001 research work also found that only twenty-percent published articles on terrorism are providing substantially new knowledge on the subject.¹¹ The rest are simply reiterating and reworking old data, which in turn makes the subject of studying radicalization & terrorism, suffer from a near-chronic lack of active research. The reports such as, “The Sun in the Sky: The Relationship between Pakistan’s ISI and Afghan Insurgents,” published by London School of Economic¹², only demonstrates the scope of misapprehension and deliberate efforts to spread “strategic confusion” between the US, NATO and Pakistan, and other international partners in struggle against terrorism. In order to terminate the negative impression that this report attempted to spread, it is utterly prudent that first I refer to the first impression of the publisher of this report. The disclaimer of the publishing house states as under:

“Although every effort is made to ensure the accuracy and reliability of material published in this working paper, the Crisis States Research Centre accept no responsibility for the veracity of claims or accuracy of information provided by contributions”¹³

The character of this disclaimer shows that despite the use of enormous resources/ sophisticated language, and the pre-conceived assumptions, the publisher has refused to take the burden of truth. Remarkably instead of taking the credit of supposedly “very vital” report, the publisher did not demonstrate any appetite to verify the truth behind the so-called “semi-structured interviews.”¹⁴ In contrast to this view, probably the most informed person on the war in Afghanistan, General David Petraeus, the Commander of the United States Central Command (CENTCOM) disocunted this report, and said: “I don’t want to imply that I would accept the London School of Economics study or the individual who wrote that for them...He expressed doubts about its authenticity and noted that links between Pakistani intelligence agencies and Afghans “date back decades from when we (the United States) used the ISI to build the Mujahideen, who were used to push the Soviets out of Afghanistan...”¹⁵ His reflections brought out some of the most interesting points in relation the LSE report on the assumed links of ISI. His remarks also indicate that the report is “sloppy”, and is merely based on interviews with Afghan intelligence/ or elements hostile to Pak-Afghan strategic cooperation.

The public rejection of the report by the senior most US commander is also an indication of the fact that no amount of propaganda and rhetorical publications can undermine the Pak-US relationship. The Celandine effort to limit the operational scope of Nuclear Pakistan’s security services is counterproductive to gain success over the Afghan and foreign militants operating in the Pak-Afghan border area. Moreover, the timely statements by the Commander of CENTCOM question the validity and intentions of academic productions of this standard.

Never in the history of any national security services, has it demanded that a country in question must restructure the intelligence apparatuses according to the strategic requirement of the opponents or geopolitical goals of any superpower for that matter. The idea in itself is flawed and based on fabricated facts. Even the smallest country on this planet would seek to maintain the structure of its security services according to its internal and external security needs. Challenging or threatening to change the strategic dynamics

of armed/security forces of independent states cannot serve the purpose of establishing a real stability mechanism in South Asia.

It is then a fair assessment that at a time when there is an increasing sense of paranoia regarding the potential radicals and terrorists, there is a powerful need for balanced role of media/academia to question rightly the efforts of a respective state in terms of counter terrorism, but, ensuring the credibility of their sources, especially of those who are serving the western societies in a positive manner.

Conversely, the Western nations too have failed to contain the exaggerated reaction to the regular and mandatory Islamic practices. The new wave of anti-Islamism has seriously gripped the young Western Muslims, and thus is crafting a generation, which is trapped in a “double identity crisis. The process of racial profiling, for example raise serious questions about the future immigration policy of the US and other western nations, which in turn has created further mistrust between the native and the migrant communities.

The Pakistanis living in Denmark, Holland, Germany, United Kingdom and the US are particularly targets of stereotypes and anti-Muslim racial behaviour. The most demanding social norms is that the Muslims should clarify and defend their ideological positions, especially in the face of anti-Islamic laws and against the publishing of any offensive and insulting material about the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). Whether it is the issue of wearing a headscarf, the inter-family marriages, watching Pakistani channels on satellite-dishes, and sending children to faith schools, the Muslim Communities face a barrage of criticism about their backwardness, and being less sensitive to their western-orientation of Christian culture. In several ways, it is not justified and not justifiable that freedom-loving democratic societies and media enforce two parallel principles of freedom on one society.

Considering the level of misperception and hatred that have grown out in the post-9/11 events and wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, it is only prudent that more should be done to redress the system of

relationship between the ethnic communities and the natives of the western countries, rather than inflating the conflict to the level of social implosion, and fracturing the traditional values of tolerance in the democratic western societies. Building a confrontational baseline between the native western citizens and the migrant Muslim communities would only cast doubts over the role of US and NATO countries in stabilizing and reconstructing societies such as Afghanistan.

Most importantly, the media have not effectively curbed the rhetorical/propaganda campaign against the Muslims communities, although some if not all the families living in the western societies might have suffered at the hands of terrorist organizations. The ethnic communities living abroad and in respective Muslim societies would not demand less than a responsible media, whose duty is to combat all negative responses from terrorist and radical toward a vibrant and coherent society.

Factors Influencing Media Coverage

A variety of factors impact modern news reporting and coverage. Technological advances, demanding public and editorial convictions fundamentally have shaped the content, character and timeliness of the news-worthy event. Technology advancement has meant tighter deadlines often with less informed, unedited, and unscrutinized news reports¹⁶, The consequences of which is a fierce market competition, and turning a human and sensitive story into a dramatic and sensational news product.

The owners and editors who believe that the news must be reported regardless of its nature may be manipulated by individuals or groups intent on obtaining coverage.¹⁷ As it can be observed from the post-September 11 coverage of almost all terrorist actions and consequences that the terrorists and radical elements were allowed to manipulate major networks of the world. The terrorists would send out handbills, video/audio tapes to spread the message of hate and war against states, general public and especially the Pakistani armed/security forces.

This media manipulation of terrorist organization, especially al-Qaeda produced a countless number of miseries in Afghanistan, Pakistan and on the wider Muslim community living in other parts of the world. This has led to calls for self-restraint and for legislation to curtail reporting that might glorify the terrorist cause, disseminate terrorist propaganda or involuntarily aid operational capacity of major terrorist organizations.

There have been very severe reactions by the human rights/media freedom organizations to such measures:

- The powerful institutions (Ex. military & interior ministry) of frontline states including Pakistan were accused of undemocratic behaviour, and that the media holds the right to publish what “fits-in” in its editorial framework, although freedom comes with a responsibility, not in any other way and form.
- Journalists may well end-up taking “sides,” not in terms of an open support to terrorist organizations, but, in the service of providing “better and fast” information to the public, and thus trapping into the propaganda network of foreign and domestic terrorist organizations.
- The lack of close scrutiny and disregarding the “supreme national” security interest by some media organizations ultimately place the security organizations and ordinary citizens at a higher risk of being targeted by the terrorists. In some instances, the terminology “supreme national interest” was even ridiculed and questioned, just for the sake of opposition to Pakistani military/ISI and Military Intelligence (MI), all that was and is being carried out “just” in the name of serving the democratic/liberal norms of freedom of press.

The Responsibility of Media: Reporting Radicalization and Terrorist Acts

Controversy over the appropriate role and responsibility of the media in reporting the terrorist events is perhaps predictable¹⁸ and derives from the competing needs and perspectives of the

radicals and terrorists. Media coverage and propaganda is an essential weapon of terrorists. The radical and terrorist groups use this tool in multiple ways:

- To convey the message of violence and hate,
- To gain recognition of their causes, demands and grievances, and
- To spread fear, anxiety and generate conflict within among the different ethnic communities, minorities and undermining the socio-political harmony.

The portrayal of shocking events, the chaos that ensues, inability of authorities to prevent the act, protect the citizenry and provides security¹⁹, undermine confidence in governmental institutions and democratic ways of ruling a state.

In the past decade or so, the Pakistani government have used the media to address public concerns over the menace of terrorism and radicalization, although the sufferings of civilians kept on mounting. Still electronic media in Pakistan and other developing nations is passing under a process of maturity. On the other hand, modern societies relies heavily on broadcast and electronic media to alert and inform the public, but, in the post-Afghan and Iraq wars, the role of western media is linked with pre-conceived notions of hate and stereotypes, and thus undermining the task of educating people about the positive aspect of other religions and nations. This mechanism is vital in preparing and projecting a community and in generating an effective response to the propaganda of terrorist networks. A number of considerations are crucial to establish the patterns of this reaction.

From the perspective of journalists and the media, a free society, in part at least, the unfettered ability to report events and issues, especially those with a political message.²⁰ Censoring news about terrorism, the journalists argue, infringe on the public's right to know, potentially depriving the public information needed to assess and react to events and trends.

Two important reflections can be determined from this argument. The first aspect is related to the fact that reporting idea and encouraging discussion about different ideologues do not amount to support terrorism, provided that such discourse is not aimed at spreading message of hate and violence. The second reflection indicates that by implicitly or explicitly advocating the terrorists and radicals, the media deprives victim the right to question the pretext under which the acts of terrorism were conducted.

In the light of sufferings that victim of terrorism endures, the media can also be problematic in terms of telling and re-telling the so-called trauma story or re-reporting events relating to all forms of terrorism. In the aftermath of suicide/car bombing and other terrorism related events, it has been observed that journalists from electronic and print media can be aggressive in their attempts to photograph victims, potentially exploiting them in the process.

In terms of posting a counter response to terrorist activities, the need to demonstrate displeasure and opposition to message of violence is important. Though little noticed electronic/print media reporting, moderate Muslim activists, retired civil-military bureaucrats and youth organizations arranged peaceful rallies against the acts of terrorism and violence by the al-Qaeda and other militant outfits. From New York to London, and from Copenhagen to Amsterdam, these important bulwarks work against the spread of “hate syndrome” and militancy. More importantly, the organizers of these protests are mostly natives of respective Western countries including the US, the UK and France.

A number of moderate leaders, intellectuals, journalists and members of civil society were threatened and many of them are also being killed. Mainstream Muslims in Afghanistan, Pakistan and in the west are also victim of radicalization, although in a more subtle way, the actions rhetoric of both Islamic and neo-conservatives²¹ often produce blind, primitive responses from non-muslim communities leading to increased religious bigotry, hate and Islamomophobia.²²

The Danish Cartoon controversy (2005-2010) about the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), and its aftermath clearly reflect that the European and Scandinavian countries have become the breeding grounds for confusion and a major source for inspiring radicalization and instability in wider South Asian region. It is this link between social impact of radicalization and terrorism, which is consistently challenging the US and NATO forces in Afghanistan.

Conclusion

The most important conclusion can be drawn from the Quranic teaching of “going beyond violence.” The ensuing analyses of three interconnected parts demonstrate the complexity of stabilizing Afghanistan and beyond. This observation springs from a combination of inherent complexity of the issues and an additional complexity of intentions frequently evident in the pervasive contortion of the US and NATO policies towards the issue of wider peace in the South Asian region. Although it is difficult, and ultimately impossible, to make final conclusion about relevance of stability strategy, the core objective however is to constitute and agree on the specifics of “doing more together.”

The article concludes that the reasons behind disagreements between US and NATO position flows from insistence on Pakistan “do more,” and to strengthen Indian influence and military might against a “weak technical support system” to Pakistan (Ex. civil nuclear deal between the US and India, the consistent transfer of military and missile technology to India by Israel and Russia). The fact that none of the earlier strategies to establish peace in Afghanistan have been successful in terms of extensive use of military force evidently reveals the misperception about the new strategic concept of NATO. Hence, the conclusion is that it does not possess the capability and resources to stabilize “war zones.” The anti-war hysteria and public anger against the US and NATO countries are not merely perceptions or propaganda. These views must be counted in terms of democratic values.

Recommendations

The current state of instability in Afghanistan once again draws the only global power into a perfect storm and the Asian section is shuddered. The three unequal, but interconnected sections in this article are aimed to draw on the following recommendations:

- Tolerance and understanding of each other’s socio-political needs are the keys to “doing more together to stabilize Afghanistan. Realistically, at the moment, the US, NATO and Pakistan’s conflict with radicals appears so powerful and of such overwhelming importance that it is difficult to imagine it simply fading away. Therefore if the trajectory of the US-Pak strategic partnership remains practical, intact and of special interest for both the countries, then toward the end of this decade, the United States must be able to redress the system of relationship with the Muslim World.
- There is a great need to promote good governance and justice in Afghanistan. In order to suspend the flow of drug money to the militants, there is a great need to improve anti-narcotics measures.
- Balancing the role of regional players against Indian influence in Afghanistan (Ex. China, Iran and the Central Asian Muslim States), and assigning role to Muslim Countries in reconstruction and stability efforts, given the cultural sensitivities of primitive Islamic-tribal Afghan society
- Implementing local programs, and not failing Pahstun and “other” communities in the areas of education, small business loans and medical care. This policy will help preparing Afghanistan for better inter-tribe relations including the future relations between the former Taliban leadership. The character of such initiative must evolve a forward-looking policy of relations with Pakistan, as this planning will shape a stable environment in the post-US and NATO and South Asia.

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Notes

¹ ...the President of the United States will face a daunting set of challenges in seeking to stabilize Afghanistan and its region...It remains prime operational area for al-Qaeda; it is replete with interconnected security dilemmas, and it an area where the reputations of both the United States and NATO are squarely on the line, Maley, William: *Stabilizing Afghanistan: Threats and Challenges*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, October 2008, p.1.

² Mitchell, William, Dr., *Swinging the Tomahak – The Role of Cultural Experts in War Fighting*, Danish Military Journal, (*Militært Tidsskrift*), 138 number (årgang), Number 4 – December 2009, pp. 442-443. The author advises NATO, and works at the Royal Danish Defense College, Institute for Leadership and Organization R & D Section, C2 and Intelligence.

³ A sense-making process consists of subjective context of a given task, and the matters, which provides a theoretical foundation for our understanding of complex battle spaces that often incorporates both cognitive and physical domain.

⁴ *Ibid.* For further reference, see US Army Manual (2009), FMI 3-24.2 *Tactics in Counter Insurgency*, March 2009.

⁵ Raoul Giradet, *La Société Militaire de 1815 á nos jours*, Perrin, 1998, p. 228. For a good overview of this period, see Colonel Hennri bore, “Complex Operations in Africa”, *Military Review*, March-April 2009, pp. 65-71.

⁶ The most obvious reference to strategic choice in this paper is the way Taliban, US and NATO forces have set the “war theater.” The logic to gain more territorial and security control plays out on the parallel and conflicting goals of all the parties involved in Afghan conflict. Hence, the logic of strategic choice is particularly mentioned to define victory related claims, rather than gauging broader implications of their choices.

⁷ Author’s informal discussions with the former Director General of International Staff of NATO, General (Rtd.) Ole L. Kanborg, the subject of discussion was the role of NATO on reconstruction and military operations in Afghanistan, May 20, 2010, Copenhagen, Denmark.

⁸ “Reverse terrorism” can be defined in terms of losing control of those militant forces that in one or another form was once sponsored by a state, non-state actor, or by a collective set of countries. In the case of former Mujhaideen (some of them now Taliban leaders) in Afghanistan, the US, its Western allies, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and all those who oppose Russian invasion in Afghanistan, have supported the creation of volunteer fighters from mostly Muslim countries. At the end of this assignment, these fighters left without any further perspective, and in the wake of civil war in Afghanistan and consistent frustration, they have developed a sense of revenge towards their former sponsors. This perception in terms of reverse terrorism that we now face cannot be ignored.

⁹ For further reference, see print/ electronic media reports (September-December, 2009/January-March 2010), Daily Dawn, The News, Express News and Geo News English Urdu TV Channels.

¹⁰ Schmid, A.P. and Jongman, A.J. Political Terrorism, 2nd edition, Oxford North-Holland Publishing Company, 1988, p. 179.

¹¹ Silk, A. The Devil you know: Continuing Problems with the Research on Terrorism, Terrorism and Political Violence, 2001, 13 (4), 1-14.

¹² Waldman, Matt, “The Sun in the Sky: The Relationship between Pakistan’s ISI and Afghan Insurgents,” Crisis States Discussion papers, number 18, published by London School of Economic, June 2010, www.crisisstates.com

¹³ Ibid. cover page.

¹⁴ Ibid. p. 2

¹⁵ Gen. Petraeus Discounts London Report Tying Pakistan to Taliban, Dwan News, June 19, 2010, Internet edition, www.dawn.com.

¹⁶ Kingston, S. Terrorism, the Media and Northern Ireland Conflict, Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, Volume 18, 1995, pp. 203-231.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Elimquist, S. The Scope and Limitation of Cooperation between the media and the authorities, in Y. Alexander and R. Latter (eds.), Terrorism and the Media, Brussey’s INC.

¹⁹ Nacos, B.L. Terrorism and the Media: From Iran Hostage Crisis to the World Trade Centre Bombing, Columbia University Press, New York, 1994.

²⁰ Perl, S. Terrorism, the media and government: Perspectives, trends, and options for policymakers. CRS Issue Brief, 22 October, 1997. As viewed at www.fas.org/irp/irs/crs-terrorism.htm.

²¹ Historically, 30 years ago it meant a former liberal who became a conservative. The cliché was because “they (the neocons) were mugged by reality,” but it was because they saw the empirical failures of liberal welfare, state and foreign policies, and they were therefore less ideological than other conservatives and brought much more of a social science background to their argumentation, for further reference, see: So, what is a 'Neocon'? By Bill Steigerwald, TRIBUNE-REVIEW, May 29, 2004

²² “The report provides *prima facie* and empirical evidence to demonstrate that assailants of Muslims are invariably motivated by a negative view of Muslims they have acquired from either mainstream or extremist nationalist reports or commentaries in the media.” “Islamophobic, negative and unwarranted portrayals of Muslim London as Londonistan and Muslim Londoners as terrorists, sympathisers and subversives in sections of the media appear to provide the motivation for a significant number of anti-Muslim hate crimes.” The document – from the University of Exeter's European Muslim research centre – was written by Dr Jonathan Githens-Mazer and former special branch detective Dr Robert Lambert. For further reference, see Media and politicians ‘fuel rise in hate crimes against Muslims:’ By Vikram Dodd, January 28, 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/jan/28/hate-crimes-muslims-media-politicians>, last visited June 8, 2010