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PAKISTAN-CENTRIC FOREIGN POLICY OF INDIA

Abstract

India is following Pakistan centric foreign policy since independence. Encircling Pakistan on its borders and isolating it in the comity of the world has been remained the fundamental objective of India's foreign policy. India enjoys good diplomatic relations with the all major powers as well as with the Muslim countries of the world. It remained a close strategic partner of former Soviet Union till the 1990. After the collapse of the Soviet it cultivated intimate friendship with the United States of America but did not damage its ties with the Soviet. US is now a strategic partner of India and favors for her permanent seat in the UN. India has also mended fences with Beijing in order to promote its trade and diminish the significance of Pak-China friendship. Moreover, India's relations with Afghanistan and Iran remained significant throughout history but since 9/11 it has taken practical steps to strengthen ties with these countries in order to create unease for Pakistan in her neighborhood. Although India has well established reputation across the world but its anti-Pakistan policies are enough to show her real face to the world. India tactically uses its intimate ties with all regional countries and world power against Pakistan. India has still not accepted Pakistan's existence and all the time remained busy in hatching conspiracies to undo Pakistan. This paper provides a detail study regarding India's evil designs against Pakistan as well as the extent to which it has been successful in her ambitions. The study also provides understanding on Pakistan's policies to counter India's designs.

Keywords: encirclement of Pakistan, Iran-India cooperation on Chahbahar Port, Seek influence in Afghanistan, Pakistan's counter-measures.

Introduction

Pakistan's creation was the biggest blow for the India and the former's survival and unremitting progress further shocked and infuriated India. So to minimize its grief India is constantly hatching intrigues to obstruct Pakistan's progress and even to undo it. In post 9/11 scenario India is actively strengthening its ties with major

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powers of the world including Muslim world, Iran, Afghanistan, China and Russia. Basically it has been remained the corner stone of India's foreign policy to isolate Pakistan in the world by cultivating strategic partnership with the US and other powerful countries and propagating a dark image of Pakistan as well as to encircle Pakistan on its frontiers by strengthening relations with Pakistan's neighbors. It has established good bilateral relations with Iran and Afghanistan in order to encircle Pakistan on her western border. There is growing India-Iran cooperation especially naval collaboration in Indian Ocean as well as in Arabian Sea. The Indian motive behind it is to sideline Pak-Sino cooperation in Gwadar. India has spent a large amount on the construction of Chahbahar port in Iran. India's intention in developing Chahbahar port is to address its economic interests and to counter Chinese role and influence in the Indian Ocean plus Arabian Sea also to encircle Pakistan (Khan, 2013). For these reasons India has made strategic and economic alliance with Iran. The Chahbahar Port with no trouble will be reachable for India to conduct its trade and economic relations with Afghanistan and Central Asia via roads and rail linkages. Chinese interests in Gwadar and India's interests in Chahbahar port will lead to enmity and competition between the two regional powers but will have serious implication for Pak-Iran relations. India's main foreign Policy objectives are to encircle Pakistan and counterbalance China, for achieving these objectives it is establishing good relations with Iran and Afghanistan and at the same time concluded civil nuclear pact with United States of America (*Ibid*).

Hostility with Pakistan is a persistent principle of Indian foreign policy therefore it has cultivated good relations with Afghanistan and Iran in order to enclose Pakistan on all side. It has also established good relations with China for ensuring its economic interests and further sidelining Pak-China friendship. India is struggling hard for isolating Pakistan at international level, constraining it on military side by enhancing its military capability and destabilizing Pakistan on economic side is the logical and strategic extension of Indian foreign policy. Afghanistan occupies predominant role in India's geostrategic and geopolitical calculation. Afghanistan's claim over Pashtunistan has always been supported by India

However, Afghanistan got significant attention from Indian side after the end of cold war and the disappearance of bipolar world. India's eagerness for strengthening ties with Afghanistan is to gain the status of principal regional power and all at once to undercut Pakistan's influence or to kick out Pakistan from the Afghan scene (Rabbani, 2012). Indian foreign policy objectives in Afghanistan include cultivating anti-Pakistani sentiment among the Afghan people through vital aid and assistance to anti-Pakistan elements in the country, rebuilding and reconstructing the economic as well as political infrastructure and distancing Pakistan from the Afghan soil both physically and psychologically (*Ibid*).

Apart from its past border clashes India has establish good relations with China especially there are growing trade and economic commitments between the two countries. The economic and commercial ties between the two regional powers are stronger than Pak-China economics knot. US-India strategic partnership and civil nuclear deal is an excellent example of long standing commitment between the two countries. Russia is still a close friend of India providing every possible support to

India as well as it has maintained effective partnership with Israel. India's intimate friendship with the world powers and regional countries is outcome of her effective foreign policy and successful diplomacy. However these Indian policies have created horrible challenges for Pakistan.

India is not only involved in encircling Pakistan on the external front but also carrying out covert operations in Pakistan's provinces of Balochistan and Gilgit-Baltistan. India's involvement in creating instability, disturbance and violence in Pakistan has been recently confirmed by Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi in a public speech (Perkovich & Dalton, 2016). In recent times tensions between the countries reached to the boiling point as a result of an attack on Indian security forces in Kashmir on September 18. The government of Prime Minister Modi has hold Pakistan responsible for the attack. Indian officials claimed that the attack was carried out by members of Pakistani based terror group Jaish-e-Mohammad (Chandran, 2016). However Pakistan has rejected the accusation, relating the allegations as an attempt by India to deflect attention from Indian held Kashmir where violation of human rights has become routine business (*Ibid*).

Theoretical Framework

This paper is based on the theory of balance of threat which calculates that "states will balance against threats. Threat in turn is derived by a combination of three variables: aggregate capabilities (i.e a state overall military and economic potential), geography, and perceptions of aggressive intentions. If one state becomes especially powerful, and if its location and behaviour feed threat perception on the part of other states then balancing strategies will come to dominate their foreign policies". (Wohlforth, 2015). Since independence Pakistan is struggling to balance against perceived threat from India. On the external front, India is actively consolidating relations with Pakistan's neighboring countries such as Afghanistan and Iran in order to encompass Pakistan on two sides, has reestablished ties with China to neutralize China's stand on Kashmir, while internally Pakistan has been remained the victim of covert destabilizing activities of India. India is a regional power with significant economic and military capabilities, strategically important geography and has aggressive intention against Pakistan. To balance against perceived threat from India, Pakistan has strengthened its relations with neighboring countries as well as regional and world powers.

India's approach towards Afghanistan

India's relations with Afghanistan remained friendly since the beginning and it was due to the Indo-Afghan excellent relations and partly because of Durand Line and Pashtunistan issue that Afghanistan did not extend recognition to newly independent state of Pakistan. India tried to maintain good terms with Afghanistan however, Pakistan's support to the Taliban movement against the Soviet during 1980s and the subsequent installation of Islamic government in Afghanistan by the Taliban created space for Pakistan in Afghanistan. The Taliban rule in Afghanistan (1996-2001) was an excellent example of close friendship of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Indian influence remained limited during the Afghan *Jihad* against the USSR. With the creation of Taliban regime the relations between India and Afghanistan reached to its lowest ebb, in other words an absolute rupture occurred in their bilateral relations. During this time as Pakistan was on excellent terms

with the Taliban regime, India developed working ties with the Northern Alliance, a Tajik dominated group headed by Ahmad Shah Massoud which was against Taliban government (Yakolev, 2001).

The event of 9/11 and the subsequent attack of USA with the active support of the world community on Afghanistan give a challenge to the foreign policy makers of Pakistan to either join the alliance of NATO led by the US or face the same action from the US and coalition forces. The Indian government announced unconditional logistic support to the US in the international war against terrorism, the motive behind such announcement was to create hurdles for Pakistan, to get the support of US and to distort Pakistan's image in the world so in this grave situation the military regime of Musharraf decided to side with the US against the government of Taliban. With the toppling down of Taliban and the emergence of the government of Hamid Karzai on the Afghan scene, India got excellent opportunity to re-establish its relation with Hamid Karzai (Ganguly, 2012).

In post Taliban Afghanistan, India is following a range of strategies include advancement of its strategic interests as well as economic and political influence in Afghanistan. India is involved in training the security forces of Afghanistan as well as developing economic infrastructure in order to increase its soft power (Hanauer & Chalk, 2012). India became too much involved in Afghanistan overtly in developmental activities but the covert intentions are the encirclement of Pakistan by cultivating good relations, increasing its soft image and distorting Pakistan's image within Afghanistan. India has established its consulates in Afghanistan near Pakistan's border which are used for creating disturbance in Balochistan and FATA (*Ibid*).

Expand Influence in Afghanistan

India believes that if Pakistan influence and control the political dispensation in Afghanistan it would have adverse effects for India. It would increase difficulties in Indian held Kashmir and the Kashmir will remain a burning issue, thereby, the dispute will gain world attention and there will start a debate and discussion on the issue at the international level. India believes that the internationalization of the Kashmir dispute will benefit Pakistan and at the same time will undermine Indian stance on the issue (Rabbani, 2012). India is taking active role in reconstruction, development, trade and humanitarian works in order to highlight its benevolence and gain trade and political benefits however, the underline intention is to undercut the space and influence of Islamabad in Afghanistan (Sharma, 2012). Pakistan's interventionist policy towards Afghanistan is due to perceived existential threat from India. As a counter measure to security threat and possible India-Afghan alliance Pakistan consider Taliban as significant tool to prevent the growing Indian space in Afghanistan and to secure its western border (*Ibid*).

Search for Influence in Economic Field

India is investing huge amount in Afghanistan reconstruction and development since the establishment of US supported government in Afghanistan. In 2011 Afghan President Karzai visited India and concluded strategic partnership with India. Under this agreement cooperation between the two countries was formalised in the field of security, political, social, education, trade, people to people contact

and capacity building. Within the framework of this agreement India has pledged \$2 billion and spent approximately \$1 billion. It has become the fifth principal donor to Afghanistan. India provides most of its assistance in the field of humanitarian assistance, capacity building and infrastructure projects (Price, 2013). Under strategic partnership India's major role in Afghanistan is defence and security cooperation. India provides training to the Afghan forces within India though its focus on security cooperation is increasing. Besides all, there is a rapid increase in bilateral trade between the two countries. The total value of their bilateral trade was \$80 million in 2001 which increased to \$280 million in 2010. Afghanistan got membership of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in 2007 as a result of a proposal by the government of India. India is the fifth largest source of Afghan imports and accounts for 20% of Afghan total exports (Ganguly & Howenstein, 2009).

Strive for Political Influence

India wants to exert its influence in the political sphere of Afghanistan and has taken various steps for the purpose. In order to prevent the establishment of a Pakistani-backed government in Kabul, India wants to gain political influence in the country. For this purpose it has strengthened the government of Karzai, worked for setting up democratic institutions to ensure representation of all ethnic groups with limited influence of Pashtun population (Hanauer & Chalk, 2012). India and Afghanistan are also significantly engaged politically with frequent visits of high-level political leadership of both countries. The southern as well as south-eastern parts of Afghanistan are dominated by Pashtun population where India has ensured its diplomatic presence for the realization of its interests in the country. It has established a considerable number of consulates in the Af-Pak border region. Through these consulates India wants to make links with local leaders, assist developmental projects, increase awareness regarding regional developments but most importantly these consulates are used for supporting separatist elements in Baluchistan and other parts of Pakistan (Perveen, Khalil, Ahmad, & Khalil, 2015). In Afghanistan India has developed a strong pro-Indian lobby which is used against Pakistani interests. It has well-established and effective diplomatic missions in strategically important areas for gaining maximum influence at the cost of Pakistan (*Ibid*). During the reign of Taliban, India had actively supported the Northern Alliance for countering Pakistani-backed *Mujahidin*. It had provided military equipment, training and defence advisers to the Northern Alliance (Ganguly & Howenstein, 2009).

Pakistan's Approach towards Afghanistan

A sovereign, secured and prosperous Afghanistan will best secure Pakistan's interests in the region. However, Afghanistan is in a state of war since decades where violence, crimes, and insecure living standards compelling Afghan refugees to prolong their refuge in Pakistan. An insecure and disturbed Afghan situation has always negatively affected Pakistan's security and stability. Pakistan is Afghanistan's most significant neighbor because of their shared values, customs, religious and cultural affinity and geographical proximity. But unfortunately Pak-

Afghan relations remained strained throughout history except a short period of Taliban rule. The major irritant is the controversy over the Durand Line.

In recent time both countries face the problem of insurgencies, chaos, violence and declining security situation. Pakistan being an immediate neighboring country faces the direct effects of insecurity in Afghanistan. Mutual blame game and mistrust is growing because both countries ignore the seriousness of the situation. The recent Pak-Afghan border clash is worse outcome of this mistrust. An urgent attention is required on the part of both countries to adopt a common approach for the resolution of all issues, normalize the relations, ensure peace and avail the opportunities to accelerate the pace of development.

Pakistan's foreign policy has always favored friendly and harmonious ties with its brotherly Muslim neighboring country of Afghanistan. Pakistan was among the few countries that came for the rescue of Afghanistan on the occasion of Soviet intervention in December 1979. Pakistan not only remained a frontline state during Soviet-Afghan conflict but also a prime mover of peace after the Soviet withdrawal. After the installation of *Mujahidin* rule in Afghanistan in 1996 Pakistan was the first to recognize and support the new regime. Pakistan's foreign policy once again drastically changed following the event of September 11, 2001 when US demanded Pakistan's support against Afghanistan on urgent basis. With the fall of Taliban and establishment of Hamid Karzai regime Pakistan not only recognized Karzai rule but also extended full support to the new government.

Pakistan's Role in Afghan Reconciliation

Pakistan has the potential to ensure peace in Afghanistan and is able to bring the insurgent groups to negotiation bench. Due to immediate neighborhood, shared values close ethnic, religious and cultural ties and more importantly because of Pakistan's influence over the Taliban, Pakistan can efficiently influence peace process in Afghanistan. The Afghan authorities are aware of Pakistan's potentiality that is why after coming into power the Afghan President Ashraf Ghani visited Pakistan in order to get the support of Pakistani government and establishment in promoting the Afghan peace.

Pakistan remained helpful toward its neighboring country, especially since the Soviet Union intervention in Afghanistan until current time the former has played instrumental role in supporting Afghanistan. Pakistan favors peaceful resolution of the long Afghan war because the spillover effects of Afghan conflict have deteriorated the peace and security of Pakistan (Khan, 2010). Pakistan has actively played its role in eliminating terrorism and has sacrificed more lives than US and combat forces. Pakistan desires an inclusive reconciliation process with Taliban as a major negotiating party that would ultimately lead to power sharing bargaining in Afghanistan (Yusuf, 2013). Despite troubles that Pakistan faces due to the Afghan situation it has offered its services for the cause of peace in Afghanistan and is fully supporting the 'Afghan owned and Afghan led' reconciliation procedure. However the Afghan authorities accuse and hold Pakistan responsible for all the Afghan plights.

Pak-Afghan Economic Ties

Afghanistan has always been supported by Pakistan in her trade with other countries. Pakistan wants enhanced cooperation with Afghanistan in trade, energy and agriculture etc. In recent times bilateral trade between the two countries stands at \$1 billion which was only 3 million in 2002. Both countries established Joint Economic Commission for re-examining bilateral trade ties and strengthening cooperation in economic field. Pakistan is Afghanistan's third principal export market and one of the major trading collaborators. In July 2010, the countries have signed Transit-Trade accord that allows access to Gwadar as well as Port Qasim. The agreement enabled Afghanistan to expand its trade across the region (Solomon & Cullison, 2010). The two countries are taking steps to strengthen their bilateral trade that include signing of investment related treaty as well as MOU for constructing transportation infrastructure including highways and railways links in Afghanistan as well as opening new trade roads in waziristan, and opening branches of banks that would improve trade and economic progress (Mazhar & Goraya, 2009).

Indian Policy Towards Iran

India is financing the construction of Chahbahar Port which will provide an entrance way to Iran, Afghanistan and CARs through Indian Ocean. Indian Policy circles view Gwadar Port as a direct threat to its interests in the region because the port's closeness to the Straits of Hormuz will provide Pakistan golden opportunity to exercise its influence over the whole energy routes. India also fears that Gwadar will enable China to monitor the movement of India's navy in Arabian Sea as well as in the Persian Gulf (Global, 2005). Due to Pakistan inclination towards the US Iran believes that Pakistan might allow the US to use Gwadar port for monitoring Iranian activities. The map below shows the location of both Gwadar and Chahbahar Ports.

The Position of Gwadar and Chahbahar Ports

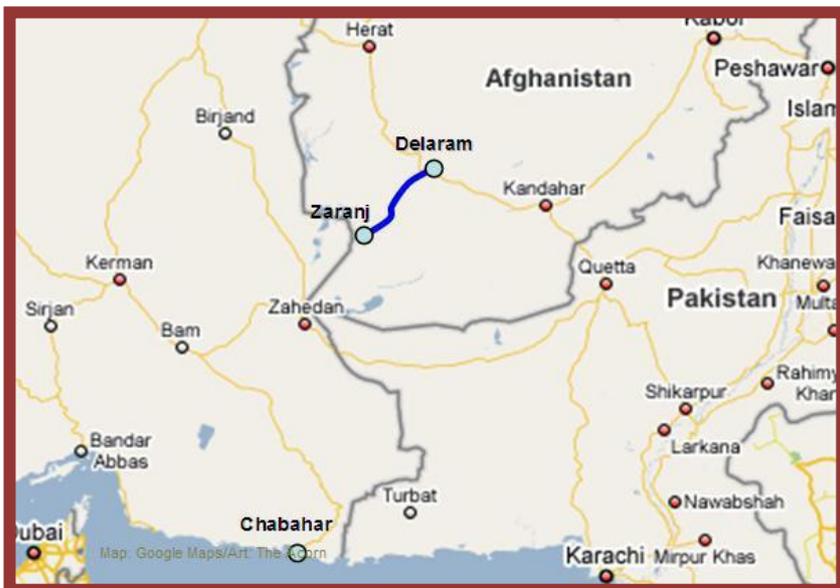


Source: www.pk.tribune.com./forums/posts.php?=38750

Therefore mutuality of interests binds together Iran and India to cooperate with each other in every field. In this connection Afghanistan gains strategic importance because Pak-Iran contradictory interests have provided a base for the formulation of Indo-Iranian alliance. India's efforts to construct linking routes between Afghanistan and Central Asia is a retort to Chinese attempt to build up Gwadar Port that will serve as a gateway to world markets for Central Asian natural resources (Juli A, 2003).

Iran is assisted by India in the construction of railways system connecting Iran with Afghanistan and Central Asian countries in order to provide them alternative corridor to the sea thereby reducing Pakistan's influence over the landlock CARs. Iran and India are agreed to cooperate in the reconstruction of Afghanistan and extend their support in the development of transportation infrastructure in order to provide the country alternative routes through Chahbahar Port of Iran. India is working on the development of railway tracks that would connect Zaranj in Afghanistan to Chababar. Moreover the construction of 218 km Zaranj-Delaram road by India that connects Afghanistan with Chababar Port is a part of circular road of Afghanistan which provide easy access not only to Afghanistan but also to CARs via Iran (Khan, 2012).

Location of Zaranj and Delaram Road



Source: <http://www.defence.pk/forums/current-events-social-issues/49089-India-send-more-troops-afghanistan-7.html>

India has linked the Herat-Kandahar Highway through the already existing roads that lead to Chabahar Port of Iran. The route will considerably cut down the overland passage and will prove much quicker than the current road set up that links Afghanistan to Karachi and Gwadar Ports. A plan for constructing a rail network from Hajigak to Zaranj and then to Chabahar is there. India and Iran are also working on building 600 km road connecting Chabahar and Zahedan city of Iran which is positioned close to the southwestern region of Afghanistan which will pursue the same route as the rail line (Malhotra, 2012). Although the new road and rail links will facilitate bilateral trade between Afghanistan and India but will also beyond any doubt undermine the strategic significance of Gwadar Port.

India and Iran has enhanced their bilateral naval cooperation in the Arabian Sea as well as in the Indian Ocean since 9/11. This growing cooperation between the two countries has direct affect on Pakistan and China. As both Pakistan and China are working on the development of Gwadar Port which is significant for China's strategic objectives and important for Pakistan's economic development. Chinese interests in Gwadar Port include strengthening its partnership with Pakistan, expanding and securing its oil import ways as well as ensuring its presence in the Indian Ocean and in Arabian Sea. While India's interests involves securing energy routes and encountering China's influence in the Persian Gulf, Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean. For realizing these goals India has established strategic and economic ties with Iran and has spent vast amount on Chahbahar Port in Iran that will be reachable for India's exports and imports via rail and road links to Afghanistan and CARs (Khan, 2013).

Pakistan's Policy towards Iran

Good and affable relations with all countries, especially with neighboring countries are one of significant guiding principles of Pakistan's foreign policy. Pakistan Iran relations are not erected on smooth line (Perveen, Khalil, Ahmad, & Khalil, 2015) since Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979 and simultaneous Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the subsequent Pakistan's leading role, especially her support for the Taliban. Sunni-Shia differences and their support for opponent religious groups in Afghanistan are the irritant points in Pak-Iran relations. Iran's foreign policy is resembled with India as far as Pakistan's involvement is concern in Afghanistan. Iran is on good terms with the Northern Alliance and has close strategic, economic and political ties with the group. It strongly opposes the return of Taliban into power, the group which is backed and actively supported by Pakistan's establishment.

Pakistan and Iran not only share common border but there are also common historical, cultural, linguistic and trade links between them. They are bound together due to geographical propinquity as well as by common religion of Islam and shared ideals. Pakistan's culture and language is deeply influenced by Iranian culture and persian language (Burke, 1993). Pak-Iran relations witness many ups and dawn, Iran was the first country that recognized Pakistan's independent status soon after the partition of India into two sovereign states in August 1947. Pakistan was also the first country that recognized Iran's Islamic revolution in 1979 (Pakistan-Iran Relations: Challenges and Prospects, June, 2014). Both remained strong allies of the capatilst bloc and members of the US sponsored security pacts.

The 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran and USSR intervention in Afghanistan in the same year and Pakistan's leading role in Afghan Jihad against the Soviet redetermined their geostrategic position in the regional and world strategic alliance. In the period of the Afghan-Soviet conflict Pakistan actively supported Taliban while Iran extended their support to anti-Taliban group, the Northern Alliance. This created main troubles in the their bilateral relationship. Iran is concerned regarding Pakistan's role in Afghanistan and its support for the Taliban. However, since 9/11 both countries have effectively managed to maintain normalize ties despite several persevere irritants (Sial, 2015).

Pak-Iran Economic and Trade Cooperation

Pak-Iran economic and trade dealings are date back to centuries when both countries traded with each other on barter basis. However despite the centuries long trade links, progress in economic field remained marginal due to several political, geostrategic and economic reasons (Pakistan-Iran Relations: Challenges and Prospects, June, 2014). Pakistan and Iran remained members of Regional Cooperation for Development now Regional Cooperation Organization. Pakistan is the 11th largest trade partner of Iran. Both countries signed Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) on 4th March 2004 however, their bilateral trade volume remained low. There is a high but indirect trade volume between Pakistan and Iran that is through third country transaction and smuggling. Due to international sanctions on Iran and lack of banking channels between the two countries indirect business is done via United Arab Emirates (Minhas, 2014). In order to strengthen bilateral trade and economic cooperation the two countries set up Joint Economic Commission in 1986. Both the countries are also working on 780-kilometre gas pipeline project, the plan which was conceived in early 1990s but officially signed in 2009.

The changing economic and security situation in the region and the world has direct impact on the Pak-Iran bilateral ties. The US policy of isolating Iran and imposition of sanction on Iran impede the progress in economic and trade between the two neighboring countries. However the recent visit of Pakistan's prime minister to Tehran has positively influenced Pak-Iran economic ties as the leaders of both countries reiterated their commitment to increase mutual trade volume. Recently both countries have an observer status in the Shinghai Cooperation Organization (Pakistan-Iran Relations: Challenges and Prospects, June, 2014).

Energy Cooperation

Pakistan and Iran signed the Iran-Pakistan Gas Pipeline pact in 2009 and the additional annexes of the agreement were concluded in 2010. It was expected that this most important project would be materialized in 2014. Since the signing of the agreement Iran has completed most of its part on the project. However, Pakistan's alliance with the United States, Saudi Arabia and the sanction imposed upon Iran by the international community are the factors which impede progress on IP gas pipeline and also slow down cooperation between the two countries in economic field (Sial, 2015). It is imperative for both Pakistan and Iran to complete the IP pipeline project as soon as possible because it will best solve Pakistan's energy problem and give strength to Iran's economy.

Major Irritants in Pak-Iran Relations

One of the serious strains in Pak-Iran bilateral relationship is border security, the factor which is greatly responsible for the upset ties between the two countries. The sunni militant groups in Iran that operate and seek protection in Pakistan's border areas is the cause of concern for Iran. The US deep influence on Islamabad and the later close relations with Saudi Arabia is another critical irritant that created resentment among Iran's policy circles. However, according to some reports Saudi Arabia had sought Pakistan's PM assistance for improving Saudi-Iran relations. According to Iran's news agency IRNA, the coming of Nawaz Sharif into power could positively influence bilateral relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran because on one side Nawz Sharif has warm relationship with the leaders of Saudi Arabia and on the other side a vital change has taken place in the policy of Saudi Arabia towards Iran (Sial, 2015). Moreover, Sectarian violence, Sunni-Shia clashes inside Pakistan, Pak-Iran conflicting interests in the Afghan game, Iran-India close cooperation and frequent firing from Iranian side on Pakistan are other serious irritations in Pak-Iran relations (Pakistan-Iran Relations: Challenges and Prospects, June, 2014).

The new emerging competition between Pakistan's Gwadar Port and Chahbahar Port of Iran also adversely affect both countries' relations. The new Chahbahar Port, which is financed by India is a part of India's designs to build up a transpotation infrastructure for the pupose to reduce the strategic significance of Gwadar Port. The ultimate desire of Delhi is to bypass Pakistani Port by connecting Chahbahar with Central Asian Republics through road links and railway system. This will decrease the Central Asian countries' dependence on Gwadar. Iran already enjoys good relations with CARs and is collaborating on several projects that connects Chahbahar with these countries. (Khan, 2012).

Relations with Major Powers of the World

United State of America

The bilateral ties between US and India developed into strategic partnership based on convergence of interests in regional and world affairs and shared values. Constant high level visits have further strengthened bilateral relationship. There is broad-based cooperation between the two countries which includes security and defence, trade, education, health, energy, agriculture, enviroment and civil nuclear collaboration. Both countries are also cooperating in counter-terrorism, sharing information and capacity building. The significant aspect of their bilateral relationship is civilian nuclear deal, which has generated unevenness in the already tensed south Asian enviroment.

Defence and security cooperation is the most important pillar of their bilateral strategic partnership. The constant increase in the their bilateral defence trade is perceived as counter balance to Chinese influence in the region. There is enhanced defence trade, maritime security cooperation, personnel exchange and joint exercise between the two countries. As a 3rd major economic power of the world, India is a significant economic and trade partner of the US (Martin, Akhtar, Kronstadt, Kumar, & Siskin, 2014). The valume of bilateral trade has significantly increased from \$ 5.6 billion in 1990 to \$66.9 billion in 2014 in marchandise goods.

Pakistan's relations with the US fluctuate from eras of wider engagement and worse estrangement since establishment. Almost immediately after the creation, Pakistan aligned itself with the west and joined the US sponsor security agreements in order to catch the attention of a super power and get economic and military assistance. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan brought Pakistan into limelight of the world. Pakistan played a major role in supporting the Mujahideen groups against the Red Army. Unfortunately with the end of Soviet-Afghan conflict and collapse of Soviet Union, the US turned its eyes from Pakistan and imposed sanctions on it under Pressure amendments. Pakistan once again became important for the US after the event of 9/11. Pakistan not only provided every possible support to the US in the war against Afghanistan but also played a frontline state role in defeating extremist and eliminating terrorism. The flames of Afghan war not remained limited to Afghanistan but entered into Pakistan and worsely affected the security of Pakistan's border regions.

Recently there is widespread mistrust between the two countries, the US held Pakistan responsible for the predicaments it faces in Afghanistan. There is an increased anti-American sentiments among Pakistani people due to the US 'do more' policy, drone strikes, and dual standard. Other key irritants in their bilateral relations include terrorism and militancy in Pakistan, nuclear proliferation, human right issues and Pakistan's support for Afghan insurgency (Kronstadt, 2011). Pakistan also wants a leading role in the Afghanistan's reconciliation process and future politics of the country. There is an urgent need on the part of both countries to understand each other problems and needs and find a reasonable way of getting rid of the present ambivalences. Pakistan is an aid dependent country and its economy needs active assistance therefore, while formulating foreign policies the policy makers should keep in view the country's requirements in present situation as well as in the future. The US should also realize Pakistan's importance in the Afghan peace process and secure and stable south Asian region.

China

The relationship between India and China remained disturbed since the beginning due to border clashes and competition over regional dominance. However, in recent time both countries have reshaped their policies and increased the potentials for cooperation. The two countries are agreed to collaborate on a number of matters such as climate change, Afghanistan's stability and development of infrastructure. Both are cooperating in multilateral forums and organizations. Trade and investment is on increase and the valume of bilateral trade in more than Chinese trade with Pakistan. However, despite growing cooperation the relationship faces persistant tention due to the growing presence of China in the Indian Ocean, the increasing crossing of Chinese soliders into disputed regions of Indo-China border and India's large trade discrepancy with China (Southernland, Koch-Weser, & Zhang, 2014). Though Indo-China relationship with India has changed between estrangement, engagement, conflicts and vice versa yet Pakistan and China remained close partners during the course of history.

Pakistan's intimate friendship and close collaboration with China is an immense challenge to the economic and geo-strategic goals of India. Therefore, in order to counter balance Indian hegemony, Pakistan needs active support and cooperation

from China. China is actively cooperating with Pakistan on Gwadar Port project. Gwadar Port will enable China to check the rising India's influence in the Indian Ocean as well as in Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea. Although the Gwadar Port will fulfill China's economic, political, security and strategic interests in the region but certainly it will boost Pakistan's economic growth, enhance its prestige and counterbalance India's influence in the region. As India is spending huge money on Chahbahar Port which will give strategic advantages to India at the same time China is investing huge amount on Gwadar Port and other related projects which will serve the strategic interests of both China and Pakistan. Thus there is convergence of Pak-Sino national interests in prevailing situation (Khan, 2013).

Furthermore, Chinese support for Pakistan's defence and security, its presence in Azad Kashmir and infrastructural development in the region as well as China's open support for Kashmiri separatist movement are major irritants in Indo-China relations (DAS, 2013). Recently both Pakistan and China are working on CPEC project which is part of China's plan to create trade routes through Pakistan in order to unlock its western area (the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region) as well as to stabilize its borders. The CPEC will connect Gwadar to Kashgar (Chinese City) in the landlocked XUAR through roads, railways and pipelines. The project will provide new markets for Chinese companies to pursue huge investment for infrastructure (Vandewalle, 2015.p.6). The project will enhance warmth in Pak-China relationship and will boost Pakistan's economy and overall progress.

Russia

India's relations with Russia have remained warm and smooth, however, their bilateral relations under went several distinct phases. Interestingly in each phase the relations have gain strength or decline depending on their experiences with the western world. Russia's military and economic aid has been used by India to follow its regional design, among those the significant one was the containment of Pakistan as well as China. Throughout history, their bilateral relations were most excellent when they perceived a linkage between Pakistan and China (Singh, 2013). The basis of Delhi strong strategic cooperation with Russia is provided by United States' military and economic aid to Pakistan, the later alliances with the west and strategic partnership with China. Relation with India remained important for Russia due to its confrontation with China and its desire to reach to 'Third World' nations via India. Though, till 1990 containment of Islamabad and Beijing was common denominator on part of the two countries. However, after of Soviet disintegration both countries have reshaped their bilateral relationship. Presently they have restructured their ties and based their relations on equal footing than that of India's over dependence on Russia during cold war period (*Ibid*).

Pakistan's relations with Soviet Union remained strained due to Pakistan's alliance with United States and its leading role in Afghan *Jihad* against Soviet Union. However, during the era following the end of cold war, Russia consolidated its military, political and economic status and regained its position as a major power of the globe. In the period after cold-war, both Russia and Pakistan have reshaped their foreign policy but progress towards establishing smooth bilateral relation remained slow (Hanif, 2013). The event of 9/11 and the subsequent Pakistan's role in Afghanistan changed Russia's perception about Pakistan and a changed for

better began in bilateral relationship between the two countries. In the present scenario, the two countries see their economic and strategic interests converging. Both countries think about their role in ensuring peace in Afghanistan as well as availing economic openings in Central Asia. Pakistan wants to stabilize and strengthen its economy with Russian investment while Russia sees Pakistan as better starting point for its trade and investment in the face of changing Indian policy of developing close friendship and strategic partnership with the US. It is in this line that despite several constraints Pak-Russia ties have strong prospects to progress (*Ibid*).

Conclusion

The cordial relations between India and US and their bilateral civilian nuclear cooperation, the growing cooperation between India and Iran and the increasing warmth in India's relations with Afghanistan and Central Asia indicates Indian designs in the region. The ultimate objective behinds India's efforts to cultivate intimate ties with Iran, Afghanistan and CARs is to envelop Pakistan on all sides. However, Pakistan is aware of Indian designs and is performing well in countering India's strategies. For this purpose Pakistan has taken concrete steps to strengthen its relations with China, revive ties with Iran and strive to win the trust and confidence of the Afghan people. However, more efforts are required on the part of Pakistan to offset the despicable encircling plan of India by not giving access to land routes for its trade with Kabul and Central Asia, raise the Kashmir and other core issues at international forums and secure itself both internally and externally to counter Indian nefarious plans.

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