

Pakistan's Foreign Policy in Changing Regional and Global Dynamics

By Dr. Huma Baqai

Introduction:

Realism remains the foundation school of thought for any foreign policy analyst. Realists are the traditionalists in International Relations and Security Studies.¹ Thus, the core assumption of groupism, egoism and power-centrism continue to be used to justify foreign policy behavior,² which is built around national interest.

The concept of the national interest in foreign policy making became the core focus to the development of Realism in post- Second World War years and continues to dominate both the academia and governments. Morgenthau brought the concept to prominence, stating that the fundamental aim of foreign policy must be to ensure: the integrity of the nation's territory, of its political institutions and of its culture. Thus the core objective of foreign policy remains national security.

However, "National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol", authored by Arnold Wolfers, some over fifty years ago, suggested foreign policy is dictated by the national interest, more specifically by the national security interests.³ Lippmann gave a functional understanding of it as; "A nation has security when it does not have to sacrifice its legitimate interests to avoid war and is able, if challenged to maintain them by war".⁴

National security centrist approach from the realist school is rooted in the Thomas Hobbes' view of state interactions, synonymous to a state of war of all against all; thus the core objective of foreign policy is to ensure survival of the state. For the realist the basic national interest of all states is national security, where politics is for survival and not progress. Progress is important, but is not of prime importance. Applying the theories to the contemporary inter-state relations of South Asia, it is evident that all states play power politics.

¹ Peter Hough, *Understanding Global Security* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 2.

² Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield, Tim Dunne (ed.) *Foreign policy: theories, actors, cases* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 36-37

³ Arnold Wolfers, "National security_ as an Ambiguous Symbol" *Political Science Quarterly* (New York) Vol. 67, No. 4. (Dec., 1952): 481-502.

⁴Peter Hough, *Understanding Global Security* (New York, Routledge, 2004), 10.

According to Morgenthau, the lust for power results in three types of foreign policy, behaviors or thrust.

- a) Policy of the status quo
- b) Policy of imperialism
- c) Policy of prestige⁵

A similar explanation was also put forward by Arnold Wolfers (1984,106), that “differences in purpose for which power is sought... accounts for some of the great variations in the scope and intensity of the quest for influence and power.”⁶

Realist response to the criticism of its thrust is Defensive Realism, which is negotiated by state security; whereas the Offensive Realism give the justification of status quo.

The Defensive realists like Kenneth Waltz (1979) maintain that it is unwise for states to try to maximize their share of world power, because the system will punish them if they attempt to gain too much power. The pursuit of hegemony, they argue, is especially foolhardy.⁷

Whereas, the opposing voices as John Mearsheimer argues that it makes good strategic sense for states to gain as much power as possible and, if the circumstances are right, to pursue hegemony. The argument is not that conquest or domination is good in itself, but instead that having overwhelming power is the best way to ensure one’s own survival. For classical realists, power is an end in itself; for structural realists, power is a means to an end and the ultimate end is survival.⁸

Pakistan’s foreign policy is not just India-centric; it’s built on rivalry and is best explained through the laws of the most resilient rivalry in the modern world history. Stephen P. Cohen in his book “Shooting for a Century” on India and Pakistan, categorically says India-Pakistan rivalry is likely to endure for several more decades_ even to 2047, a century”.⁹ 95% of the world conflicts are resolve-able, only 5 % are not, the India-Pakistan dispute is the longest lasting in the latter group.¹⁰

Realists are great lovers of history, according to them history teaches them that war and conflict are norms in international relations. Conflict and competition may result in aggressive outlets and thus states must be ready to defend itself, assuming the structure of international politics in anarchic, where the minimum objective is a balance of power. According to Realist thinkers it’s futile even to imagine the end of this rivalry. The problem is that it’s not just a bilateral equation.

⁵ Sten Rynning and Stefano Guzzni, “Realism and Foreign Policy Analysis”, ResearchGate.

Accessed May 12, 2016.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237465426_Realism_and_Foreign_Policy_Analysis

⁶Ibid.

⁷ John J. Mearsheimer, “ Structural Realism” in Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki, and Steve Smith, eds., *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 72. Accessed May 17 , 2016. <http://mearsheimer.uchicago.edu/pdfs/StructuralRealism.pdf>

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Stephon P.Cohen, *Shooting For a Century* (India: Harper Collins, 2013), ix.

¹⁰ Peter T. Coleman, *The Five Percent: Finding Solutions to Seemingly Impossible Conflicts* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011), 4-5.

India-Pakistan rivalry has not only regional and global manifestation, it is not just about peace in South Asia, but is intrinsically linked to global struggle against terror and violent extremism that has its roots here.

Policy of Status Quo:

In his seminal work, “Politics among Nations”, Morgenthau defines the status quo as the “maintenance of the distribution of the power that exists at a particular moment in the history”. The concept of status quo derives from status quo ante bellum, “which implies a return to the distribution of power before a war.

This can be easily applied to the politics of South Asia, where the legacy of partition continues to haunt Pakistan-India relations. The study reveals that the military power equation on the Pakistan’s side is a defensive realist state, and India as an offensive realist state.

Policy of Imperialism:

Imperialism is a manifestation of the balance of power, aiming to achieve a favorable change in the status quo. The objective is enhancement of power by decreasing the strategic and political vulnerability of the nation.

In the India-Pakistan context, the most blatant form is military imperialism, conquest may not have happened because of the balance of power but the policies of proxy wars, strategies of dismemberment, promotion of insurgencies on each other’s land are all applied.

Economic and cultural imperialism are also themes that dictate the politics of South Asia, whether it is India-Pakistan relations, China’s rising economic power or US-Pakistan relations.

Policy of Prestige:

Policy of prestige is central to the argument that Morgenthau built. The prestige is perception and reputation of a nation’s power. Prestige might or might not have any connection with reality. This is how foreign observers perceive power behavior, and may be as important as power itself. It is defined as a groups sharing a certain second level belief; each member beliefs that the rest believe that a party has a certain desire-able quality.

The pursuance for prestige may be for a variety of traits, but in the India-Pakistan construct of relations, its prestige is also negative competition and conflict, it’s built around weapons, conventional and nuclear, aimed at inflicting harm and pain or at least to heighten the threat perception of the other.¹¹

Contextualizing Pakistan’s Foreign Policy:

Pakistan was named as one of the nine pivotal states whose future evolution would not only determine the fate of the South Asian region but would also effect international stability, said historian Paul Kennedy.¹²

¹¹ Barry O’Neill, “Nuclear Weapons and the Pursuit of Prestige”, Department of Political Science University of California, Los Angeles, Draft, May 2002.

Accessed May 21, 2016. <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/polisci/faculty/boneill/prestap5.pdf>

¹² Muqarrab Akbar, “Pakistan’s Foreign Policy: Internal Challenges in New Millennium,” *Berkeley Journal of Social Sciences* Vol. 1, No. 2, (Feb 2011):4.

Pivotal states are typically middle ranked countries, in which any transformation of polity or behavior could have a profound and lasting impact on their region, and possibly the wider world. As per BMI research, Pakistan is categorized as one on the basis of its strategic value, which includes its large population, its status as a Muslim state, it being a front line state in war on terror and world's sole Muslim nuclear state. The sources of instability identified for Pakistan are Political Schism, Islamist militants, adjacency to Afghanistan. The issues at stake are Power balance in South Asia., future of political Islam, nuclear proliferation and interestingly India's security.¹³

The power dynamics of the South Asian region is changing at an unprecedented pace. The emerging power and assertiveness of China is manifested in the form of its growing economic and military power, rising political influence, a distinctive diplomatic voice and increasing involvement in regional and multilateral issues.

The growing convergence between Pakistan and China and perhaps Russia and a west-ward looking India, is bringing about a paradigm shift in the politics and power equation of the region. The reactionary blooming Indo-US strategic alliance is also changing the balance of power in the region. The new found intimacy between US and India will definitely alter the Russian image of the India and will contribute to a shift in its Asian policies. To add to all this is the new Iran, economically de-strangled and displaying political pragmatism after a very long time. This becomes more significant in the backdrop of a very unstable middle east, and a conflict entangled Saudi Arabia.

Pakistan after a very long time is showing independence of foreign policy. The policy of self-abnegation is changing. Its foreign policy was always a story of constraints and compulsions, the shift is towards options and choices, because of the changing situation, it has acquired multi-dimensional strategic significance, which minimizes Pakistan's dependence of the past. The Chinese "String of Pearl" strategy and US strategy to contain China, both have Pakistan as a major player, giving Pakistan dual relevance with China. Pakistan is trying to balance its relation shifts both between Saudi Arabia and Iran, and also with China and United States. The transition is not easy, both Saudi Arabia and United States are used to, a compliant, almost subservient Pakistan. US, especially, is not looking for co-operation but submission.

The new independence of action, yet to be recognized more fully is both refreshing and challenging. Some observers may think China's One Belt-One Road initiative, in which Pakistan has emerged as a front line state, is a contributing factor. Although, it has changed the power and economic dynamics of the region, and there is no doubt that China has given Pakistan a solid commitment to bolster both its political economy as well security. This convergence was never materially possible in the past, nor was it a part of China's South Asia calculus.¹⁴

Accessed May 17, 2016. <http://berkeleyjournalofsocialsciences.com/Feb%204.pdf>

¹³ "Seven Pivotal States Facing Crucial Political Challenges In H2 2013-2014," BMIRResearch. Accessed May 22, 2016. <http://www.bmirresearch.com/news-and-views/seven-pivotal-states-facing-crucial-political-challenges-in-h2-2013-2014>

¹⁴ David Scott, "21 South Asia in China's strategic calculus".

Accessed June 30, 2016, <http://www.d-scott.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/china-southasia.pdf>

Pakistan is now cultivating the eastern bloc, it is cognizant that foreign policy decision independence is only achievable if it sustains its relation with China and consolidates them with Russia and Iran. The east ward trend in Pakistan's foreign policy should only be viewed in terms of creating options and choices. Washington and Riyadh are important countries for Pakistan and moreover one relationship should not come at the expense of the other. Pakistan is moving away from the myopic attitude of discerning the world in binaries, and is moving towards a strategy of improved relations with all its neighbours and beyond.

The country for the last two decades has been embroiled in conflicts. It had to deal with both their operational dimensions and aftermath. This continues to be the case. According to the South Asian Terrorism Portal Pakistan endured one of the heaviest tolls in the world with over 21,158 civilian fatalities between 2003 and 2016.¹⁵ Pakistan's forces have conducted 12 operations in various parts of the country since 2001 to address the situation. Terror attacks in the country have declined up to 80%, since the deadliest attack on Army Public School, Peshawar.¹⁶

The army chief has termed the year 2016 the year of annihilation of terrorists.¹⁷ In two consecutive meetings in the month of June at GHQ, one with the Formation Commanders¹⁸ and the other with the civilian leadership¹⁹, the commitment to prevent hostile intelligence agencies to foment trouble inside Pakistan and sabotage CPEC was endorsed. Furthermore, General Raheel also stated that operations against terrorists of all hue and color will continue and Pakistan wouldn't allow its land to be used for terrorist activities against its neighbours.²⁰

The foreign policy outlook of Pakistan has changed because of the emerging new realities of the region that include the shifting of the economic fulcrum from the west to the east, is perhaps a very pertinent development which has brought about a paradigm shift in Pakistan's foreign policy from geo-politics to geo-economics. To respond to the same, It is now for several years, committed to tackle terrorism and corruption at all levels, it has also displayed a genuine desire to improve relations with Afghanistan, Iran and India. The thrust is now built around its energy and economic needs, internal security and stability to change the economic landscape of the country.

¹⁵ "Fatalities in Terrorist Violence in Pakistan 2003-2016," South Asian Terrorism Portal Pakistan. Accessed May 22, 2016. <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/database/casualties.htm>

¹⁶ "Pakistan witnesses 80% decline in terror attacks", *The News*, June 8, 2016.

Accessed June 25, 2016. <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/126219-Pakistan-witnesses-80pc-decline-in-terror-attacks>

¹⁷ "Pakistan has no option but to succeed against terrorism: COAS", *Associated Press of Pakistan Corporation*, June 1, 2016. Accessed June 4, 2016. <http://www.app.com.pk/pakistan-has-no-option-but-to-succeed-against-terrorism-coas/>

¹⁸ "Gen Says ready to pay any price to turn CPEC into reality," *The News*, June 2, 2016. Accessed June 3, 2016. <http://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/124766-Gen-Raheel-says-ready-to-pay-any-price-to-turn-CPEC-into-reality>

¹⁹ "No foreign agency can foment terror in Pakistan", *The Nation*, June 8, 2016.

Accessed June 12, 2016. <http://nation.com.pk/national/08-Jun-2016/no-foreign-agency-can-foment-terror-in-pakistan>

²⁰ "Pakistan won't allow anyone to use soil against Afghanistan, expect same from Kabul: COAS", *The Nation*, July 8, 2016.

Accessed July 12, 2016. <http://nation.com.pk/national/08-Jul-2016/pakistan-won-t-allow-anyone-to-use-soil-against-afghanistan-expect-same-from-kabul-coas>

Pakistan is gradually progressing towards better regional dynamics. However, Pakistan-India relations continue to hamper progress. In fact, the recent revelation that include RAW involvement to sabotage the CPEC is indicative of Indian nefarious designs in the region. Soon after the launching of the CPEC, a special cell was established in RAW with allocation of huge sum of money amounting approx. \$300 million to scuttle this mega-project.²¹

Moreover, RAW is alleged to be in clear cut collaboration with pro-Indian Afghan Intelligence Agency (NDS) for subversive activities in Pakistan.²² There is irrefutable nexus between Raw and NDS spreading terrorism in Pakistan, their main objective is to sabotage CPEC and brew unrest in the Balochistan province, from where six NDS agents were arrested. Home Minister Sarfraz Bugti is on record stating, "RAW and NDS jointly infiltrated their agents into Pakistan, who committed target killing of innocent people, bomb blasts and other heinous crimes."²³ On the other hand, the confessional video statement of RAW agent Kulbhushan Yadav and India's request for counselor access is self-explanatory. This is the first time since World War 2 that the serving officer of another country has been arrested.²⁴

Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations:

The Pakistan- Afghanistan region was referred to as the "cockpit of Asia" by Lord Curzon. The contemporary times see them as neighbors, with a checkered history of conflict and co-operation. Both are Islamic republics, members of SAARC and designated by the US as major non-NATO allies post 9/11. The relationship, in spite of these similarities and convergences has been problematic, and is of mutual suspicion and interference.

Pakistan has given up on its policy of strategic depth in Afghanistan. However is not prepared to trade it for strategic vulnerability or worst strategic defeat. The hostility between the two countries is self-defeating, the discord strengthens terrorists on both sides of border. The shared border is 2,000 km long and perhaps one of the most porous and difficult border to manage in the world. Pakistan, even today hosts nearly three million refugees. The relationship is complex, what complicates it further is that, the Pakistan –Afghanistan relations are not a simple linear equation. They have been hostage to India's maneuvering in Afghanistan. The regional proxy war between Pakistan and India in Afghanistan and the US desire to counter Chinese and Russian influence in the region also complicate the situation.

The US constantly sends confused signals to Pakistan. Duplicity of action is more on the US side; in the beginning of 2016, Chief of US and NATO troops Lt. General Mick Nicholson categorically stated that targeting the Haqqani Network was no longer the focus of United States' counter-terrorism operations in Afghanistan,²⁵ later in the year, the US demanded the exact

²¹ Special cell set up in RAW to foil Economic Corridor," *The News*, May11, 2015.

Accessed June 19, 2016. <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/12423-special-cell-set-up-in-raw-to-foil-economic-corridor>

²² Jawad R Awan, "RAW-NDS agent caught from Chaman" *The Nation* (Karachi), April 07, 2016.

²³ Muhammad Zafar, "Not so hidden hand: Six Afghan 'agents' arrested in Balochistan" *The Express Tribune* (Karachi) May 27, 2016.

²⁴ "490 soldiers, 3,500 militants killed in Operation Zarb-e-Azb so far: DG ISPR", *The Express Tribune*, June 15, 2016. Accessed June 15, 2016. <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1123356/dg-ispr-addresses-press-conference-afghanistan-pakistan-border-clashes/>

²⁵ Ayaz Gul, "US Will Not Target Haqqanis in Afghanistan," *Voice of America*, January 31, 2016.

opposite from Pakistan.

The Afghan policy on Taliban is also weak and lacks direction, which is contributing towards their gaining strength and clout. The Taliban had traditionally drawn on ethnic Pashtuns in its insurgency against the Afghan government, more recently, disgruntled members of other ethnic disenfranchised communities; like Tajiks, Turkmen and Uzbeks are joining the Taliban in the country's north. This has contributed towards expanding the groups reach, not seen since the U.S. led invasion in 2001. The non- Pashtuns make up around one-quarter of the Taliban leadership council and its various commissions. This has gone largely unnoticed by the US-led NATO forces. This is a major challenge on the ground, inside Afghanistan, where new fronts are being opened in the north because of the Afghan government's failure, which is unable to address grievances that the Taliban is exploiting for recruiting purposes. This may result in the fall of record number of districts to the Taliban in the fighting season of 2015 and 2016.²⁶ The past practice is to blame Pakistan for the failures of the Afghan government.

Pakistan is constantly criticized for cultivating Taliban leadership and at the same time pressured to bring them to the negotiating table. The recent killing of Mullah Mansur in a drone attack in Balochistan just before he had agreed to become a part of the peace process is very confusing.²⁷

US defence secretary, Ashton Carter in a meeting with senior Pakistani military leaders categorically said, I must tell you, "I am a friend of India", we try to be a trusted partner of India," Said the defence secretary.²⁸

India in return, endorsed the US stand on South China Sea island dispute with China by reaffirming "importance of the freedom of navigation and over flight throughout the region including the South China Sea". The Indo-US alliance is further complicating the power equation of the region even more.²⁹ The Indian press has also reported that Ashton Carter has conveyed to the Indians that the U.S. has given up on Pakistani cooperation to stabilize Afghanistan and wants India to play a larger role there.

India-US nexus:

The US-India relations started consolidating a decade ago. The areas of engagement included economy, defence, climate change, rule of law and various other issues. US has supported both Indian membership to Nuclear Suppliers Group and a permanent seat of the United Nations

Accessed June 17, 2016. <http://www.voanews.com/content/us-says-not-targeting-haqqanis-in-afghanistan/3168157.html>

²⁶ Frud Bezan, "Ethnic Minorities Are Fueling the Taliban's Expansion in Afghanistan," *Foreign Policy*, June 15, 2016.

Accessed June 18, 2016. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/06/15/ethnic-minorities-are-fueling-the-talibans-expansion-in-afghanistan/>

²⁷ Tahir Khan, "Mullah Mansoor was 'about to join peace talks' when killed," *The Express Tribune*, July 11, 2016. <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1139173/mullah-mansoor-join-peace-talks-killed/>

²⁸ Munir Akram, "The Indo-US alliance" *Dawn* (Karachi), April 20, 2016.

²⁹ Ibid.

Security Council. It was also given a path breaking entry into Missile Technology Control Regime, because of US support, opening doors for India to acquire world class missile technology. There is also a move to give India the status of major non NATO ally.³⁰

On the defence front the strides made in recent times are even more gigantic. The defence trade between US and India has risen from some \$300 million to over \$14 billion during the last 10 years and it is growing. There is no doubt that U.S. is investing in a long term strategic partnership with India. Senator Warner after introducing the US-India Defence Technology and Partnership bill, said, “The bill bestows upon India the status it deserves as a partner in promoting security in Asia and around the world.

US is also helping to sell India the Patriot Advanced Capability (PAC)-3 missile which is the world’s most advanced and can destroy tactical ballistic missiles carrying weapons of mass destruction, advanced cruise missile and aircrafts. After a decades of shifting gradually towards the U.S., India is set to abandon all norms of non-alignment, sovereignty and autonomy in return for closer military ties. The Modi government has pursued vigorously the three foundational defence agreements, the previous United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government had opposed it, suggesting it undermined India’s policy of non-alignment. The crux of the matter is that India has openly allied with US to counter the strategic convergence between Pakistan, China and perhaps also Russia.

The U.S. also wants its trade with India to grow multifold and be close to the levels of US-China trade. Assistant secretary of state for South and Central Asia Nisha Desi Biswal informed the Indian lawmakers that the US-India bilateral trade has grown by a factor of five over the last, 15 year, to over USD 100 billion and India wants to increase it by another fivefold.³¹

US-Pakistan Relations:

The contemporary US-Pakistan relationship seems to be a repeat of what it was like in Feb, 2007, under the Bush administration where David Sanger’s article created the ground for Vice President Dick Cheney’s visit to Pakistan, with the mantra of “do more”, concerns over Afghanistan, Al-Qaeda and insistence upon military action in Waziristan. Fast forward 2016, after a gap of nine years, New York Times and Washington Post are at it again. New York Times editorial captioned” Time to put the squeeze on Pakistan”, squarely blamed Pakistan for the mess in Afghanistan.³² The only difference is this time the US government has distanced itself from the public and congress outcry by saying that its relationship with Pakistan is important and vital.

However, the talk need to be substantiated with actions on the ground, which seem to be missing. The issue of F-16, Shakil Afridi, lope sided policy on the nuclear issue and the latest drone attack

³⁰ “Commodore RS Vasan, US-India Relations and Imperatives for China,” South asia analysis Group, no. 6125(2016). Accessed on June 23, 2016 at <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/node/2003>

³¹ Overcome Challenges To Realise Economic Ties Potential: US To India, NDTV.

Accessed June 20, 2016. <http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/overcome-challenges-to-realise-economic-ties-potential-us-to-india-1405326>

³² The Editorial Board, “Time to Put the Squeeze on Pakistan”, The New York Times, May 12, 2016.

Accessed June 20, 2016. http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/12/opinion/time-to-put-the-squeeze-on-pakistan.html?_r=0

in Balochistan are self-evident. Moreover, the signals of once again trying to minus Pakistan from the peace process in Afghanistan are not indicative of what is being said.

Pakistan is constantly warned of consequences, if it doesn't do exactly what the US thinks is the way forward for peace in the region. After jeopardizing the peace talks on more than one occasion, it continues to urge Pakistan to persuade the Taliban to join the peace process. In the same breath, US Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Olson told Pakistan, that "it will not have a bright future until and unless it goes after the Taliban".³³ There is either confusion or duplicity on the Taliban policy in the US. The signals sent are mixed.

Zarb-e-Azb is the largest military operation undertaken by the Pakistan Army in the Waziristan area. Over a period of two years, 3,600 sq. km in North Waziristan has been cleared of terrorists. These operations including "Operation Kinetic"³⁴ have been conducted, without any biases. Shawal has also been cleared of terrorism, where 7,500 bomb making factories were closed down, 3500 terrorists have been killed, 992 hideouts have been destroyed. Pakistan Army, has recovered modern weapons from the terrorists, which they had stolen from American troops. The army also seized 253 tons of explosives, enough to make IEDs for at least 15 years.³⁵

US lawmakers concede that the on-going military operation in Waziristan has curbed terrorism inside Pakistan. What needs to be understood is that these actions are also helpful in curbing violence on the Afghan side. However, Pakistan can't be held responsible for what is not being done on the Afghan side.

US would be providing more than three billion dollars in support for the Afghan National Security Forces from 2018-2020. US has already spent billions of dollars on Afghan Security,³⁶ \$68 billion to support Afghanistan's army and police force and additional \$45 billion has been spent on direct humanitarian assistance,³⁷ the question is there any improvement on the ground.

According to Neta Crawford, a professor of Political Science at Boston University and co-director of the Cost of War Project, that since 2001, the Pentagon and the U.S. State Department has spent a total of \$783 billion on Afghanistan, factoring in the costs of deploying troops and diplomats. That figure balloons to \$1.8 trillion if future interest on the national debt, veterans' care and other long-term spending is considered."³⁸

³³ "Indian role in Afghanistan overestimated in Pakistan: Olson", *Dawn*, June 22, 2016.

Accessed June 21, 2016. <http://www.dawn.com/news/1266465/indian-role-in-afghanistan-overestimated-in-pakistan-olson>

³⁴ Timothy Noah, "Birth of a Washington Word_ When warfare gets "kinetic", *Slate*.

Accessed June 20, 2016.

http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/chatterbox/2002/11/birth_of_a_washington_word.html

³⁵ "490 soldiers, 3,500 militants killed in Operation Zarb-e-Azb so far: DG ISPR", *The Express Tribune*, June 15, 2016.

Accessed June 15, 2016. <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1123356/dg-ispr-addresses-press-conference-afghanistan-pakistan-border-clashes/>

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Tim Craig, "U.S. will seek billions more to support Afghan military efforts," *The Washington Post*, June 18, 2016.

Accessed June 20, 2016. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the-us-will-be-seeking-billions-more-from-other-countries-to-help-support-afghanistan-efforts/2016/06/17/3b6bb0b8-2f3d-11e6-b9d5-3c3063f8332c_story.html

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 8.

The Wall Street Journal, post the drone attack in Balochistan, reported that, some peace makers viewed the drone strikes that killed Mullah Mansur as a setback to restore peace to war-ravaged country. The Secretary General of the Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs, Mr. Paolo Cotta –Ramusino said that “we need to interact with the Taliban leadership, not take them out and that the striking the leadership was a mistake.”³⁹

Moreover, after the drone strike, that killed Mullah Mansur who was seen as an obstacle to peace by the Pentagon and President Barak Obama, resulted in the Taliban appointing a hard liner religious leader Mullah Habitaullah as the new chief, who has stepped up attacks on governments and has vowed to avenge Mullah Mansur’s death.⁴⁰

Pakistan Saudi Arabia Relations:

Pakistan- Saudi Arabia relations have remained largely cordial. Riyadh is one of Pakistan’s foreign policy pillar, the other two being Washington and Beijing. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have supported each other on matter of strategic interest. Saud Arabia has in times of need provided Pakistan with strategic financial assistance. The most pertinent being in 1998, after Pakistan was facing sanctions post its nuclear programme and more recently in 2014 for internal financial sustainability.

The recent conflict in the Middle East have also impacted Pakistan and Saudi Arabia relations. Pakistan’s decision to maintain neutrality during the Yemen crisis, in which Saudi Arabia was a frontline player, did not sit well with Riyadh. Riyadh, like the US is use to a compliant Pakistan. According to the Wikileaks, the Saudi Ambassador to the US, Adel al-Jubeir asserted in 2009, that the Saudis were not observer but participants in Pakistan.⁴¹ The Saudis consider themselves the movers and shakers in Pakistan’s internal affairs. The recent independence of actions shown by Pakistan was new to Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia remains very important to Pakistan. The strategic depth of the relationship is neither lost on Saudi Arabia nor Pakistan. However, Pakistan’s political and religious landscape is very complex and diverse. The sectarian orientation of Saudis’ support to Pakistan during the first Afghan Jihad, turned out to be very expensive for Pakistan, politically, socially and militarily. Moreover, Pakistan has to respond to the emerging politics of alliances in South Asia. This requires Pakistan to maintain a balance between its relations with Iran and Saudi Arabia. The new Iran, US and India nexus and its impact on the peace dynamics in Afghanistan are new realities, Pakistan must respond to. The Saudi-Indian defence cooperation is no secret, Pakistan views it as Saudi’s choice to diversify its security partnership. Pakistan’s relation with Iran should be viewed in the same light by the House of Saud and others.

The Pakistan-Saudi Arabia positive alignment in Afghanistan may be strengthened by improved relations between Pakistan and Iran, where Pakistan can act as bridge state between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia still remains a very pivotal country for Pakistan.

³⁹ Jessica Donati, “After Drone Strike, Uncertain Path to Afghan Peace,” *The Wall Street Journal*, June 20, 2016. Accessed June 22, 2016. <http://www.wsj.com/articles/after-drone-strike-uncertain-path-to-afghan-peace-1466371769>

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ “Public Library of US Diplomacy,” WikiLeaks.

Accessed June 23, 2016. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/07RIYADH2320_a.html

India- Saudi Arabia Relations:

Year 2015, witnessed the historical strategic rapprochement between India and Saudi Arabia, they have been on an upswing over the last two decades. India is the largest trading partner, the trade volume between Saudi Arabia and India touched to USD 39.3 billion in 2014-2015.⁴² Saudi Arabia is also the largest supplier of oil to the country. India's oil consumption rate is set to reach 9.8 million bpd by 2040, Saudi Arabia wants to make the best of it. In 2012, Saudi Arabia had also come to rescue Indian economy by increasing oil exports to compensate for the dwindling of supplies from Iran_ post US sanctions on Iranian oil industry. India's rich portfolio in IT and Pharmaceuticals are also very attractive to the Kingdom. Over 2.96 million Indian expatriates live and work in the kingdom, which makes Saudi Arabia a country, with highest number of Indian passport holders. These expatriates enrich Indian economy by 10 million dollars, worth of remittances every year.

However, India eyes more than just economic ties with the Kingdom. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has visited UAE and Saudi Arabia within a year in 2016, responding to calls in India that the country should insert itself in the broader geopolitical dynamics of the region, involving both Iran and Saudi Arabia. The balance of power in South Asia is determining new global equations. The convergence between Saudi Arabia and India & US and India are more obvious than other and of interests and concerns to Pakistan. Indian Prime Minister, Modi amongst other objectives, would like to build on its ties with Saudi Arabia to isolate Pakistan. Just before the Indian Prime Minister's visit to Saudi Arabia, Riyadh announced sanctions against four individuals and two organizations in Pakistan involved in financing terrorist operations,⁴³ this was to please India at the expense of Pakistan. Modi was conferred with the highest civilian honour by the Saudi King, on which even the Indian Muslim community had reservations.

Pakistan, Iran & Saudi Arabia Triangle:

India is trying to balance its relations with Iran and Saudi Arabia., however the convergence that it has with Saudi Arabia has gained a lot more depth. Moreover, Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan Mehdi Hoonardoost statement that Iran is willing to become a part China-Pakistan Economic Corridor,⁴⁴ is self-explanatory of the scheme of the things to come. The balance, India is trying to achieve, has been achieved by Pakistan. Pakistan foresees the natural convergence of interest between China, Iran and itself. The recent endeavors from the both sides endorse the direction of relations. Pakistan and Iran have stakes in peace in Afghanistan. An unstable conflict ridden Afghanistan has security implications for both Iran and Pakistan. There is an obvious trilateral convergence of interest between Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran.

In fact the Indian designs to destabilize Pakistan, through Afghanistan as a result of which Afghanistan remains conflict-prone, go against the interests of both Pakistan and Iran. The

⁴² "Charge d' Affaires message on the occasion of 67th Republic Day of India",_Embassy of India, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

<http://www.indianembassy.org.sa/Content.aspx?ID=879>

⁴³ "Saudi Arabia tilts towards India," Al-Monitor.

Accessed June 23, 2016. <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/04/saudi-arabia-tilt-india-pakistan-salman-iran.html>

⁴⁴ "Iran ready to become part of CPEC: envoy," *The News*, April 17, 2016.

Accessed May 15, 2016. <http://www.thenews.com.pk/print/113354-Iran-ready-to-become-part-of-CPEC-envoy>

relations between the two countries are back on track. Pakistan today has a choice to work around its reliance on the house of Saud, since China is now bankrolling Pakistan. This is not lost on Iran. William Dalrymple's so called deadly triangle comprising of India, Pakistan and Afghanistan⁴⁵ can be countered by an emerging triangular relationship between Pakistan, Iran and China, giving peace a fair chance.

The courting of Iran by India, should not be viewed as a threat by Pakistan, neither should it turn its relationship with Iran into a zero-sum game. If Pakistan and China categorically say that CPEC corridor is not against any country and even India should become part of it. Pakistan should walk its talk when reacting to the recently signed agreement to develop Chabahar port, related infrastructure, availability of approximately \$500 million for these projects and India's economic charm offensive in the region.

Chabahar and Gwadar can complement each other rather than be in competition. Moreover it is not practical for China to use it, nor has China shown any desire to cultivate it.

Iran is a very mature and pragmatic, it may welcome the investment, India wants to make in building up its port, any country would, but it cannot erase from its memory the fact, that very conveniently the same India had taken a velvet divorce from Iran, when it wanted to pursue the Civil Nuclear Deal with the US. 2004 to 2014 is lost decade in terms of Iran-India relations, a time when Iran desperately needed friend. In fact, India had also dumped Russia in pursuance of modernizing its armament and creating convergences with the west.

As for Afghanistan, Pakistan has on more than one occasion categorically said that it is committed to Afghan owned and Afghan led peace process, Pakistan should also say that Afghanistan has complete independence of economic action.

Why should Chabahar be seen as harming Pakistan's interest or the viability of Gwadar? Anybody who understands the ground realities would vouch for the fact that the Iranian port is at best an option and not an alternative. It in no way undermines the importance of Gwadar port.

In addition to it, India initiated Chabahar in 2003, inked in 2015, the logistics cash fluidity and the infamous Indian red-tapism are serious issue. Whereas, Gwadar would be operational in 2017. Moreover, last but not least India does not have the money muscle, China has. Pakistan has accepted Chabahar with graciousness, it's not even a remote threat, if Pakistan continues to work on the Gwadar port and CPEC with speed and commitment.

Pakistan should continue positive engagement with Iran and work on its becoming a part of one-belt one-road initiative. Iran can be a part of it in spite of Chabahar. There is a natural convergence between the three countries that is China, Pakistan and Iran. It has not been invested in.

Among other things, Pakistan should also learn from Chinese pragmatism. For years, Pakistan was in a strategic relationship with US, sometimes even at the expense of China. However,

⁴⁵ William Dalrymple, "A Deadly Triangle: Afghanistan, Pakistan & India", *The Brookings Essay*, June 25, 2013. Accessed June 20, 2016. <http://www.brookings.edu/research/essays/2013/deadly-triangle-afghanistan-pakistan-india-c>

China never held it against Pakistan and raised its concerns, if any, strictly through private diplomacy. Lessons for Pakistan and Iran relations.

Pakistan's Relevance:

Pakistan is the sixth most populous country of the world. The recent progress in the region hold great promise for it, its geo-political and geo-economic significance stands re-emphasized. It not only bridges regions like Middle East, Central Asian Republic, South Asia and South East Asia, but also connects energy abundant countries to energy-starved countries. It is the only country in the world that is the front line defence against global terror, for the past 14 years. It has an intrinsic role in determining the outcome of the Afghan War. Pakistan's geo-strategic location, emerging geo-economic significance, gives it multi-lateral strategic significance making it a country that has direct stakes in contributing towards peaceful borders in the region.

Bruce Riedel in his 2010 article, also emphasized the role of Pakistan in determining the outcome of Afghan War.⁴⁶ The reluctance shown by Pakistan to take direct action against the Afghan Taliban in Pakistan and the Haqqani network are issues of capacity and ability to handle more fronts. Pakistan is a country fighting three wars, it has two hostile borders and an internal war, it's tackling with. The Afghan Taliban in Pakistan today are not seen as strategic assets. The mindset of 1990s has changed. Pakistan sees their ascendance to power as a source of concern. For it may result in repercussions for Pakistan in the form of giving an impetus to Islamic militancy in Pakistan. Ambassador Masood, Director General ISSI rightly pointed out, that Taliban are neither Pakistan's wards nor its proxies.⁴⁷

The doctrine of "Strategic Depth" in Afghanistan is no more an option for Pakistan. However, Pakistan is still very sensitive to strategic vulnerability emanating from Afghanistan, what in essence Pakistan is looking for is an inclusive government in Kabul, which is not hostile to Pakistan and is sensitive to sensibilities of Pakistan, exactly what Afghanistan wants from Pakistan.⁴⁸

Going back to the theoretical framework of defensive and offensive realism in South Asia, the new development is that the theatre of conflict between Pakistan and India has shifted to Afghanistan. India strategically cannot contribute towards building peace in a country it uses to instigate violence in Pakistan. India wants to hold Afghanistan hostage to its designs in the region to hurt both Pakistan and China. Inadvertently, US is supporting it. As a result of which, a conflict ridden Afghanistan is drifting towards a civil war, which is a direct threat to the internal stability of Pakistan. A peaceful, stable and non-hostile Afghanistan is intrinsic to Pakistan's goals and objectives of economic turnaround.

The security and economic dynamics of foreign policy for Pakistan and China stand intertwined. Pakistan's focus has shifted from just geo-politics to geo-economics. This is in itself a major

⁴⁶ Bruce Riedel, "Pakistan's Role in the Afghanistan War's Outcome", *Brookings*, May 20, 2010.

Accessed June 16, 2016. <http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2010/05/20-afghanistan-riedel>

⁴⁷ <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2016/06/26/features/an-interview-with-ambassador-masood-khan-director-general-institute-of-strategic-studies-islamabad-and-former-ambassador-to-the-united-nations-and-china/>

⁴⁸ Safdar Sial, "Pakistan's role and strategic priorities in Afghanistan since 1989," Norwegian Peace Building Resource Centre, June 2013. http://www.peacebuilding.no/var/ezflow_site/storage/original/application/daf97b6b68b9445f85c58923a3afdeb3.pdf

paradigm shift. The economic objective that Pakistan has set for it-self has direct stakes for peace and stability in Pakistan and Afghanistan, improved relations with Iran and Russia, in fact even India. Pakistan is fast becoming a country investing in the politics of economy of growth, regional integration and peace. Pakistan energies are now geared towards neutralizing all conflicts inside its territory and improving relations with its neighbors to cultivate the atmosphere of peace. Can we say the same for India, with the rise of RAW activities in Pakistan to sabotage CPEC; unprecedented investment in arm purchase and desire to alter the naval balance of power in the region?

The US's support to all this, is also indicative of the Indo-US alliance geared towards promoting cold war dynamics in the region including arms race, pitching one state against another and working to curtail Chinese influence in the region. Not a recipe for peace. US and Afghanistan, both are hostage to Indian lobbies, the cost of this is very high for Pakistan, but it is higher for US and Afghanistan. It's costing 4 million of dollar per hour for US tax payers, this has gone on for 14 years. The cost for Afghanistan is peace itself.