

PROCEEDINGS OF INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON INTER-REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY: SOUTH ASIA AND CENTRAL ASIA

NOVEMBER 9-11, 2016



Editors

**Prof. Dr. Khalid Manzoor Butt
Muhammad Manzoor Elahi**

Proceedings of International Conference on
**Inter-Regional Connectivity: South Asia and
Central Asia** (November 9-11, 2016)

Editors

**Prof. Dr. Khalid Manzoor Butt
Muhammad Manzoor Elahi**

ISBN: 978-969-9071-07-2

Published by



**Department of Political Science
Centre of Excellence China Studies
GC University Lahore, Pakistan**

International Conference on Inter-Regional Connectivity: South Asia and Central Asia

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EDITORIAL

Department of Political Science and Centre of Excellence China Studies, GC University, Lahore, jointly organized an International Conference on Inter-Regional Connectivity: South Asia and Central Asia (ICIRCSACA) on November 9-11, 2016 at Bukhari Auditorium, GC University Lahore, Pakistan.

The department has credit of been organizing international conferences every year on significant and contemporary themes since 2013. In addition to the aforesaid conference the department has organized three international conferences so far i.e., International Conference on Water Resources Governance in the Indus Basin (2013), International Conference on Local Representation of Power in South Asia (2014), and International Conference on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (2015).

This conference encompassed within its purview new trends of regionalism and regionalization in connection with indigenous demands and realities of ‘sisterly regions’ i.e. South Asia and Central Asia. The focus of this academic endeavor was to discuss regional dynamics beyond the conventional parameters of regional study and to contribute in the formulation of a theoretical as well as methodological framework that must be synchronized with the Asian milieu. In addition, the conference initiated an academic debate on critical discourse in the realm of regionalism and filled the research gap by constructing a model of inter-regional connectivity across the traditional settings of the regions. The phenomenon of inter-regional connectivity in Asia is need of the time and a way forward for South and Central Asian states, wherein they could get more through cooperative interplay on the dictum of mutual dependence.

The conference accentuated on geostrategic vitality of South Asia for Central Asia and vice versa; under the spectrum of geopolitics, geoeconomics and geoenergy. In this perspective, both regions are interdependent in varied fields. For instance, South Asia endows with pragmatic and cost-effective transit trade route to the Central Asian landlocked states. Whereas, Central Asian hydro-carbon reserves are strategic assets for energy stricken South Asia in order to pacify the latter’s unbridled energy demand. In addition, hydel-power generation of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan could also be a mean of connectivity and liaison between the both regions. Geographical proximity, historical affinities and socio-cultural propinquities are significant means to engulf the bridge of connectivity.

Historically, both the regions were once on the crossroads of Silk Route, a conduit for the transformation of cultures, ideas and commodities from north to south and east to west or vice versa. This route was the hub of world economic activity but wrath of imperial powers, Tsarist Russia and Great Britain, disconnected this strategic link and started a perennial geopolitical vendetta, the Great Game, to extend one’s influence on to others. In this game of imperial preponderance, Central Asia was ‘soft-underbelly’ of Russia; likewise, South Asia was ‘crown of jewel’ for Britain. Later, the rise of British imperial yoke from South Asia and the fall of Soviet ‘iron curtain’ from Central Asia paved the ways to reinvigorate inter-regional connectivity between the aforementioned regions.

Post-Soviet Central Asia is once again ready to revive historical legacy, wherein focus is on economic linkages, strengthening of cultural ties, building of mobility, consolidation of political harmony and culmination of diplomatic bonds. Apart from this, it is equally imperative today to launch joint ventures to quell the rise of terrorism, militancy, and religious extremism for sustainable peace and development in the ‘heart of Asia’. The new framework of inter-regional connectivity is a ‘win-win situation’ for the both regions. This academic initiative, therefore, has been taken up to highlight the vitality of inter-regional connectivity and to provide an opportunity to scholars to further explore avenues of mutual-cooperation.

The conference themes covered multiple dimensions of inter-regional connectivity between South Asia and Central Asia.

- Theme-I: Conceptualizing Inter-Regional Connectivity
- Theme-II: Geopolitics of Corridors: Building Economic and Political Linkages
- Theme-III: South Asia’s Energy Security vis-à-vis Central Asia
- Theme-IV: Peace and Security-Centric Cooperation
- Theme V: South Asia-Central Asia Connectivity and the World

The theme of regional connectivity in Asia received an unprecedented recognition from the academic circles, policy making community, and think-tanks across the globe. We were overwhelmed by the response from national and international academicians to the Call for Papers and received very interesting abstracts. The meeting of Conference Scientific Committee was convened thrice to ensure the blind review process. The committee evaluated each one of the manuscripts for the conference on a number of criteria including the significance and relevance of the topic, clarity and quality of the research questions posed, methodology devised for the study, logical flow of the assumptions and inferences made, and originality as well as structure of the abstract. The committee made its final selection after going through all the abstracts.

Besides 40 national scholars, 25 foreign scholars from 16 countries presented their research papers. It is, indeed, a matter of pride that such a large number of foreign scholars gathered at our University. Scholars from United States of America (USA), Russian Federation, Peoples Republic of China, United Kingdom (UK), Germany, Belgium, Czech Republic, Italy, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Republic of China (Taiwan), India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Singapore participated in the conference. The national and foreign scholars were agreed upon the establishment of a permanent think-tank where academicians and researchers could debate on the emerging issues of regional connectivities.

The conference encompassed nine academic sessions on the aforementioned themes along with inaugural and concluding sessions. Some of the sessions were held simultaneously at Bukhari Auditorium, GCU and GCU Meetings Room. Madam Zakia Shahnawaz, Minister for Higher Education, Government of the Punjab, graced the inaugural session and appreciated the academic and research endeavors of the department. Mr. Ahmed Rashid, a renowned foreign policy analyst and best-selling author of several books on politico-economic and security dynamics of South and Central Asia, delivered a keynote address. The academic sessions were chaired by eminent foreign and national scholars i.e. Mr. Ahmed Rashid (Pakistan), Dr. Bilveer Singh (Singapore), Prof. Dr. Sarfraz Khan (Pakistan), Dr. Martin Hribek (Czech Republic), Dr. Sinderpal Singh (Singapore), Prof. Dr. Hassan Askari Rizvi (Pakistan), Prof. Dr. Ishtiaq Ahmed (Sweden), Dr. Vladimir Boyko (Russia), and Prof. Marvin Weinbaum (USA). We were honored by the presence of Federal Minister for Railways, Khwaja Saad Rafique, as chief guest in the concluding session of the conference. He accentuated on the significance of railway infrastructure in strengthening of intra and inter-regional connectivity.

In the end, we extend our gratitude and profound regards to foreign scholars who came across the globe and made their research contributions. We are also thankful to our national scholars. We appreciate and encourage the support of all the people who extended their hands in this academic and research endeavor. We are highly indebted to Higher Education Commission (HEC), Islamabad, and Punjab Higher Education Commission (PHEC) for the provision of required funds. Last but not least, we are grateful to Prof. Dr. Hassan Amir Shah, Vice Chancellor, GC University, Lahore, for his valuable guidance and financial support.

Editors

Prof. Dr. Khalid Manzoor Butt
Muhammad Manzoor Elahi

WELCOME NOTE

Prof. Dr. Khalid Manzoor Butt

Chairperson, Department of Political Science

Director, Centre of Excellence China Studies

GC University, Lahore, Pakistan.

With permission of VC we begin the program.

Madam Zakia Shah Nawaz, Minister for Higher Education, Government of the Punjab, Keynote Speaker, Mr. Ahmed Rashid, Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is indeed a matter of great pleasure and honor for me to welcome you all here at GC University, Lahore, to attend International Conference on “Inter-Regional Connectivity: South Asia and Central Asia”. At the outset, let me extend a special thanks to all the delegates and participants who have come all the way from Europe, US, China, countries of South and Central Asia, and various parts of Pakistan to present their papers in the conference.

Ladies and Gentlemen, let me share with you that it is the 4th consecutive international conference that the Department of Political Science is very proudly organizing. The conference provides opportunities to discuss important issues of mutual interest and concern at Track-II level. Such initiatives have immense potential to generate ideas and concepts that can create a momentum for academic excellence, human development, and regional peace and cooperation.

The theme of this conference is thought provoking not only for Pakistan but for this part of Asia. The conference seeks to explore economic, political, strategic, and social dimensions of inter-regional connectivity, covering a wide range of subjects of interest and concerns to the countries of the two regions – South Asia and Central Asia. I expect the scholars to bring forth new trends of regionalism in Asia and give suggestions for indigenous realities and demands beyond the conventional parameters of regional study and to contribute in the formulation of a theoretical framework for further research.

As you know, South Asia is not known for strong political and economic cooperation. So, connectivity deficit is pushing it back in the volley of world regions – South Asian region is the least connected one in the world. While this deficit is a result of a number of factors beyond our control, the others are clearly a result of our own bad decisions. A common vision needs to be developed within the regional matrix because the diversity in these regions can be harnessed into collective synergy for the prosperous future of the regions. After the disintegration of Soviet Union the Central Asian energy rich states have got opportunities to stretch themselves to South Asia for economic gains and to find a shortest access to Indian Ocean for trade and commerce. This is the time that countries of South Asia and Central Asia should resolve their bilateral issues and make a mechanism for cooperation and understanding.

Increase in trade and enhanced connectivity would make regional countries a stakeholder in peace and stability while easing the energy constraint to economic growth. This will reduce the levels of conflict and the regions would witness trade, traffic, tourism and energy flow across national borders and would help in healing wounds that have been festering for decades. Major initiatives in this regard can include opening of borders, building logistic infrastructure, extending land access, and entering currency swap and free trade agreements. Such things can be helpful to reduce poverty and enhance the living standards of the people.

Last but not least such geographic linkage will bring political and economic developments which can also address the regional problems like poverty, illiteracy, extremism and intolerance in the region.

The message that I believe this conference should give is “diversity converges into strength”, for Pakistan particularly and for the whole region generally.

I expect that scholars from across the globe will shed light on regional dynamics beyond the conventional parameters of regional study and contribute in formulation of conceptual as well as methodological framework that must be synchronized with the Asian milieu.

I am also grateful to the Chief Guest who has graced the ceremony on a very short notice. I am also thankful to Mr. Ahmed Rashid who is an old student of this great institution and an authority on the topic for accepting our request to deliver keynote address.

For the arrangement of this conference, we have full support of VC, HEC Pakistan and Punjab HEC. This conference cannot be arranged if my faculty and students have not worked hard with commitment and enthusiasm.

Mr. Manzoor Elahi the focal person deserves a round of applause for his immense efforts for the conference.

Once again, I thank all the participants who have come all the way from different parts of the globe and made this event very memorable.

I thank you Ladies and Gentlemen.

VICE CHANCELLOR'S MESSAGE

Prof. Dr. Hassan Amir Shah (SI)

Vice Chancellor

GC University, Lahore, Pakistan.

Good Morning and *Asslam-o-Alaikum*.

It gives me immense pleasure to welcome all of you to this International Conference on Inter-Regional Connectivity: South Asia and Central Asia. I would like to thank Madam Zakia Shahnawaz, Minister for Higher Education, Government of the Punjab. We are honored by her presence. I would also like to thank Mr. Ahmed Rashid, a leading expert and an authority on the regions of South and Central Asia. I don't believe that we could have found a better person to deliver a keynote address. We have delegates from the US, Europe, Central Asia, Russia, China, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Singapore, and Taiwan. I would like to thank all of you in Pakistan and particularly in GC University, Lahore.

The theme of this conference is need of the time and encompasses immense potential to generate ideas and concepts that could pave the way for politico-economic development, regional peace, and cooperation. In this age of connectivity, I consider CPEC the biggest-ever collaborative effort and an apparatus of on-rolling economic cooperation between Pakistan, China, and other regional countries. It is rightly said as game-changer and tool of transformational change in the economic profile of the entire region.

Pakistan and Central Asia, both, needed to be brought out of their isolation. I believe that this conference will help to chalk out an outline on inter-regional connectivity between South and Central Asia. The participants are expected to highlight multiple prospects and challenges in the way of economic, political, strategic and social linkages among the countries of the sister-regions.

I hope the two days of extensive deliberations among the delegates of 18 countries would contribute to make effective recommendations to the government. I expect the scholars to bring forth new trends of regionalism in Asia keeping in view the indigenous realities and demands beyond the conventional parameters of regional study, and contribute in the formulation of a theoretical framework for further research.

Finally, I would like to congratulate the Political Science Department for holding this conference. As Dr. Khalid Manzoor Butt, Chair of the department, told us that this is the fourth international conference being organized by the department. The last international conference was on CPEC. Apart from this, the department organized "International Conference on Water Resource Governance in Indus Basin" and "International Conference on Local Representation of Power in South Asia". But, I think, this conference stands out because of large number of foreign delegates who are making their research contributions.

In the end, I thank you all and enjoy yourself.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Ahmed Rashid *

Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you very much for inviting me. I would really like to thank the Minister, Madam Zakia Shahnawaz, Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Hasan Amir Shah, and Chairperson, Department of Political Science, Prof. Dr. Khalid Manzoor Butt, who invited me.

Thank you so much indeed.

I think all of you probably remember this day it seems that Donald Trump has won the American elections and, frankly speaking, I am very fearful of that what would impact and what is going to happen to the whole world particularly with our region Pakistan, Afghanistan, and India.

I am going to commence my keynote talk about what I see the real tragedies of Central Asian Republics (CARs) after twenty-five years of their independence. The Central Asian states have not been able to link up effectively with the southern tier. The southern tier means Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. We are still struggling to get connectivity between Central Asia, and the southern tier.

Today, I am going to put much focus on internal political dynamics of Central Asia and reasons of dis-connectivity that why and where we stood unsuccessful. The first thing to state is that, remember, the disintegration of Soviet Union in 1991 and 1992. At the time of Soviet dismemberment all the Central Asian leaders were extremely reluctant to get independence. They did not want to get separation from Russia. I was in Central Asia for more than one month. I travelled and met the presidents at that time. They all expressed deep sense of fear and trepidation about becoming independent. One could not blame them because they were completely connected with Moscow. Pipelines, roads, railways, exports, trades and everything had to be channeled through their parent state i.e. Russia. They did not own any infrastructure or organization which could look at southern countries as an exit point.

However, the need to find out access to sea is absolutely vital after independence as all the Central Asian Republics are landlocked. The first connection that Central Asia had with the southern tier was actually the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. Central Asia was the base area for the Soviet Army who sent hundred and twenty thousand troops into Afghanistan. Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan were main logistical bases for the Soviets. Thousands of Central Asian troops fought in Afghanistan. They became acquainted with the fact that many of the Tajik, Uzbek and Turkman troops were having fight with their fellow Muslims, who also belonged to their same ethnic groups in Afghanistan.

This was a kind of wake-up call to all the Central Asian states that there is a world beyond Moscow. Unfortunately, the leadership in Central Asia after independence had a very negative experience with all the leaders of southern tier. Remember that both Pakistan and Iran were supporting the Mujahideen. CIA was not only funding the billions of dollars of weapons to them but also organized the campaign to attack Central Asia. Gulbadin Hikmatyar and other Afghan groups penetrated into Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in order to dismantle the soft-underbelly of Soviet Union. So, Iran and Pakistan were considered unfriendly states. Turkey was also considered unfriendly. They all were arming the Mujahideen and only India was supporting the Afghan communist regime and was considered the friend of the Central Asian states. This was a very inauspicious beginning to the relationship.

Now, let me focus on when the independence came. Firstly, the views of Central Asian leadership were essentially the same and were not different from their parent communist leaders. Unfortunately, there was literally one man rule in four of the five Central Asian states. There was no political parties and many of these

* A renowned foreign policy analyst and best-selling author of several books on politico-economic and security dynamics of South and Central Asia. Following books are on his credit. *The Resurgence of Central Asia* (1994), *Taliban* (2000), *Jihad* (2002), *Descent into Chaos: The US and the Disaster in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia* (2008), and *Pakistan on the Brink, the Future of America, Pakistan and Afghanistan* (2012). His books have been translated into over 40 languages.

states had only one candidate for presidential elections. They were incapable of accommodating many of the regional minorities, religious groups and ethnic groups.

Secondly, the failure of CARs to establish better relationships among themselves was an important matter. There is no connectivity among the CARs that is the real tragedy. No state in the region is self-sufficient in everything. Some of Central Asian states have oil and gas, others have water and others have minerals and what was desperately needed after independence in 1992 was a Central Asian common market.

Intra-regional connectivity and good friendship was missing among all the CARs because the Central Asian leaders did not get on with one another. They were vying to become the regional leader. Karimov of Uzbekistan and Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan were trying to become the primary leader of Central Asia and the poor states i.e. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan became the victim and suffered. There was a constant tussle over the water resources. Unfortunately, the real conflict right now in Central Asia is the issue of water. Water is provided by the mountainous terrain of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. It is wanted desperately for the cotton fields of Uzbekistan and for some parts of Kazakhstan but there is a dispute over what these small states would get in return from the supply of water. I didn't see any connectivity within the region.

One can well understand the fear of Central Asian leaders. I would like to shed light on the political movements that erupted at the time of independence. First of all, remember, the very lethal and brutal civil war that Tajikistan went through from 1992 to 1997. About 50,000 people were killed and brought about devastation of the Tajik economy and society. In the end, UN peace efforts initiated something new that Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP), one of the leading opponent party in civil war, became part of the Tajik national parliament. It was the first and only time that moderate Muslim party was given seats in any of the Central Asian states' parliament. Later, unfortunately, the whole peace process was unraveled and IRP was declared treasonable and thrown out of the parliament. Many people, including myself was thought that this is the model that other CARs should apply for the regional peace.

Unfortunately, there has been backlash against the Muslim groups in many parts of Central Asia. Out of these four states only Kyrgyzstan - smallest, weakest, and most vulnerable because of lack of resources - has shown some kind of democratic aspirations. Kyrgyzstan is now a parliamentary democracy. It has abandoned the presidential system because its two presidents were totally corrupt and ousted by the mass movements. In fact, these mass movements were seen with great suspicion by the other Central Asian states because they have highly centralized presidential system.

I think at the same time the real tragedy has been the refusal of Central Asian leaders to accommodate their own legacy and inheritance of Islam. Let me touch on this very briefly. For many of us in South Asia after *Makkah* and *Madina*, Central Asia is the third seat of Islamic learning and spirituality. Most of the Sufi movements that we follow very closely in the Indian subcontinent have their origin from Central Asia. The Naqshbania, Qadria, and all other spiritual schools have their roots in Central Asia.

Apart from this, in the nineteenth century when Central Asia was ruled by Tsarist Russia, one can also witness a modernizing Muslim movement called the 'Jadids' which tried to do work like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan of Aligarh. The Jadids were trying to mix modernism and the benefits of colonialism with Islamic teachings. After the communist revolution in 1917, Soviets faced a very large protest by the Central Asian Muslims against the Red Army in shape of the Basmachi Movement and resultantly, all the states produced very strong and effective Basmachis.

Later, there is no doubt that Central Asia suffered because of the war in Afghanistan which went on in the last decade of twentieth century. Pakistan supported, first, Gulbadin Hikmatyar and then the Taliban. India supported the Northern Alliance of Afghanistan. There was not merely a terrible civil war in Afghanistan but a full regional conflict between two sets of states was at its apex. The regional players were supporting different sides in the Afghan civil war.

Such regional environment was not in favour of Central Asian states. They did not want to be influenced by the outer power. They feared hugely, especially, when the Taliban took northern Afghanistan and established their control in Kunduz in 1997. They had apprehension that the Central Asian militant groups would join hands with the Taliban and in that case militancy and extremism would dismantle the regional peace.

I followed very closely the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) which actually had fought guerilla war in three of the Central Asian states even before the incidents of 9/11 and without the influence of Osama Bin Laden. They had fought in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Later, the IMU was shoved into Afghanistan where they joined hands with the Taliban and eventually fought against the Americans and NATO troops after 9/11.

However, the proliferation of Islamic fundamentalist groups and their extremist activities in Afghanistan and its northern peripheral areas frightened off Central Asian states from making contacts with the southern tier. Central Asia also suffered from very dramatic terrorist attack. The first major terrorist attack was at Uzbekistan in March 2004 when three cities were hit by bombs and killed forty seven people. The following year in 2005 there was the uprising in Andijan, Uzbekistan. In which the regime killed hundreds of people in the streets of Andijan. The President Karimov sanctioned by the US, Europe, the UN, and the global community which resulted in withdrawal of US military bases from Uzbekistan. Karimov asked the Bush administration to evacuate the military bases which were given to them to fight global war against terrorism in Afghanistan.

Unfortunately, the influence of the Islamic State (IS) or the Daish cannot be denied in Central Asia. The fact is, around four hundred Kyrgyz have joined the Daish in Syria and over eight hundred Tajiks have also joined it. There is a full-fledged Uzbek battalion which is linked to IMU and fighting against President Bashar-al-Assad in Syria. The fear, for sure, is that these militants who have traveled all across the Middle East will come back into Central Asia. A Tajik colonel of the Special Forces of Tajikistan joined Daish and became the Minister of War for Daish. So the Central Asians have dominant influence in the Syrian crisis and of course this is very disturbing.

Let me just know you as I have stressed on all these reasons that why the Central Asian leadership is reluctant in opening up links with the southern tier. It is also the fact that, at the same time, their economies have suffered terribly. Now, obviously, the oil rich and gas rich states of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have done well over this period and their economies are flourishing but there has been very little trickledown effect to raise the living standards of the public because there is a lot of unrest in these oil and gas rich states.

The poor states, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, have not carried out the necessary economic reforms and unfortunately have done very badly. But since the global economic crisis in 2008 all of Central Asia has suffered badly. The prices of oil have gone down so income has gone down of the Central Asian states. The prices of the minerals have gone down and the exportable commodities like wheat, copper, iron, and many others are not getting international market rates. We have also seen a growing dependence of CARs on migrant labour. As you know more than fifty percent of the GDP of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan is dependent on migrant labour who are sending back remittances. In fact, we know this is not a secure way to anchor your economy.

Instead of increasing production and productive capacity at home you're exporting labour and that labour is allergic to all the whims and fancies of the host country. What we have seen is that fifty to sixty percent of the remittances that were coming before 2008 has dropped down to maximum level. These governments have really suffered. Their currencies have also depreciated by thirty to forty percent. They are facing a huge economic crises.

The fast-growing economies of the leading Asian countries have created strong imperatives for inter-regional as well as intra-regional connectivity, however, but Afghanistan war and bilateral disputes among the Asian states are major hurdles in the much needed process. Even intra-regional connectivity within South Asia and Central Asia does not exist.

It is ironic that now the outside powers, Pakistan and Afghanistan, are trying to build up some kind of cooperation within the Central Asian Republics. We have tied up links with Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan in joint efforts to import electricity from Central Asia and for that we need intra-regional cooperation of all the Central Asian states and cooperation with the southern tier.

Now, in the midst of this, let me tell you finally what the hopes are of connectivity right now. Well, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan have inaugurated a CASA-1000 electricity project i.e. a transmission line for supplying electricity to northern Afghanistan and coming into Pakistan. A line that could eventually even be extended to India. Tajikistan has launched the construction of 1.2 billion power link that will allow the export of its electricity from the Rogun Dam which still has to be built.

Pakistan has done great deal to clean up a lot of its domestic terrorist groups but still has to deal with external groups such as afghan Taliban, Al-Qaida, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), etc. Such non-state actors are still a threat to peace and stability not only in Pakistan but also to the whole region to build the silk route. China, who is a major player in this ‘great game’ of inter-regional connectivity, must make efforts in ending conflict between Pakistan and Afghanistan, and Pakistan and India. It is not easy to understand that how to build infrastructure across the Central Asian region. The relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan and the hostile relationship between Pakistan and India are hampering the process of inter-regional connectivity.

We hope that this conference will bring more ideas e.g. how to increase intra-regional and inter-regional cooperation in Asia. Pakistan can play a very significant role in strengthening of inter-regional ties. China-Pakistan-Economic-Corridor (CPEC) is a great source of economic and political cooperation between Central Asian states and the southern tier. It could create greater trade and investment opportunities. In this way, Pakistan will be a gateway to CARs to strengthen their ties with South Asia and the rest of the world.

Secondly, we all have to play a major role in bringing the war in Afghanistan to an end. We are not going to see the materialization of CPEC in its essence if this war continues in Afghanistan. For this purpose we need to have better relation and cooperation with India on this matter. India also has to believe on this fact that it cannot maintain the 7 percent of GDP growth rate while leaving rest of South Asia in doldrums. India has to help to raise the economic fortune of all the states of South Asia. It cannot be on one-state track and ignore others.

I wish you all the best in this conference.

Thank you.

CHIEF GUEST'S ADDRESS

Madam Zakia Shahnawaz

Minister for Higher Education
Government of the Punjab, Pakistan.

Prof. Dr. Hassan Amir Shah, Vice Chancellor, GC University, Lahore, Prof. Dr. Khalid Manzoor Butt, Chairperson, Department of Political Science, Mr. Ahmed Rashid, and scholars from around the globe, and Ladies and Gentlemen Aslam-o-Alaikum.

I don't think so it is fair to speak after 'Ahmed Rashid'. He followed the Afghan Jihad (1979) and has closely observed the political and security dynamics of this region. We all look at him and his books as a great contribution in the academic realm.

I feel honored to be here at this university. My family studied here. This university is one of the prestigious institutions which produced many scholars. I am also honored to welcome national and international scholars who came and attended this international conference on Inter-Regional Connectivity: South Asia and Central Asia.

This is very important to say that Department of Political Science, GC University, Lahore, upholds academic and research activities and this time organizes its fourth international conference. I would like to say that all the other universities should follow suit and organize such valuable conferences because it provides an opportunity to national scholars to come across with foreign scholars in order to strengthen academic cooperation.

I see, our regions are in turmoil. We are, therefore, talking about regional cooperation and trying to establish peace and stability by strengthening mutual interaction at inter and intra-regional levels. The states have to collectively resolve these matters in order to deal with regional issues. Indeed, peace is very far, if countries as being together strive and make possible contributions then there will be more and more peace in our regions.

Nature has gifted us all kinds of communication routes. New trends of regionalism and regionalization are demanding connectivity between South Asia and Central Asia. Pakistan is located on a very significant geographical place in South Asia. The region is on the crossroads of Asia and endows with cross border mobility via web of road, rail and sea routes. Central Asia is a landlocked region and enriched with hydro-carbon resources. Both the regions are inter-dependent and the cooperation between them is inevitable for the economic and human development.

Historically, both the regions were once on the crossroads of Silk route which was hub of world economic activity. I am hopeful that inter-regional connectivity between South Asia and Central Asia will enhance the opportunities of trade and economy. These land locked states will get access towards the outer world via Pakistan, one of the shortest routes from Central Asia to Indian Ocean.

I hope that scholars will provide a comprehensive study and practical approaches for policy and decision makers on the issues of regional connectivity. Ahmed Rashid has presented a very good description of what is happening and the scholars will, surely, moot upon the possible avenues of connectivity in the next academic sessions. I hope you will give us a feedback on what we should plan and what sort of framework we should take into account in order to make decisions on the issues of inter-regional connectivity. That will be very useful to us and we hope to follow your guidance and advices.

In the end, I would like to thank to all of you for having me here today, I am sorry that Chief Minister, Punjab, could not come today as he was busy on another very serious and important matter. I wish he was here but I tried my level best to present our stance on regional connectivity for political and economic development of Pakistan as well as the regions.

Before I leave, I would like to read one of the couplet (*shair*) from Dr. Alama Iqbal's poetry as today is 'Iqbal Day' and he was also an eminent scholar of this esteemed institution where we are present today.

کھول انکھیں زمین دیکھ، فلک دیکھ، فضا دیکھ
مشرق سے ابھرتے ہوئے سورج کو ذرا دیکھ

Open your eyes and look above,
Look at the streak of dawn

I wish this conference a big success.

Academic Session: 1

Conceptualizing Inter-Regional Connectivity

Session Chair: Mr. Ahmed Rashid

RECONCILIATION IN SOUTH ASIA AS A PREREQUISITE FOR INTER-REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

Marvin G. Weinbaum*

Abstract: *Increased connectivity between South and Central Asia is impossible in the absence of substantial progress towards political reconciliation among the countries within both regions. In South Asia, economic growth and prosperity are impeded by security-driven agendas in Pakistan, Afghanistan and India that revolve around the armed struggle in Afghanistan and the Kashmir dispute. Rivalry between India and Pakistan sustained by special interest elites strongly encumbers trans-regional movement of goods and services. Pakistan and Afghanistan are geographically pivotal to realizing the prospects for connectivity with their northern neighbours. But mutual distrust leading to defensive trade, energy and other economic policies constrains opportunities to enjoy the benefits of cooperation. Overcoming differences among South Asian states and greater outreach to Central Asia will require fuller appreciation of their common stakes and entail the risk-taking that comes with adopting new security perspectives.*

Keywords: Connectivity, Regionalism, Conflict, South Asia, Central Asia

Introduction

The thesis of this paper is that positive engagement among the countries within South Asia is critical to establishing effective connectivity with the states of Central Asia. The ability to enjoy mutually beneficial inter-regional links cannot be realized in the absence of substantial progress towards reconciliation between Pakistan and its neighbours. The mutual distrust of South Asian countries and their absorption with conflicts figure strongly in retarding the region's overall economic growth and prosperity. Failure to reduce tensions that are for the most part security driven has impeded the economic and structural reforms necessary to increase trade, facilitate investment, and promote energy transfers and cultural exchanges. Without change, South Asia stands to be left far behind China, Russia, Iran and other external powers in a new Great Game for Central Asian resources and markets.

Two major confrontations animate the tensions within South Asia—those between Pakistan and India and between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Lesser rivalries exist between India and Nepal and Sri Lanka, and between Bangladesh and Pakistan and Bangladesh and India. However, it is the particular triad of Pakistan, Afghanistan and India that most occupies this paper. Without resolving or marginalizing two related areas of tension, namely the armed conflict in Afghanistan and the Kashmir dispute, a growth of inter-regional connectivity, particularly multilaterally, is unlikely. Although relations between Central Asian states are not dealt with in this paper, the region's inter-state rivalries inhibit cooperation and progress towards closer integration with South Asia.

Progress in regional interconnectivity involves four processes: recognition, definition, implementation and evaluation. As this paper will show, it is in the area of recognition that gains are most visible. Countries of South and Central Asia have slowly come around to appreciating their common economic and security interests. Over the last half-decade there have emerged more organized efforts to provide mechanisms for inter-regional cooperation. Several member organizations have spelled out the most promising areas of development and mutual gain.

Definition, the second process in achieving regional connectivity, involves setting out priorities and principles to guide cooperation, and will be seen to have had mixed results. At various meetings of regional actors over the last several years, concrete project proposals have defined the need for a regional transportation infrastructure, the harnessing of untapped energy, accessing water resources, and breaking down trade restrictions. But to date, inter-regional, multilateral dialogue has mostly resulted in mere wish lists of projects that are for the near future unrealizable.

Few projects or programs have reached the implementation phase. It is where even the best laid plans and development strategies to achieve connectivity have come up empty. The few successes are nearly all

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bilateral rather than multilateral. Some are unable to realize their potential because they were poorly conceived and fell prey to competing national objectives. Most have failed because they depended on government policies where they encounter problems of political will, administrative capacity, and endemic corruption. Still farther off on the path to connectivity, whether multilateral or bilateral, is a process of evaluating projects and programs that is systematic, objective, and transparent. It is a stage that judges whether countries have met their commitments and allowed for accountability. Ideally, a well-developed connectivity regime would be empowered with soft enforcement responsibilities that, while careful to respect national sovereignty, could provide the multi-national vetting mechanisms that lead to concrete criticism and identify specific areas for improvement.

Promises and Reality

There seems little doubt that the benefits of cooperation between countries of South and Central Asia far outweigh any drawbacks. They would be in a better position to break down trade restraints and share development goals that include building a regional transportation infrastructure, harnessing untapped energy and accessing water resources. Economically it makes sense by enabling them to reduce costs, pool their resources and take advantage of their complementary capacities.¹ Improved coordination could overcome such problems as wasted resources and development assistance working at cross-purposes. An inter-regional framework that furthers cooperation and coordination would also allow countries of South and Central Asia to pursue counterterrorism and counternarcotic missions and meet their other security challenges.

Yet countries in both regions have failed to progress very far towards economic integration or forge common approaches towards security. For all the logic of greater connectivity, rather than working together in areas where they share common ground, deeply embedded national rivalries and entrenched economic and other elite interests have impeded change.² While the regions are already connected by terrorist networks, drug trafficking and smuggling, their governments' defensive hedging strategies lead to creating barriers to the movement of people, energy and ideas.³

Within South Asia increased trade would on balance be in the interests of all its states. At present South Asia has anaemic intra-regional trade, at least of the licit kind. At 5 percent of total trade, it is the lowest in the world.⁴ While informal trade is much higher, it denies governments needed taxes. Protectionist and politically motivated obstacles, most of them non-tariff, impede economic investment and growth. Freer trade within South Asia is also a necessary precondition for increased commerce with Central Asia. Connectivity could create greater space for private sectors to work together with the public sectors within and across borders. Given the incentives and appropriate legal frameworks, the private sector may help facilitate the expansion and transfer of administrative and technical skills. Furthermore, region-wide connectivity can bring better opportunities for drawing on human resources in order to improve civil services and vocational education. At the same time it is necessary to be careful that hopes and plans do not too far overreach their capacity to succeed. To fail too often may discourage and threaten worthy projects. It could turn off the foreign and local investment and the popular support needed to be successful.

Undoubtedly, the region's most ambitious attempt to further integration is the seven-member South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Founded in 1985, SAARC was created to encourage cooperation over a wide range of activities including finance, agriculture, energy, and poverty alleviation. It was especially expected to lead to the removal of obstacles to trade, most importantly non-tariff barriers. The Association committed itself to accelerating liberal trade agreements through a South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA). However, burdened by the adversarial relations between SAARC's leading members—Pakistan and India, the association is crippled, a victim of unresolved political issues and special interest group aims. This glaring multilateral failure dampens prospects for the prosperity and stability of South Asia and augurs badly for meeting the goals of the Istanbul Process.

The potential economic dividends of inter-regional economic cooperation are perhaps most apparent in the energy sector. The economies of India and Pakistan have significant and growing energy needs. The demand for energy in India and Pakistan is growing at rate of over 6% a year.⁵ Like other South Asian countries they are not going to be able to come close to meeting their energy requirements from domestic sources. Among major projects, the most talked about to meet these energy shortfalls is the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) natural gas pipeline. Funded by the World Bank, TAPI would in addition to meeting domestic

needs award transit fees to Afghanistan, help industrialize the country, create jobs for its youth, and generally aid in normalizing the Afghan economy and society.

Security concerns in Afghanistan and Pakistan aside, formidable financial hurdles for making necessary infrastructural improvements are likely to hold back progress on TAPI. And despite Turkmenistan's desire to diversify its buyers, TAPI may become difficult to justify with China's opening its own gas pipeline to Turkmenistan. CASA 1000, another ambitious project, also faces financial challenges. Originally intended as a multinational project to carry gas and electricity from Central Asia to Afghanistan, Pakistan and possibly India, CASA 1000 has become strictly a bilateral Tajik-Afghan venture.

Most of the hopes for promoting and directing multilateral inter-regional connectivity have rested on bringing together countries in an organizational framework. The Istanbul Conference convened in 2011, from which emerged the Heart of Asia concept, was organized in the awareness that without collaborating in stabilizing Afghanistan the 14 members would become more exposed to the forces of extremism and terrorism.⁶ The Istanbul Process mandated for itself introducing confidence-building measures, contributing to strengthening people-to-people contacts, and bringing cohesion to regional integrating efforts already in progress.⁷ The Istanbul Process, not incidentally, also coincided with the United States' Silk Road initiative that sought to have Afghanistan's neighbours take greater responsibility towards contributing to the country's economic growth and stability. It fit well with American policy determination to reduce its commitments to Afghanistan.

Also with Afghanistan's stability as its focal point, the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA) was initiated by the Kabul government in 2005 to provide a forum to promote stabilization in Afghanistan and the wider region through economic cooperation and attracting investment.⁸ Its six meetings—the last in 2015 attended by 11 regional countries and 19 other countries, and 40 various organizations—have identified projects in hydropower, counter-narcotics, trade facilitation, among other areas. But the RECCA conferences, despite their elaborate ceremony and ambitious aims, have to date few concrete achievements.

Not to be upstaged, the Chinese and Russian-led Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), whose membership includes all but one of the Central Asia states together with most recently Pakistan and India, have co-opted many of the ideas of broad geographic cooperation that are objectives of the Heart of Asia grouping. The SCO has in some respects superseded for South Asia the ailing SAARC. Separately, broad regional integration took on new meaning with China's announced One Belt, One Road initiative—its own iteration of revived historic Silk Road trade routes. The most prominent application of this concept is China's promised massive investment in Pakistan's infrastructure through creating a China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). While bilateral, like several other initiatives serving China's foreign and economic policy interests, CPEC is meant to promote the idea of ultimately linking China to much of South and Central Asia and the Middle East.

With all the promise of increased connectivity between regions, it should also be understood that many of the aspirations of South Asian states for greater trade and other access have been premised on Central Asia representing a highly lucrative new frontier that would somehow, especially in the cases of Pakistan and Afghanistan, be the solution to most of their economic and security problems. South Asian countries have sometimes overestimated the compatibility of their economies and cultures with those of their northern neighbours. Affected by weakly integrated economies and adversarial political relations, South Asian states also have often not fully taken into account the competition from countries like Iran, Turkey, China and Russia.

The Triad

With reconciliation among the key powers of South Asia as a precondition for achieving connectivity with Central Asia, any progress will be marked by the ability of Pakistan, Afghanistan and India to move beyond the enduring suspicions and distrust that have consumed them and have relegated the creation of linkages to Central Asia to the backburner. For that to change, the security dynamic that drives the rivalries between Pakistan and India and between Pakistan and Afghanistan must evolve to reflect the mutual benefits of cooperation. Many of the tensions in these three South Asian states arise from the asymmetries in their military and economic strengths that lead to defensive strategies impeding the policies needed for a more integrated region. The unresolved issues that stand between them leave little political space for leaders to take the necessary risks that compromise solutions entail. These countries are more inclined towards hedging strategies than

undertaking new initiatives, however promising. Potentially far-reaching agreements also easily fall prey to the special interests of economic elites. With greater political will, freer intra-regional trade of goods and services, and infrastructural promotion becomes possible. Similarly, the ability to deal effectively with transnational drug trafficking and terrorism can be enhanced significantly with risen political will.

Pakistan and in particular Afghanistan are pivotal to capitalizing on the opportunities for inter-regional cooperation. Geographically, both countries can serve as crossroads for trade and energy transfers. But a violent Afghanistan and insecure Pakistan leave that potential unfulfilled. The Afghan conflict accounts for many of the tensions within South Asia and the apprehensions of its neighbours. The feared export of militants and their ideologies is a driving factor in the call for cooperation between South and Central Asia. The hope is that by facilitating Afghanistan's emergence as a hub of economic activity integrated within a regional framework, the Afghan economy can be strengthened and the regime may be better able to fend off insurgency. No country in the vicinity believes it would be well served by a Taliban victory. India and Pakistan have reason to be concerned about a radical Islamic government in Afghanistan that inspires and empowers Islamic militancy in their own countries. As the perceived threat from militant Islamists grows, the states of South Asia may find additional motives for cooperation among themselves and with Central Asia Central Asia states. Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan fear security risks from Afghanistan were the United States to entirely withdraw its forces and should the Taliban overrun the country.

If Afghanistan is going to take its place as a catalyst for broad regional wellbeing, regional actors must step up as international economic and development assistance to Afghanistan declines. While no substitute, they can make the region more hospitable by following through on collaborative projects and lowering trade and border restrictions. They can also do more in sharing their development knowhow and personnel. But it may be further necessary that regional partners, without becoming directly involved in Afghanistan's political affairs, impress upon the Afghan government the need for domestic reforms. The implementation of projects, public or private, is obviously compromised by corruption that more broadly undermines and distorts economic growth. Also, the corrosive effects across regions of poppy cultivation on development plans and the society itself have to be confronted.

As much as a struggling Afghanistan is perceived as posing a threat to its neighbourhood, its problems must also be understood as a product of a security-driven region and a competitive international environment.⁹ Afghanistan is conspicuously an arena in which others' rivalries are played out. The country has been caught up in a strategic contest between India and Pakistan, resulting in what is a long running proxy war in Afghanistan, and also in a global war on terrorism that began with U.S. military intervention after 9/11. Involvement in the American-led war against terrorism in Afghanistan and Pakistan's own struggle with insurgents and militant extremists forces both countries to look at its neighbours through the lens of these conflicts.

No small part of the absence of greater cooperation among the states of South Asia is that India, as South Asia's ascendant power, has not played its role with particular skill or understanding of what regional hegemony entails. Rather than choosing to exercise leadership to foster mutually beneficial economic growth or trust building, it has helped to engender resentment and distrust among its neighbours.¹⁰ India has done little to calm Pakistani fears of encirclement or allay fears, however unrealistic, that India has designs to dismember Pakistan. It also reinforces views among Afghans that Pakistan is an overbearing neighbour, seeking to make Afghanistan an economic and political vassal.

Tensions between India and Pakistan have made India less willing to join in major energy transfer projects with Central Asian states from which it could greatly profit. Lacking India's participation, critically needed energy projects have become less economically feasible. India's reluctance grows out of a fear that pipelines or electrical grid lines that cross through Pakistan can be easily sabotaged. No less important is India's conclusion that it would be vulnerable to blackmail in the event that Pakistan threatened to cut off supplies. Pakistan does indeed have a history of closing its borders for transit to achieve political leverage.

The continuing controversies surrounding trade between Afghanistan and Pakistan offer a good picture of the difficulties achieving regional cooperation. The Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit and Trade Agreement, first signed in 1965, again in 2010 and then renegotiated in 2016, was designed to strengthen trade relations and loosen regulations. It was intended to ensure that Afghan exports have truck access to Pakistan's Indian border at Wagah and to the port of Karachi. In return Pakistani goods were to be allowed to move freely across

Afghanistan, including to Central Asia. But in what has become one the thornier issues between the two countries, the accord has never permitted Indian goods bound for Afghanistan to transit Pakistani soil. Nor in periodically closing the border, has Pakistan regularly permitted Afghan goods the access promised. During one recent brief closure at Wagah, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani threatened to retaliate by cutting off Pakistan's transit routes in his country.¹¹

Protectionism in the form of tariffs, unnecessary regulations and border restrictions is a familiar constraint on trade between Pakistan and India. Pakistan tends to employ non-tariff barriers (NTB) that focus on general categories of goods, particularly politically sensitive agricultural imports, while India often targets particular industries and trading partners, including China. Many of the leading NTBs employed by India involve delays caused by bureaucratic barriers.¹² Although free trade between Pakistan and India has been the subject of long discussion and negotiations, agreement has most recently broken down over the exclusion list that governs allowable imports. Several key industries in Pakistan and possibly the military are uneasy about the prospect that the trade will be uneven with cheaper Indian goods flooding a Pakistan whose own products cannot compete. Intra-regional cooperation was also set back by Pakistan's refusal in March of 2015 to participate in the trans-South Asian road connectivity project, the landmark Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA), which was agreed to several months later by Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal.¹³

What Can Be Done

Progress in achieving cooperation within South Asia — a condition for connectivity with Central Asia — involves reducing current tensions between Pakistan and India over Kashmir and those between Pakistan and Afghanistan created by their respective insurgencies. In both cases, their differences have resisted solutions for nearly 40 years, which suggests the need for new approaches. Despite most conventional thinking, the Kashmir imbroglio is unlikely to be surmounted by confronting the intractable issue directly. Many tantalizing compromise formulas, both ones publically revealed and those discussed through backchannels, have died quietly. Instead, the best hope for resolution of the dispute would seem to lie in its being subsumed within transformational normalization of relations between Pakistan and India. That organic, incremental process would emerge out of mutually benefiting economic, security, environmental, and cultural agreements that lead to the freer movement of people and goods and ideas. Only then, having found meaningful common ground, can the seemingly intractable Kashmir dispute be possibly defused with a jointly satisfying compromise. The history of conflict resolution elsewhere suggests this is how entrenched territorial conflicts often end.

Aside from a major, potentially nuclear, armed conflict between Pakistan and India, chaos in Afghanistan offers a worst case scenario for the states of South and Central Asia. A sharply deteriorating Afghanistan could have the effect of again drawing India, Russia, and Iran into a protracted Afghan civil war. An emergent radical Islamic regime could quickly shed its nationalist agenda in aligning with insurgent groups, intent on destabilizing regimes, particularly in Pakistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. It would mark a major setback for inter-regional cooperation, as these and other states would be consumed with trying to insulate themselves from jihadists.

For the time being, the proxy or shadow war in Afghanistan shows as in Kashmir no sign of diminishing and may be worsening. Only a Kabul government that perseveres militarily in the face of strengthened insurgency and with international support stabilizes the economy, can survive and begin to change the strategic thinking in New Delhi and Islamabad about Afghanistan. Also required is that Afghan leaders reconcile differences and also make significant domestic economic and administrative reforms. Only then can the Kabul leadership be able to regain the confidence of Afghan citizens who yearn for a government able to protect them and provide for a better life. With this it becomes possible to convey to Afghans that time is on the government's side, not the Taliban's. The outcome is more likely to resemble a process of reintegrating insurgent fighters than the striking of a grand bargain with the opposition.

Reconciliation gains anywhere within South Asia could carry a multiplier effect. Marked improvement in relations between India and Pakistan would greatly lessen Islamabad's fear of India's motives in Afghanistan. Pakistan in turn would have less reason to hold on to its Afghan proxies, thereby improving chances of Afghanistan's stabilization and also lessening Afghanistan's need to turn to India as a counterweight to Pakistan. With more cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan and the mutual benefits to their economies, their disputed border over the legacy issue of the Durand Line would almost certainly fade away. A stabilized,

reasonably peaceful Afghanistan would then be in a position to realize its aim to become a nonaligned, neutral state ready to assume a role in connecting South and Central Asia.

Among external powers, the United States, which is regularly engaged with Pakistan, India and Afghanistan, encourages cooperation and conciliation among them. However, its capacity to help to resolve the region's issues is highly limited. In the past American diplomacy has been most effective in helping to defuse crises that have reached a near boiling point. Whether, with its reduced presence in the region and perceived strategic tilt towards India, the United States will have the needed credibility is uncertain. Meanwhile, as the American influence diminishes in the region, Washington has welcomed a larger Chinese presence so long as China's involvement contributes to stabilizing the economies of Pakistan and Afghanistan.

China may be ready to play a more active role in reducing tensions in South Asia, and its One Belt, One Road policy signals a possible desire to help strengthen links between South and Central Asia. China's recent investments in the economies of Pakistan and Afghanistan, and growing interest in the resources of Central Asian states carry a greater stake in the future stability of both regions. Less clear is how far the Chinese are prepared to go in pushing for reconciliation between Afghanistan and Pakistan, or the extent of China's commitment to help in tampering down tensions better Pakistan and India.

With the current prospects so dim for South Asian conciliation, and inter-regional coordination and cooperation still more in the realm of promise than delivery, it is necessary to appreciate that there are no short cuts to interconnectivity. Outside actors and the creation of various multilateral structures to promote inter-region connectivity cannot resolve differences among Pakistan, India and Afghanistan. In the end, the moves towards reconciliation must come from the states themselves. It is then that the avenues to engagement with Central Asia can fully open. Still, despite the many obstacles and limited progress to date, inter-regional connectivity can and must remain a goal. Its ultimate contribution to the well-being of all the countries of South and Central Asia are self-evident.

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CONNECTIVITY VS. NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY THREATS: THE INEVITABILITY AND COUNTERING MEASURES

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Abstract: *The aim of this paper is to introduce the unavoidable side effect accompanied with the regional or global connectivity. Definition of the non-traditional security threat will firstly be presented in this paper. The nature of the non-traditional security threat and its association with the connectivity will be discussed subsequently. Further, the inevitability of the non-traditional security threats emerged together with the increasing transnational flow of personnel, capital, merchandise, service and information caused by the global or regional connectivity will also be introduced. Categories of the non-traditional security threats will be listed and concluded with certain general characteristics for further discussion later in this paper. Counter-measures for eliminating or preventing these non-traditional security threats as well as those transnational negative impacts will be analyzed. Three different, including global, regional and bilateral, approaches for managing the non-traditional security threats brought by the connectivity will be discussed according to their individual appropriate conditions. In the end of this paper, certain unbiased perspectives regarding the inter-regional connectivity between South Asia and Central Asia will be presented by the outsider, the author of this paper, from the East Asia for serving all this respectful conference participants' interests.*

Keywords: non-traditional security threat, connectivity, five circulations, global effort, regional mechanism

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to introduce the unavoidable side effect accompanied with the regional or global connectivity. Definition of the non-traditional security threat will firstly be presented in this paper. The nature of the non-traditional security threat and its association with the connectivity will be discussed subsequently. Further, the inevitability of the non-traditional security threats emerged together with the increasing transnational flow of personnel, capital, merchandise, service and information caused by the global or regional connectivity will also be introduced. Categories of the non-traditional security threats will be listed and concluded with certain general characteristics for further discussion later in this paper.

Counter-measures for eliminating or preventing these non-traditional security threats as well as those transnational negative impacts will be analyzed. Three different, including global, regional and bilateral, approaches for managing the non-traditional security threats brought by the connectivity will be discussed according to their individual appropriate conditions. In the end of this paper, certain unbiased perspectives regarding the inter-regional connectivity between South Asia and Central Asia will be presented by the outsider, the author of this paper, from the East Asia for serving all this respectful conference participants' interests.

Definition of Non-Traditional Security Threats

Non-traditional security threat sometimes is also known as non-conventional security threat. It is a security issue gradually concerned by the international society after the Cold War. The concept is defined by dividing the security threats into categories of "soft" and "hard". This categorization approach is increasingly accepted by various governmental agencies, intelligence communities and academic circles. Nonetheless, there is indeed no clear dividing line among innumerable types of threats. It therefore is quite common to see different threats would not only tangle together but also mutually affect in many cases.¹

Non-traditional security threat is generally defined as those threats other than the result of military, politics and diplomacy. The non-traditional security threat remains capable to affect the survival and development of sovereign states as well as mankind.² There are many different forms of the non-traditional security threats including terrorism, epidemic diseases, piracy, transnational crimes, illegal immigration, environmental deterioration, economic instability, financial disruption and information misconduct or even attacks on informational exchange. A long list of non-traditional security threats can be drafted as long as these

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threats are not originated from the direct consequences of military actions, political maneuvers or diplomatic interactions; regardless they are premediated or unintentionally produced.

In order to effectively assess the impacts possibly caused by these non-traditional security threats and to formula measures for managing these security challenges, we should grasp their linkage relationship with the traditional threats. We may sensibly expect that the scale of the resources for coping with the non-traditional security threats will be inevitably less than the resources allocated for dealing with the traditional security threats. Nonetheless, the nature does not imply destructions or damages conceivably created by the non-traditional security threats will be less significant than the traditional security threats.³ Frankly speaking, there is clear and precise definition for the non-traditional security threats. Moreover, many traditional security threats caused by military, political and diplomatic behaviors may have the possibility to trig the crisis of the non-traditional security threats. As comparing of the traditional security threats and the non-traditional security threats, they can be mutually affected. The reciprocal causation relationship between these two categories of security threats does exist. Traditional security threats can be derived consequences of the non-traditional security threats. On the other hand, these two kinds of security threats may occur together at the same period of time.

As the governance of the government is ineffective, it may intensify the non-traditional security threat and worsen the situations. Particularly, many of the non-traditional security threats can only be well-managed by mature law-enforcement measures. For those areas within the territorial dispute zones without clear demarcation arrangement, they are very easily becoming the heavens for transnational crimes and illegal immigration activities. Especially, when neighboring states are lack of channels for exchanging information and cooperative relationship, these kinds of non-traditional security threats would be widely spread everywhere along the borders.

Nevertheless, there are several existed examples indicating that there is a possibility to eliminated non-traditional security threats as the political rivalry and military stalemate vividly presents. The common border areas between two German states during the Cold War era and the De-Military Zone along the two-Koreas still with high tensions so far, the civilian activities are relatively insignificant because of near the military stalemate lines. Such situations may considerably reduce the non-traditional security threats such as the environmental pollutions thus turning beneficial to the ecological preservations.⁴

Although we may therefore conclude that there might not be necessarily existed a causation relationship between the traditional security threats and their non-traditional counterparts, yet, an implicit linkage between these two categories does undeniably exist. Whether any particular security threat may trigger another security threat is in essence circumstantial. It all depends on those conditions at the moment. However, to assess the possibility of triggering other security threats, regardless they are traditional or non-traditional security threats should be a sensible issue to be considered. Especially, many natural disasters such as earthquakes in recent years had ever led to other catastrophic consequences like tsunami, collapse of infrastructures, disorder of social systems and even failure of national governance.

Viewing from other angle, for those military forces specifically established and trained for dealing with the traditional security threats and those assets and equipment designed and produced for these challenges, whether they can be effectively converted as the options for tackling the non-traditional security threats, it is indeed an issue worth of further study. Basically, the military forces, law enforcement units and emergency reaction institution, no matter their original attributions are designed for aiming at either traditional security threats or their non-traditional counterparts; they are defined as the core elements for responding national security threats. The unmanned aerial vehicles designed for military reconnaissance and battlefield surveillance therefore may directly conduct search and rescue mission in the national disasters without any modifications.

Honestly speaking, there is a general and worldwide tendency indicating that many advocates of employing military forces to involve in disaster relief, dispatching military medical facilities to participate epidemic control and medical service missions. Yet, the military units or platforms involved into law enforcement operations are still full of controversies. The proper legal jurisdiction based on the judiciary professional qualification was still demanded by many parties as a basic prerequisite. Further, the non-traditional security threat should be attributed into the category of national security threats, or alternatively, a normal criminal act against the law or order is still hard to judge. The difference between the essences of these two categories is not so clear. As mentioned above, dividing line of issues on the security threats is never explicit.

Apart from the controversies originated from the legitimacy and jurisdiction of the law enforcement actions, there are suitability of personnel training and professionalism as well as appropriateness of hardware equipment, mission platform and operating procedures can be questionable as transferring those personnel and assets originally preparing for dealing specific security threats to alternative tasks of managing other security threats. Based on the uncertainties commonly contained by traditional security threats and non-traditional security threats, all those coordination efforts among the governmental agencies and civilian institutions are already defined as the necessary requirements for jointly handling security threats.

Further, simply because the dividing line between the traditional security threats and non-traditional security threats is so unclear, we therefore even need to identify that these two kinds of security threats would essentially occur together in various degree. Be that as it may, certain obvious differences may still present between these two dissimilar categories. As we have already known, the traditional security threats are essentially created by military, political and diplomatic actions. It is obvious that these actions are in essence premeditated and intentional. We therefore can define the traditional security threats are the results of many premeditated and intentional maneuvers. As comparing with those actions are intentional selected, i.e. courses of choice, the non-traditional security threats might not be necessarily the consequences of calculated measures. Nonetheless, there are certain types of organized criminal acts should be defined as the non-traditional security threats literally caused by the plots and conspiracies of the criminal organizations.

Certain types of the non-traditional security threats can be attributed to the act of God. These cases may generally create force majeure situations. The typical case of this type of the non-traditional security threat would be different kinds of natural disasters. In many cases, epidemic disease will be viewed as a kind of unpremeditated security threats simply because the eruptions of these medical situations could not be well predicted in advance. Other than this nature, the traditional security threats are generally directing on unambiguous targets and being confined within specific geographical territories. In another word, the coverage of destruction created by the traditional security threats is basically and more or less can be manageable. But for the case of non-traditional security threats, fundamentally, they could not be well contained in the same degree.

As we consider the nature for the traditional security threats can be confined within specific geographical territories, we will be meanwhile very surprisingly to notice that the non-traditional security threats may reach those territories for beyond our expectations or even exceeding the developing models that we originally would assume. Unlike the traditional security threats, the non-traditional security threats are hard to be restricted within specific territories. They are generally transnational by their spreading patterns. Even intentionally adopting certain measures, it may be still hard to limit the damages caused by the non-traditional security threats. Given these factors already noted, we should admit that the non-traditional security threats are not suitable for any states to adopt as the policy tools to target other states since they are by nature full of various uncertainties. Even those non-traditional security threats intentionally activated by illegal organizations, it is impossible for them to acquire the legitimacy needed for being identified as the governmental policy tools. On the same token, neither may those people who involved in those activities acquire the status as legal combatants.

In addition to those feature already mentioned above, the non-traditional security threats may have another universal characteristics is the possibility to cause negative impacts to the common interests collectively supported by many nations. This is just because the non-traditional security threats are lack of norms and specifically directing to certain states. For instance, the environmental deterioration would inevitably damage the common welfare of those states being affected. Pollutants will spread to other states through innumerable channels and media. We may effectively stop personnel and cargoes entering our territories by border control. Nonetheless, for those negative impacts through spread or propagation channels provided by the Mother Nature, we are indeed incapable to stop their entry completely. Relatively speaking, the non-traditional security threats may provide the international society more incentives for cooperation since they do not directly challenge sovereignty of any state. Fundamentally, it is important to remember that solving the non-traditional security threat that undermining the common interests is in essence based on the calculations of serving individual interests for those states who involved in any collective action.

In summary, after analyzing the nature of the non-traditional security threats in this section, we may identify that there is hard to find clear boundaries between traditional security threats and non-traditional security threats. And in many cases, these two types of security threats may seriously tangle together.

Additionally, for those measures for managing these security threats, they should maintain certain degree of flexibility and have multi-variants in order to ensure serving different functions. As we organize personnel and procuring assets and equipment for tackling these security threats, we should follow the principle of adaptation as the basic characteristics for force-building. Although there are many assets and equipment suitable for serving specific missions and tackling security threats, yet, it does imply that these assets can only satisfy these functions or tasks and spare no space for the flexibility in other utilizations.

Based on the substantial understandings on the non-traditional security threats as well as a solid apprehension of their relationship with the traditional security threats, by combining with the knowledge of responding measures, we would have a better acknowledgement of the possible impacts caused by the connectivity to the security environment, and subsequently, to formulate the most appropriate responding directing strategy to imminent challenges.

The Inevitability of Security Threats

Given the facts of connectivity actually practiced in every regions of the world, we have noticed that a phenomenon named by the author of this paper as “five circulations” emerged with the expansion of trading exchanges, in terms of both quality and quantity, after all states involved actively promoted their mutual economic cooperation relationship. As for the concept of advocating connectivity around the South Asia and Central Asia region, the key factor will be the competence to cope with the impacts on the security environment caused by the five circulations.

The five circulation is a description offered by the author to indicate the growth of trans-boundary circulation of personnel, merchandise, service, capital and information by both quality and quantity among various political entities or economic systems after their mutual interactions getting more intensified, i.e., the expansion of connectivity. Nonetheless, the mutual interaction models among different members in the international society are quite dissimilar. We therefore need to have a better understanding about the phenomenon of five circulations in order to precisely acknowledge such an important social phenomenon in the international relations.

We first need to understand that various aspects of the five circulations might not be necessarily growing or expanding together. Different nations may have very diversified requirements and standards for personnel entry or departure, merchandise import and export, introducing foreign labor force and permitting professional overseas employment, capital inflow and outflow as well as information exchange. Hence, as the control measure of one aspect becoming loosened, it may not lead to any parallel adjustment for other aspects. An expansion of trading scale to a specific state does not guarantee the business trip to this country will be easier to pass the immigration check. Likewise, some states will introduce a huge amount of labors or professionals to national infrastructure construction tasks, but, it may remain rigid control of its domestic capital market to confine foreign financial service companies to provide loans or to raise investment funds. We may conclude that these five aspects are inter-related or correlated but there is no definite causation linkage to assure mutual influences.

Second, the five circulations are still constrained by the market mechanism. The official efforts of guidance, promotion or alternatively, prohibition and condition, can only create assistance or resistance. The fundamental factor to decide the quality and quantity of circulation is still determined by the match of supply and demand in the market, never the subjective expectation or policies from the associated official authorities. For instance, the One Belt and On Road development strategy advocated by the People’s Republic of China was actively responded and substantially coordinated by many of its alliance states. Nonetheless, such policies are not capable of eliminating the entire realistic risks contained by connectivity.⁵ The final performances of circulations in these five aspects will still be decided by the market mechanism. Any unilateral enthusiasm, either from the supply end or the demand end, to lift the restrictions of merchandise or service but with no corresponding commercial opportunity will still fail to facilitate any circulation.

Further, although the five circulations themselves may contain the risks of non-traditional security threats, yet, there is no proportional relationship between these two issues. For instance, as opening the tourism may activate the massive entry of the tourists. Consequently, the possibility of transmitting epidemic diseases will be increased with the quantity of visitors. However, there is no scientific theory so far to prove that any specific epidemic disease will inevitably erupt after the quantity of the tourists over certain amount. Likewise,

as the volume of traffic increases, importing channels for the illegal articles will also soar. However, for the specific illegal substance such as drugs, there are certain importing patterns and follow-on distribution channels, the modus operandi of operation will not be changed simply because of the growth of transportations or travels. In the waters highly threatened by the piracy, the growth of maritime transportation does not imply that the pirates may have more opportunities to loot the maritime transportation merchant vessels. All these examples would negate the misperception of any proportional relationship between scale of activities and level of risks.

Also, accompanied with the growth of quantity and quality in five circulations, the non-traditional security threats may spread to some geographical areas that they never appeared before because of more information flows as well as the environmental conditions turning mature. Hence, for those political and economic entities originally do not expect or even never have the experience to handle the non-traditional security threats, these challenges will be the most essential issue that these authorities need to face as the five circulations keep expanding. Although the substantial quantity of the non-traditional security threats may not be necessarily grown with the expansion of five circulations, yet, the increasing possibility of occurring non-traditional security threats is an undeniable fact.

Last but not the least, we also need to remind that even the growing possibility of the non-traditional security threats accompanied with the five circulations is an objective fact, but the five circulations may not always cause negative impacts. For handling the non-traditional security threats, there are certain positive effects for thwarting or preventing non-traditional security threats may be provided by the five circulations. Opening to the external world is an important element for strengthening the national power. However, there are many risks may appear as opening to the external world for enhancing the economic partnership with other nations but these risks should not be a proper excuse to justify conducting conservative policies for retraction. In spite of the actual practices of the five circulations will be different case by case and uncertainties in the management process of qualitative and quantitative analysis, but all the defects can be excluded and leverages can be preserved by well process and management.

Based on the basic analysis of the five circulations phenomenon, we may further discuss the non-traditional security threats profile that possibly intensified by their growth. In general, the most significant danger is the transnational crimes that including money laundry, capital absorption, gambling, smuggling, drug trafficking, transferring illegal immigrants and even slavery sale. The threat may also cover the spiritual or mental dimension such as pollutions of minds involving pornography, evil religions and terrorism. The list may also extend to include piracy, disease propagation, trans-territory pollution and the biological damages caused by the spices proliferation of animals or plantations. Given the aforementioned threats, we should have the following basic understanding before further discussions of the responding strategy in the next section.

First, we should notice that many of the transnational crimes are essentially attached to the trans-boundary commercial and trading activities. Nonetheless, there are specific geographical conditions for these kinds of trans-boundary crimes. For example, drug-trafficking always starts from the production bases and subsequently being transferred along certain routes to reach their customers. We may follow the same principle to survey the smuggling activities according to their potential clients and supply sources. The capacity of conducting money laundry or transnational gambling or betting actions must rely on associated financial trading and fund transaction channels. Pirates can only exercise their criminal actions around certain favorable waters and their activities are highly dependent to the maritime transportation routes and waters. The eruption of epidemic disease and further propagation should have certain metrological conditions and corresponding social activities. Also, the proliferation of specific animals and plantations must acquire compatible natural conditions. We may therefore identify that grasping the geographical associations and natural conditions should be the necessary condition for properly handling non-traditional security threats.

Second, based on these geographical associations and natural conditions of the non-traditional security threats, we should also understand that specialized knowledge and information will be definitely needed to formulate appropriate responding measures. All the knowledge and information are accumulated through long term efforts. It is impossible to grab these valuable assets within short period of time simply by education or learning. We also need the intelligence network established on the connections within the regional communities in order to secure the possibility to be aware of any illegal attempts. Likewise, the understanding of the natural environment may also assure us to identify those non-traditional security caused by non-artificial factors. We

therefore may conclude that the trans-boundary cooperation and coordination with the governmental agencies located at the threat sources should be another necessary condition for handling these security threats.

Last but the most importantly, how to identify the appropriate transnational trade and financial activities based on the normal trading and commercial partnership and discriminate those proper interactions from those non-traditional security threats used them as their coverage or camouflage. We also need to differentiate those non-traditional security threats into category of the national security threats that capable of affecting the fundamental survival or the vital interests of the nation, or alternatively, the criminal actions that merely undermining social fairness and justice as well as normal operation. Consequently, based on the classification, we also need to decide the appropriate measures of employing law enforcement mechanism or other agencies with more capable national powers to handle these threats accordingly.

The Directing Strategy for Counter-Measures

For realizing the ideal of connectivity, a set of directing strategies for responding and managing the non-traditional security threats is inevitably necessary. We primarily should follow two basic principles: burden sharing of cost and resources needed as well as coordination and cooperation in jurisdiction as operational measures. First, all the non-traditional security threats involved in the areas possibly reached by the efforts of connectivity are the common challenges to all the economic and political entities, it is therefore necessary to be handled together by all parties concerned. Should such a consensus exist, it may subsequently support all parties to establish a burden sharing arrangement for shouldering the resources and cost of managing those common threats. It will certainly turn to be the most reasonable approach to institute operational mechanism for tackling problems.

Nonetheless, we must admit the differences of national strength do exist among all these states. As for the scale of cost allocated to various nations, powers within the community should have the moral cause and keeping suitable postures never arguing with the client states that supporting their policy goals. Those relatively powerful states need to share resources with nations need support for their joint operations. Reciprocity is the magic term for managing the international relations. Only by so doing, alliance states may commit their efforts with higher willingness. For solving the non-traditional security threats universally encountered, it is quite nature to follow these basic principles. The ideal of connectivity for enhancing relationship, promoting mutual interest and benefiting common welfare can only be secured via creating a politically trustworthy, economically integrated and culturally acceptable atmosphere, which the efforts of burden-sharing should be the essential elements during its establishment.

As for the coordination and cooperation in the range of jurisdiction, it is a general model for tackling common threats. For instance, the security assurance mechanism for riverine transportation within the Mekong river areas engaged by Mainland China, Thailand, Laos and Myanmar is a typical case. The persistently and constantly operated joint patrol task force is basically organized by following such a principle.⁶ This arrangement was triggered by an incident happened several years ago. It inspired all associated nations to understand that they should never be trapped by the dispute of water resource anymore. It is necessary for them to build a cooperative mechanism for coping with common treats.⁷ All the nations around the Malacca Strait including Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Indonesia may surrender their prejudice and instances of maritime law enforcement jurisdiction to establish the mechanism known as MSP, Malacca Strait Patrols for handling the notorious piracy would undeniably prove the necessity of coordination and cooperation in jurisdiction boundaries.⁸

As a matter of fact, the aforementioned mechanism may also be applied to certain maritime zones for countering other types of non-traditional security threats such as terrorism. Considering the cost and resource sharing and commitment originated from this arrangement including several sophisticated subtasks including Malacca Strait Sea Patrol (MSSP), Eyes-in-the-Sky (EiS) and Intelligence Exchange Group (IEG), we may apprehend all the participating states are very willing to contribute their own resources and to share necessary operational cost in order to achieve the collective goal of countering non-traditional security threats.⁹ A territorial and associated maritime space dispute does exist between Philippines and Malaysia in the Sulu Sea. It may even involve with certain separation movements from various political clans. Nonetheless, a joint maritime patrol institution can still be successfully established simply because the desire to counter the non-traditional security threats both nations jointly faced.¹⁰

Likewise, another counter-terrorism mission is jointly conducted by Indonesia and Brunei in the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas.¹¹ A similar mechanism is also adopted by Mainland China and Vietnam for the joint patrol mission in the waters of the Tokin Bay.¹² All these cases may prove that as long as certain value of cooperation does exist, even there is a territorial dispute on the Paracel Islands, it is still possible for parties to conduct associated law enforcement agreements for countering common non-traditional security threats by following previously mentioned two principles of burden sharing of cost and resources as well as coordination and cooperation on the coverage of jurisdiction.¹³ Last, we need to remind that these two principles emphasizing the spirit of cooperation for gathering efforts from all the parties involved handling collective threats. To assure the normal operation for these mechanisms, those powers with relatively favorable strength should maintain their manners and they should never argue the trivial details with their counterparts in order to guarantee the possibility of achieving those policy goals.

As for the substantial strategies of countering non-traditional security threats, basically, there are three approaches listed as following can be adopted. First, it is essential to coordinate with present international institutions and norms. By so doing, it will not only acquire various resources and assistances but also connecting with the operational schemes of the international society by obtaining real time information and the most advanced techniques. It has very substantial benefits in reducing cost and increasing effectiveness in the collective operations for eliminating non-traditional security threats. For instance, the Interpol organization specifically targeting the transnational organized crimes, the Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence Units for defeating international money laundry activities or the World Health Organization for informing international epidemic propagation situations are all the vital international institutions for countering non-traditional security threats.

Apart of the abovementioned global international organizations, the second approach is to take part in those regional organizations favorable of countering non-traditional security threats in all regions involved for eliminating various non-traditional security threats with regional features. For example, the aforesaid Malacca Strait Patrols is a mechanism worth of participation. It may acquire positive responses from those member states of this regional organization specifically designed for countering non-tradition security threats by providing information or committing resources so that facilitating the joint efforts of handling non-traditional security threats.

For those cases beyond the scopes of present global international organizations for effectively handling and managing certain non-traditional security threats and meanwhile no regional cooperative framework to facilitate relevant nations to engage with these non-traditional security threats together, then it is necessary to take the initiative to establish formal, either bilateral or multilateral, cooperation mechanism for countering these threats. As for establishing these formal cooperation mechanisms, it is essential to respect those mutual interaction relationships among specific regions. If we really have no possibility to overcome the existing differences among certain political or economic entities, then at least we should try to establish cooperative relationship with each individual political or economic entity. Consequently, we need to link all these cooperative connections to form an operational network for countering non-traditional security threats so that to initiate active measures in various aspects.

The reason why we need to emphasize the necessity of establishing formal cooperative mechanism is expecting to adopt formal institutions to exclude the impacts on the stability of cooperation relationship frequently caused by domestic power reshuffle in participating states. All the regional connectivity would involve states with various culture backgrounds. The modus operandi for each cultural system is fundamentally diversified. In many cases, the realpolitik is purely ruled by man. We therefore need to put efforts on cultivating personal connections in order to secure the cooperation relationship. It is far less reliable than relying on the institutionalized cooperation relationship to sustain the interactional supports for countering the non-traditional security threats together.

Nevertheless, we need to accept the frustrations originated from the realities. Sometimes, the subjective expectations or desires may not be necessarily having the fortune to acquire positive consequences. We therefore need to follow the irresistible trends to formulae responding measures that facilitating the cooperative relationship for countering non-traditional security threats. For different types of non-traditional security threats, the cooperative partners may have concern of protecting their national images or interests of external cooperation. It is quite often to see certain intentional understatement about the realistic situations or even

totally ignoring the obligations of information exchange. Sometimes, partners may express their reluctances to fulfill the requests of judiciary cooperation measures because of their domestic political concerns. It is also possible for them to intentionally expanding their jurisdictions by interpretations schemes in order to provide asylums for their own nationals. Facing all these embarrassing situations, we need to consider the overall interests and sometimes to compromise with the realities for specific cases. It is advised that we should never undermine the general cooperative structure as the stake for any individual case or other trivial issues.

Conclusion

The paper is based on the basic understanding of the international connectivity as well as the fundamental characteristics of the non-traditional security threats to derive the possible five circulations phenomenon after fulfilling the ideal of promoting connectivity between the South Asia and the Central Asia. Further, this paper analyzing the profile of the non-traditional security threats possibly intensified or signified by the five circulations and consequently discussing various types of these non-traditional security threats. Finally, two essential principles for formulating the strategies of countering non-traditional security threats are proposed as well as several approaches and essential elements for realizing these strategies are subsequently elaborated.

Although we may expect the non-traditional security threats is an unavoidable challenge that we may encounter as promoting the connectivity, yet, the significance of the threats themselves is still full of uncertainties. Whether there is any proportional relationship between the quality or quantity of the five circulations and growth with the expansion of connectivity is yet to be examined. We may only get the answers after actual practices.

Moreover, we need to remind that the military forces are the essential elements of the policy statecraft for every nation. The possibility of adopting military assets to respond the non-traditional security threats should never be totally excluded. Nonetheless, the overseas deployment and employment of the military forces may unavoidably contain certain degree of political sensitivity in the international society. Considering the expectable suspicions from the international community about adopting military forces for overseas missions of countering non-traditional security threats, we should prepare associated statements and policy interpretations for excluding unnecessary resistances and criticisms.

Last but not the least, as facing the risks of the non-traditional security threats, those government agencies responsible for policies of promoting connectivity as well as agencies of the private sectors should always keep the saying of “*ci vis pacem, para bellum*” in mind. For better preparing the imminent challenges and effectively controlling the expected damages, the only solution is enhancing the cooperation relations and improving prior preparations.

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PHYSICAL CONNECTIVITY AND NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY: RE-CONCEPTUALIZING NATIONAL SECURITY AND CROSS-BORDER LINKAGES

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Abstract: *The sovereignty and 'integrity' of territorial borders have been core concerns for post-colonial states since their inception as independent nation-states. This anxiety was especially acute when it came to territories on the periphery of the post-colonial state, physically distant from the 'centre'. More recently however, there has been a marked inclination amongst states, especially states in Asia, to participate in various forms of connectivity projects which seemingly break down these 'hard' borders between these states. The building of energy pipelines, infrastructural 'corridors' and border trading posts between states across their land borders is increasingly being viewed as a worthy goal to pursue. This poses an important academic and policy research question – why have states in Asia begun to display greater enthusiasm for connectivity projects which traverse their territorial borders? How do this impact earlier deeply held concerns about the sanctity of territorial, especially land, borders? This paper will argue that we need to re-visit, conceptually, why states in Asia now view cross-border connectivity projects as delivering positive outcomes. In this paper, I will examine the comparative case studies of China and India in attempting to build and develop cross-border land connectivity. The conclusion will attempt to explain the reasons for variance in the experience of the two countries at building cross-border land connectivity. It will point towards specific ways in which states in Asia can both develop and strengthen cross-border land connectivity.*

Keywords: Connectivity, National Security, Sovereignty, international linkages, Regionalism

Introduction

The sovereignty and 'integrity' of territorial borders have been core concerns for post-colonial states since their inception as independent nation-states. This anxiety is especially acute in relation to territories on the periphery of the post-colonial state, physically distant from the 'centre'. More recently however, there has been a marked inclination amongst states, especially states in Asia, to participate in various forms of connectivity projects which seemingly break down these 'hard' borders between these states. The building of energy pipelines, infrastructural 'corridors' and border trading posts between states across their land borders is increasingly being viewed as a worthy goal to pursue. This poses an important academic and policy research question – why have states in Asia begun to display greater enthusiasm for connectivity projects which traverse their territorial borders? How do this impact earlier deeply held concerns about the sanctity of territorial, especially land, borders?

This paper will comprise of three major sections. The first section will examine the puzzle outlined above by examining the existing literature on trans-border connectivity and the Asian experience of protecting the sanctity of national territorial borders. The second section will look briefly at the case of China and its recent experience of building various forms of land connectivity across its national borders. It will attempt to outline the factors driving this particular aspect of Chinese foreign policy. The third section will look at the case of India in relation specifically to its attempts to build cross-border connectivity between its north-eastern states and neighbouring Myanmar. These two brief case studies will provide an interesting contrast in understanding, conceptually, why and how certain states are more successful at building cross-border connectivity while others are less so.

National Land Borders: Boundary or Gateway?

In June 2015, in announcing his bid to run for the US presidency, Donald Trump pledged to build a wall across the US-Mexico border to stem the flow of people into the US from Mexico.¹ Putting aside the debate surrounding how such a two thousand mile wall will realistically be funded and built, Trump's election promise

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points to a key issue in our contemporary discourse on land borders between states and the functions borders serve.

Border Studies has become an emerging sub-discipline in recent years. It comprises a multi and inter-disciplinary research agenda, comprising scholars from within International Relations, Comparative Politics, Political Theory, Economics, Geography, Anthropology and Migration Studies, amongst others. Its research agenda is driven by both purely academic as well as contemporary public policy concerns about the seemingly changing nature of land borders between states.²

In the specific case of building cross-border connectivity infrastructure in Asia, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has long been at the forefront of conducting policy oriented research on the economic benefits of traversing national borders.³ The main thrust of the ADB's enterprise is largely driven by outlining the economic benefits which accrue to both national governments and communities inhabiting border areas. These arise from increased economic activity facilitated by the provision of enhanced connectivity infrastructure like accessible roads and provision of train connections across national borders. Relating economic growth to societal benefits, these studies also link the economic betterment of communities in the border regions to increased peace and stability for states itself.⁴ In this rendition, national borders should ideally function as economic gateways for shared economic growth and prosperity.

Within a global context, economic globalisation has created significant incentives for states in Asia to re-evaluate the function of their land borders. These have led to the advent of special economic zones encompassing the border areas of two or more states, trans-national highways and energy pipe-lines and border trading infrastructure. Some authors represent these developments as driving the de-territorialisation of states, where state sovereignty is being re-negotiated as a result of the changes that have taken place in the global economic system.⁵

As outlined at the start of this section however, this notion of borders serving as gateways for economic development and prosperity is highly contested. Especially in the case of post-colonial Asian states, national land borders have long been regarded as sites of vulnerability. The legacy of historical animosity and suspicion between states in Asia fused with an adherence to a more traditional understanding of the Westphalian notion of territorial sovereignty has resulted in states in Asia devoting resources towards establishing 'hard' borders at their respective territorial peripheries.⁶ The inheritance of post-colonial states of seemingly arbitrary, or at the very least, unclear land boundaries separating these states has driven confrontation between states in Asia, sometimes leading to all-out conventional war. In this context, states in Asia have been very anxious to maintain and defend boundaries at their territorial peripheries, especially in relation to land boundaries. Besides the existential need to defend 'every inch of territory', states in Asia have also viewed their land boundaries as sites of vulnerability due to the fear of the movement of people who challenge the legitimacy and/or authority of the state in various ways (insurgents, terrorists and criminal gangs for example). In addition to anxieties about the movement of certain groups of people across land borders, states in Asia also constantly view movement of specific goods as a threat to their wider national and societal security (illicit drugs and small arms being two key examples). Moreover, both provincial and central governments remain deeply anxious about large scale movement of people across their land borders which might potentially impact upon the ethnic and/or religious demography of their border lands.

There are thus two divergent and seemingly contradictory contemporary impulses driving states with respect to the function their national borders perform. The next two sections of this paper will attempt to examine two brief case studies in relation to this issue. The case of China and India will interrogate how two Asian states have approached connectivity across their land borders in seemingly different ways. A comparison between the two cases will allow for a clearer conceptual assessment of the factors that compel Asian states to view their borders as either gateways or boundaries.

China and Cross-Border Connectivity: Provincialisation, Economic Globalisation and Border Security

China's economic growth and development over the last three decades has been one of the key defining features of contemporary global politics. This rapid economic growth and development has resulted in far-reaching changes in how the Chinese state operates and functions both domestically as well as externally with the outside world.⁷ Looking specifically at cross-border connectivity across China's land borders, there has been

a radical change in the manner in which the Chinese state views the functions of its land borders as China has grown to become a major global economic powerhouse. The literature on the political economy of state transformation in China traces how, within the wider context of the conduct of China's foreign policy, Chinese perceptions and policies towards cross-border connectivity have been driven largely by the imperatives of economic globalisation.⁸

In their recently published study of China as an example of a 'rising power', Hameiri and Jones point to the process of the transformation of the Chinese state under globalisation as a crucial dynamic shaping its conduct, amongst other things, to cross-border land connectivity.⁹ More specifically, one key element of Chinese state transformation has been the decentralisation to provincial governments and the incorporation of special administrative regions (SARs). Examining the case of the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), one of China's earliest involvement in cross-border connectivity projects, the authors outline how China's Yunnan Province and Guangxi Autonomous Region have served to build cross-border land links between these regions of China to the neighbouring states of Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam and onward to Thailand and Cambodia.¹⁰ One part of the connectivity project in the GMS has been the building of the North-South Economic Corridor, with three sub-corridors. The first stretches from Kunming in Yunnan Province to Bangkok, via Laos or Myanmar, the second from Kunming to Hanoi and then on to the Vietnamese coastal city of Hai Pong and the third from Nanning in Guangxi Autonomous Province to Hanoi and then on to Hai Pong. This 'corridor' is already functioning as a transport corridor as the objective of linking previously un-connected areas along this corridor has already been achieved. Efforts however are being undertaken to upgrade it into a functioning economic corridor.¹¹

As part of the decentralization of power to the provinces, China's Yunnan province has been able to take advantage of China's national policy of building closer links with neighbouring Southeast Asian states to position itself as a 'bridgehead' for physical land connectivity between China and Southeast Asia.¹² Besides road connectivity, there are now oil and gas pipelines connecting Myanmar and Yunnan.¹³ In addition, there are plans underway to construct a rail network from Yunnan to Singapore.¹⁴

Despite these impressive land-connectivity projects across China's borders at Yunnan and Guangxi, there have been some concerns about the potential negative implications of opening China's land borders. The persistence of the armed struggle of various groups within Myanmar against the Myanmar government has had significant negative implications for China. This is especially acute in the border areas between Myanmar's Shan state and Yunnan, where the continuing armed insurrection in Myanmar has led to the movement of both rebels and refugees from within Myanmar across China's borders into Yunnan.¹⁵ In fact, in 2009, after intense fighting between soldiers from the minority Kokang group in Myanmar and Myanmar's army, about 30,000 refugees fled across the Myanmar-China border into Yunnan. This caused enough consternation within China for it to issue a statement reflecting its concerns about the impact of developments within Myanmar on Chinese security.¹⁶ Despite the Yunnan provincial government's impressive ability to accommodate and feed these refugees in several camps, it is clear that China's central government viewed these developments as a serious security threat.¹⁷

India's 'Northeast' and India's 'Look East' Policy: Building Connectivity with Myanmar

India's porous north-east frontier has historically presented political leaders in Delhi with a specific anxiety about India's territorial sovereignty. Only two percent of India's borders in the north-east are national-between the states of Assam and West Bengal. The rest of the borders are international (Assam-Bhutan and Bangladesh, Arunachal Pradesh -China and Myanmar, Nagaland-Myanmar, Manipur-Myanmar, Mizoram-Myanmar & Bangladesh, Tripura-Bangladesh, Meghalaya-Bangladesh).

Since 1947, various groups representing an array of ethnic minorities in the northeast region sought to do two things. Certain groups representing these communities wanted to redraw India's territorial borders and sought to locate their community outside the territorial boundaries of independent India. Other groups however, wanted to do the perceived opposite- they wanted a more durable and less porous border between India and its neighbours in the northeast region. The latter desire stemmed from the perception that large scale migration across India's international borders in the northeast region was having an adverse impact on these communities. Such conflicting demands to both strengthen and re-draw India's northeast borders had implications beyond India's domestic politics. It also implicated India's relations with countries that shared borders with it in the northeast region.

In order to understand more clearly the debate on whether India's north-east is a gateway or a boundary, it is imperative to look at the factors that gave rise to the discourse of 'connecting' India to Southeast Asia via India's north-east.

The economic imperative was a central impetus for the Indian state to embark on its 'Look East Policy' (LEP). The LEP was meant to complement and aid India's own economic liberalization domestically in the early 1990's. The Indian state foresaw higher levels of trade with countries in Southeast Asia as well as an increased amount of economic investment from Southeast Asia into India.¹⁸ One initial policy change was the Indian government's decision to modify its approach towards Myanmar. From its earlier position of supporting the pro-democracy movement in Myanmar, from 1993, the Indian government began to embrace ASEAN's "constructive engagement" policy towards Myanmar. Besides the seeming need to counteract the overwhelming Chinese influence in Myanmar, the Indian government saw two other incentives to improve relations with the authorities in Myanmar. The first was to develop economic links to acquire a share of the Myanmar market for Indian goods and the second was to restrain the support that insurgents in India's north-east were obtaining from the ruling regime in Myanmar.¹⁹ India's improving ties with Myanmar assumed even greater importance in the context of India's LEP when Myanmar became a full-fledged member of ASEAN in 1997.²⁰ India now shared a land border with an ASEAN member state and this development was historically significant.

However, despite the improvement of India's ties with Myanmar and Myanmar's admission into ASEAN in 1997, India's north-east region did not explicitly feature as part of India's LEP at this initial stage. Several observers of India's foreign policy view this period as the first phase of India's LEP.²¹ The second phase of India's LEP, beginning approximately in the early 2000's, involved building a closer relationship with Southeast Asian countries that went beyond merely forging closer economic and trade relations. In this phase, the Indian state aimed to cement growing economic and trade ties with a deeper strategic engagement with countries in the larger East Asian region, namely the ASEAN states, Japan and South Korea.²² At this point, there was another emerging notion, associated with this second phase of India's LEP, gaining ground amongst Indian political leaders. This emerging notion of physical connections between India and Southeast Asia and to the wider East Asian and even Asia-Pacific region was plainly articulated by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in 2004 when he declared that:

Our North-Eastern states are India's gateway to ASEAN countries... Our growing interaction with ASEAN is critical to fulfilling the promise of the 21st century being an Asian Century, with the main engines of the world economy emerging in the Asia-Pacific Region. We want our North Eastern States to be in the forefront of these interactions and to reap in full measure the benefits of enhanced peace and prosperity.²³

India's north-east region was supposed to serve, in this narrative, as a 'gateway' to physically connect India to Southeast Asia and beyond. This emerging notion of India's north-east region as a land gateway to Southeast Asia gained enhanced credibility with the release of the *Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity*, a document which was adopted by ASEAN member states at the 17th ASEAN Summit in 2010.²⁴ This plan envisaged an ASEAN Community by 2015 that would be characterised by bringing 'peoples, goods, services and capital closer together' in the ASEAN region.²⁵ The plan also sought to outline the need for greater physical connectivity not only within ASEAN but between ASEAN and other sub-regions within Asia. In the case of India-ASEAN physical connectivity, the focus was on two regions of India – India's southern and north-eastern regions.²⁶ While India's southern region was meant to connect to Southeast Asia via the former's seaports, India's north-east region was the designated land link to Southeast Asia. A range of initiatives and projects have been undertaken to further this aim of linking India's north-eastern region to Myanmar. These include the India-Myanmar Friendship Road link, the Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project and the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway, amongst others.²⁷

This enthusiasm and optimism needs to be tempered by an appreciation of an inherent tension in Indian foreign policy with respect to the role of its north-eastern region as part of India's LEP. On a national level, greater connectivity, especially better land connectivity between India and Myanmar, is viewed largely as a positive development. In simple trade volume terms, there is broad consensus that such connectivity will help aid the India's economy.²⁸ At the level of India's north-eastern region specifically, it is widely agreed in India that greater land connectivity with Myanmar will lead to the region's economic development based on the assumption that greater connectivity will lead to greater economic investment in the region, which would result in greater economic growth.²⁹ Associated with such assumptions of economic growth and prosperity both

nationally and regionally is another assumption – that such economic development and prosperity will translate into reduced levels of insurgency against the Indian state in the north-eastern region.³⁰

However, besides the potential benefits, greater land connectivity between India and Myanmar has potentially significant negative consequences for the Indian state. Improving land connectivity between the two countries can potentially ease the movement of economic migrants, insurgent groups, clandestine funds as well as illegal arms across the India-Myanmar border. On the migrant front alone, more recently, there is already significant disquiet in the state of Mizoram about the increasing number of Chin migrants from Myanmar engaged in crossing this border.³¹ In addition to the issue of migrants from Myanmar into India's north-east region, these assumptions about the multiple benefits accruing from greater land connectivity between India and Myanmar fail to adequately appreciate the crucial role of Bangladesh in this enterprise. Given the north-eastern region's tenuous land link with the rest of India via the very narrow Siliguri land corridor (otherwise known as the 'Chicken's Neck'), overland transit rights for goods to move between Myanmar and India via Bangladesh is vital. The agreement between India and Bangladesh in 2015 to allow the movement of goods from Kolkata to Agartala, in the Indian state of Tripura, via Bangladesh is thus a major milestone.³²

Beyond the specific technical and capacity issues related to building land connectivity between India's north-eastern region and Myanmar, there is a larger tension within the Indian government's LEP in this specific connectivity project. This larger tension is between the discourses of cross-border 'connectivity' on the one hand and the enduring practices of securing India's land borders on the other. Thus while Prime Minister Singh in 2004 asserted publicly that India's Northeastern states were India's 'gateway' to ASEAN, in January 2007, on a delegation led by India's then External Affairs Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, to Myanmar, both sides discussed the manner in which their common border could be more closely policed, with border fencing being mooted as one possible option of securing the India-Myanmar border. Besides the flow of insurgents fighting the Indian state, the securitisation of India's border with Myanmar has been a response to the unofficial (and thus illegal) flow of trade, arms and narcotics across this border.

This tension between the border serving as a gateway or a boundary is perceptible at two levels. The first is the tension between the central Indian state and specific North-eastern states. For example while road connectivity is a constant theme, and even though the re-opening of the Stilwell Road (also known as the Ledo Road) has been at the forefront of the local political agenda of the North-eastern states for years (specifically Assam and Arunachal Pradesh), successive central governments in India have dithered over re-opening this land connection from India into Myanmar and subsequently to Yunnan province in China. Most recently, there are clear signals that the Indian government is still undecided on whether to re-open the Stilwell Road, even though only 61 kilometres of the road runs within India and work is already underway to open the Myanmar–China part of this road link (which, in comparison, traverses 1,035 kilometres in Myanmar and 640 kilometres in China).³⁴

The second seeming tension is between the different agencies of the Indian state and their apparently divergent perceptions about the function of the India-Myanmar border. On the one hand, India's MEA constantly espouses the benefits of 'connectivity', including land connectivity, and relates these to the cause of stronger ASEAN-India relations as well as to the general economic improvement of the citizenry of both India and ASEAN. On the other side of the spectrum, India's intelligence agencies see open borders as a major threat to the Indian state. To put it more specifically, in the opinion of some sections of India's intelligence agencies, 'softening borders, building trade links obscures the fundamentally adversarial relationship (and) it just leaves everyone confused'.³⁵ This inter-agency tension at the heart of the Indian state drives, to a certain extent, the continued confusion about the role of India's border with Myanmar.³⁶ The central tension between it being a gateway or a boundary thus remains unresolved in India's LEP.

Conceptualising Land Connectivity in Asia

The comparative case studies of China and India in this paper point to three main conclusions. The first is that the drive for economic development drives state transformation in specific ways, leading to a re-configuration of the role of border areas as part of overall economic growth and development. The second conclusion relates to the persistence of land borders as sites of vulnerability despite broader economic imperatives pushing for greater land connectivity across borders. Finally, and as a result of the first two conclusions, there are specific ways in which states in Asia can develop and strengthen cross-border land connectivity. The first involves devolution of power to the border areas as cross-border land connectivity is best

achieved when local/provincial governments view cross-border land connectivity as economically beneficial to their communities as seen from the example of China's Yunnan Province. The second involves being able to exercise a significant amount of influence in the government affairs of neighbouring states especially in the border areas of neighbouring states. These involve helping to resolve or at least moderate armed strife in the border areas against the neighbouring state as well as helping to put in place institutions and processes which aid the economic value of cross-border interactions. Efficient and un-corrupt customs and immigration structures and legal structures to mediate commercial disputes efficiently and impartially are just two examples of the type of structures required in neighbouring states in order for cross-border land connectivity to develop and grow.

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SOUTH ASIA-CENTRAL ASIA INTER-REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY: THE FUTURE PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: *Progress and prosperity requires joint intra-regional and inter-regional collaboration, utilizing resources at their maximum and exploring new avenues for transit and trade. This not only leads to uplift the socioeconomic conditions of the masses, but also contains the role of non-state actors. In the contemporary world, economic interests and benefits have become more important players rather than ideologies in defining the mutual relations and cooperation of the states. Corridors through land and sea channels connect several regions and continents into one transnational entity and, resultantly, their mutual relevance multiplies. The paper aims to focus either the revival of the Silk Route and access to Caspian region enhances the political, cultural and socioeconomic ties between both the regions and how it will become the economic hub of the world economy. The study will be beneficial to explore new possibilities to provide the rational and cost-effective transitional and trade route to the non-coastal states of Central Asia and how the strategic energy reserves be used for South Asian States.*

Keywords: China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), inter-regional collaboration, Gwadar Port, South Asia, Central Asia Republics (CARs)

Introduction

Experts of International Relations stress that conflicts can be managed and war can be averted by cultivating and promoting multilateral cooperation among the states regardless their territorial connectivity. Interstate cooperation will open the new avenues of mutual cooperation among different sectors and areas. However, the modes of interactions and cooperation have to be managed carefully, so that, “the states be benefited in positive and productive manner”¹. The states can improve and increase their mutual relevance and create a conducive environment through economic activities, especially trade, cooperation in technical fields and social sector development, coping jointly with natural calamities, and non-official societal interaction². The designated proposition can be achieved if the ruling elites and intelligentsia of the regional states and beyond realize the fact that inter-state cooperation will lead to the socioeconomic uplift of the masses.

In the contemporary world, both internal political harmony and economic resilience have become the most effective and influencing variables to determine the state’s role at international level. Free economy, privatization and movement of goods, services and people regardless the states’ boundaries have been recognized as the basic pillars in the globalized international system. Economic ties and interests have become the most important features in defining the states mutual relationship rather than ideologies and demographic linkages. Sub-regional, regional and inter-regional politico-economic groups and their mutual mode of interactions are playing a significant role to deplete the international issues and vice versa. This multi-faceted and multi-dimensional inter-state cooperation develops the greater attention towards the “soft power” rather than “military power” which emphasizes the economic relations based on mutual relevance, the diversified modern media, and social, political and cultural connections³. However, it requires strong political will, dedicated leadership, policies continuity, adopting the principles of inclusion and managing the differences among states through peaceful dialogue.

Economic Corridor: Historical Perspective

Economic Corridors are defined as “the culture of trade agreements and treaties, status, delegated legislation, and customs that govern and guide trade relations, institutions and structures, or movement of products, services and information in a geographic vicinity among people in and across borders”⁴.

It connects and boosts the economic activities along an identified geography and provides “a connection between economic nodes or hubs.... In which a large amount of economic resources and multiple actors are

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concentrated.” It links “the supply and demand side of markets.” Therefore, an economic corridor does not represent “mere transport connections along which people and goods move.” It is “integral to the economic fabric and the economic actors surrounding it” which “have to be analyzed as a part of integrated economic networks”⁵

In the present world, the development of economic corridors has become the most important instrument to enhance trade as well as for expanding economic relations, regional integration and political harmony. These corridors are useful to provide interconnectivity among various economic nodes and hubs along a defined geography. These also provide the new opportunities to accelerate commercial activities in the region which leads to the socio-economic development and regional integration.⁶

In short an economic corridor is defined as “a territorial or sea-based transportation grid, which is used on a regular basis for the movement of goods, services and people from one state to another”⁷.

China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

Regional and global economic, strategic and political milieu has been reshaped during the 21st century. Rapidly changing global trends inspire countries to develop and promote geo-economical and geo-strategic partnership. In the contemporary world, economic interests have become one of the most influencing actors to define the role of states at international level. It has become almost impossible for states to defend their interests with their own capacities and resources, resultantly, inter-state and inter-regional connectivity, cooperation and collaboration boosted. High level talks and diplomatic consultations have become the hallmark of ever-growing cooperation among states in multi-faceted fields such as industrial ventures, infrastructure and development programs, defense, commerce and related area of the economy⁸.

In 2013, China envisioned intra-regional and inter-regional economic connectivity to boost the economic activities and mutual relations of the states adopting latest modes of transportation and communication. President Xi Jinping, in April 2013, addressing in the Boao forum stressed over the promotion of regional cooperation among the states of Asia and the rest of the world. He said, “China will increase connectivity with its neighbours... advance economic integration within the region.... China will take an active part in Asia’s regional cooperation process and promote regional and sub-regional cooperation with non-Asian regions and countries”⁹.

During his visit to Kazakhstan and Indonesia in September and October 2013 respectively, he floated an idea to establish “an economic belt based on the original Silk Road through an innovative cooperation model” to connect China with Central Asia and Europe¹⁰.

China’s vision of “One Belt One Route (OBOR) “ and “21st century Maritime Silk Road” emphasis to develop highways and maritime links for geo-strategic and geo-economic cooperation. China is eager to connect with Central Asia, Russia, South Asia, the Persian Gulf and Europe, on one hand, and extending its land and maritime links with ASEAN countries, Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean region, on the other hand. China is eager for the functioning and the revival of ancient Silk Routes in the present day context.

The CPEC is a multifaceted and multi-dimensional initiative by both China and Pakistan to avail the resources at their maximum. It will connect the Gwadar port to China’s northwestern region of Xinjiang through motorways, railway tracks, oil and gas pipelines and an optical fiber link. The designated corridor has designed to build 2700 Kilometer highway to connect Kashgar and Gwadar through Khunjrab. Railway tracks between Gwadar-Khunjrab and further extends to China for freight trains are being laid to enhance the commerce and trade activities between both the states. This connectivity will be beneficial to other intra-regional and inter-regional actors¹¹. Moreover, under the project appropriate measures will be initiated for the revival and extension of the Karakoram Highway, which connects Pakistan’s northern area and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to China’s Xinjiang. Besides physical links, both countries have agreed to establish several multi-dimensional economic zones along the corridor. To meet out the energy deficit in Pakistan, an Energy Planning Group (EPG) under CPEC has been established with a mandate to “fast track implementation of power projects related to CPEC”. It is estimated that 21,690 MW energy will be produced with the assistance of China under CPEC project¹².

Under the CPEC mega project, three main routes have been designed in Pakistan. The Western route indicates that CPEC will enter Balochistan Province via Dera Ismail Kahn and connect Gwadar through a

highway via Zhob, Qila Saifullah, Quetta, Kalat, Punjgur and Turbat. The Central route will provide connectivity Dera Ismail Khan, Dera Ghazi Khan and Gwadar port via Dear Murad Jamali, Khuzdar, Punjgur and Turbet. The Eastern route will enter in the Punjab Province from Khyber Paktun Khwa. The said route will enter Balochistan Province via Lahore, Multan and Sukkur and lead towards Gwadar port passing through Khuzdar, Punjgur and Turbet. An alternate route is also designed which will pass through Sukkar to Karachi and from there to Gwadar along coastal highway¹³.

The CPEC will be beneficial for both China and Pakistan in geo-strategic and geo-economic sense. It will open new connectivity channels for both China and Pakistan to other regional and non-regional states. Gwadar-Xingjian route will be the alternative route for the transportation of energy to China, which will be time and cost effective and safe passage rather than Malacca straits. Moreover, China will be able to find new markets to export its products and import raw material from Africa, Middle East and Central Asia. The operational CPEC will provide an access to warm waters of Arabian Sea to China through Xingjiang, which will be conducive to initiate vigorous economic activities in comparatively less developed North-western province.

The operational CPEC would be the game changer for Pakistan. It will provide an opportunity to overcome the energy crises and stabilize the economy; develop infrastructure through constructing roads, laying railway tracks, bolting energy pipelines and making Gwadar port an economic and transit trade hub for regional and non-regional states. Moreover, Pakistan will be able to develop strong political and economic ties with its neighboring states. The proposed CPEC will further improve defense and security cooperation between China and Pakistan. Resultantly, which will overcome the problems like terrorism, extremism, and separatism. Through CPEC, Pakistan and China would also get an opportunity to augment their naval cooperation in the form of joint exercises, trainings, and counter piracy measures at high seas. This would contribute for the balance of power in the whole region¹⁴.

CPEC: Geostrategic and Geoeconomic Impact on Regional and Extra-Regional Actors

Majority of the experts are optimistic that in near future the proposed CPEC will bring the drastic changes in overall geo-political and geo-strategic landscape of Asia. Moreover, the corridor will boost the economic activities and reshape the economic outlook of the regional and extra regional states. The project has potential to increase transnational and trade linkages, enhance technical and methodological cooperation, generate new paradigms of financial and commercial opportunities, and multiply political and socio-cultural connectivity among the people across the board. However, some regional and extra-regional actors are of the opinion that the corridor will be a threat to their national interests and doing their utmost to jeopardize the project¹⁵.

CPEC and Central Asia Republics (CARs)

After the disintegration of USSR, central Asian Republics attract the world attention due to their geo-strategic location and wide range of natural resources, especially oil and gas reservoirs. The international community is looking forward to develop close relations with these states on one hand, and all these landlocked states are striving to get an easy and shortest access to warm water to explore new markets to export their natural resources, on the other hand. Experts believe that proposed CPEC will become a bridge between consumer based economy of South Asia and central Asian production-based economy. The corridor can facilitate CARs to develop trade and transnational relations with Middle East and Europe via Gwadar port. Moreover, the CPEC will be a catalyst for these resources rich states to come out from the control of Russia. "Central Asian States, especially Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan attaches great importance to the transport infrastructure, the lack of which remains a chief hurdle for their slow cooperation with the international markets; however CPEC will relatively overcome the issue. If the proposed Pak-China Railway track is completed, Tajikistan could access to Indian Ocean directly through connecting with it"¹⁶. Moreover, CASA-1000 project (electricity transmission and trade project for Central Asia and South Asia) is the evidence of inter-regional cooperation. The project will become a game changer in the region. On one hand, Pakistan and Afghanistan will be able to overcome their energy crisis and on the other hand, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan will be benefited through exporting their energy. In addition, the proposed project will elevate the socio-economic conditions of the livelihood living along the CASA-1000 corridor. This would be a shining opportunity to make the way of economic success for Pakistan and Tajikistan¹⁷. Pakistan has already intended to be connected with Central Asia via Termez (southern City of Uzbekistan). In this way, the landlocked CARs can greatly be benefited from a shortest viable land-sea access to the world market¹⁸.

CPEC and Afghanistan

The corridor will be the reinforcing agent for the Afghanistan in geo-strategic and geo-economic sense. The project has the potential to give an opportunity to the landlocked state to develop its fragile economy. Pakistan has planned to link up Afghanistan with CPEC. In this regard, Pakistan has decided to construct 265 Km highway which will connect Peshawar and Kabul. The designated connectivity will integrate Afghanistan with other regional actors and provide her a way to avail Indian Ocean for transnational trade¹⁹.

Moreover, a trilateral transit trade agreement (PATTTTA) has been signed among Pakistan-Afghanistan-Tajikistan to boost the economic activities by providing a transit trade route to these landlocked states. The interstate connectivity will not only “facilitate and encourage trade, but will immensely help in reducing distance and travelling time between the two neighbors. In this way, Afghanistan will be in position to benefit from the rising economic opportunities as result of developing of the corridor”²⁰.

Chahbahar: Iran-Afghanistan-India Trade and Transport Corridor

To boost the economic activities, redrawing the geopolitics of the region and developing connectivity with Afghanistan and Central Asia via Iran bypassing the Pakistan, India signed a deal with Afghanistan and Iran to upgrade the Chahbahar port of Iran, about 150 Km away from Gwadar port under its “Connect Central Asia Policy (2012)”. According to the deal, India will invest millions of dollars to develop two terminals and five berths at Chahbahar²¹. The proposed corridor will connect Chahbahar port to Zaranj, a town of Afghan border via Zahedan. The Zaranj town already has been connected through Indian built highway to Delaram, a city of Afghanistan, 135 mile away from Zaranj. In this regard India has invested billions of dollar and constructed link roads to get an access to Afghanistan and Central Asian Republics (CARs). Moreover Indian’s move to engage Iran and Afghanistan through Chahbahar is designed to counterbalance the presence of China in Gwadar. The Chahbahar port agreement will be more beneficial for Afghanistan, in a sense, that it will provide an alternate transit and trade route to a landlocked state. However, the said land-sea route will not be cost effective as compared to the land based connectivity path through Pakistan, both for India and Afghanistan.

Srivastava believes that “the economic rewards of this pact are huge. The development of Chahbahar port and the connecting transport and trade corridor has the potential to unlock the untapped energy and mineral riches of Iran, Afghanistan, and Central Asia for export towards India, one of the largest and fast growing economies in the world”²².

Bhaskar said, “The Chahbahar pact, if realized, will connect India to Afghanistan and Central Asia and Kabul will get an alternate route to the Indian Ocean. The proposed corridor is of immense importance for the landlocked Afghanistan, as it changes the geopolitics of the region and is seen as a way out of its dependency on Pakistan”²³ (Aljazeera).” He further stated that “the deal would not cause much comfort and happiness for China and Pakistan”²⁴.

However, Pakistan has welcomed the trilateral deal and believes that both the ports would complement each other rather than compete and would be “sister ports”.

Conclusion

In short, geostrategic and geopolitical significance of Gwadar and Chahbahar ports is unique. Economically and strategically both are vital choke-points which provide unrestricted access to the Indian Ocean where about 100,000 ships and around 70 percent of the world’s petroleum trade passes each year. The strategic significance of these ports is visibly clear from the fact that these sea trade centers are located at the crossroads on international sea shipping and oil trade routes while linking three regions that are: South Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East²⁵. Both the ports, when become operational, Inter-regional economic cum political cooperation and collaboration will be enhanced. Resultantly, the economic activities will be enhanced and socioeconomic conditions of the masses will be uplifted. Furthermore, these ties will defuse the tension between or among the states, boost the people to people contact and the expertise will be exchanged. Both the ports will be the game changer for the regional and non-regional peace and prosperity. However, it requires political will, internal political harmony and vision to move forward to solve the pertaining issues in cordial and peaceful manner, so that, the menace of poverty, extremism and terrorism be washed-out. If all the regional and non-regional actors work together, the poverty and terrorism stricken regions would become the economic hub for the international community.

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SECURITIZATION OF INTER-REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY: CHALLENGES AND OPTIONS FOR PAKISTAN-CHINA RELATIONSHIP IN SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA

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Abstract: *Connectivity is core to international relations. States seek cooperation in the international environment not only for survival but for stability and success in gaining maximum within the community of states. In this context, regionalism as a concept has gained popularity within the nation states as a way to attain security, development and power. Security has always been central to state's policy matrix. Asia in this regard is one such continent which has gained significant attention due to the increasing pace of regional connectivity and the associated issues of security. In this respect, Pakistan and china is one such case study for regional connectivity that has not only created options for the socio-political and economic development but has also bought grave challenges for both the states. Pakistan and china both share a high radius of trust, mutual cooperation and strong roots of friendship with each other. As a part of South Asia, Pakistan faces multifaceted challenges of security. In addition to it, Central Asia in post-cold war era has emerged as a hub of competing interest between the major power players of the globe. Both south and central Asia are fundamental to the geopolitics that surrounds Pakistan and China. In such scenario, Pakistan's concern regarding her interest associated with central Asian is also immense. In this context, regional connectivity is a major part of Pakistan- China relationship in the recent times. Both share certain common interest in both the regions along with number of security challenges. This paper aims to develop a narrative that how securitization can be one such component which can facilitate Pakistan and china's policy of regional connectivity. As securitization is a concept which seeks to prioritize states preferences in order to reduce the threat and thus creating greater opportunities for the states.*

Keywords: Securitization, regionalism, China Pakistan Economic Corridor, security threats

Introduction

Connectivity, particularly within the regions, is increasingly becoming the popular pursuit of the foreign offices of the states. States establish ties within the international system not only for their survival but also for their pursuit of interest. These linkages not only affect the inter-state relations but also have a profound influence in shaping up the environment in which states live. In this context, regionalism is one such concept which has associated the states mainly on the basis of their geographical proximity. Mostly the geographical region has a particular identity which separates the region from the other. In addition to it, regional actors also share a historical context, which most of the time becomes one of the bases of cooperation, competition or animosity between the regional actors. The concept of regionalism has provided certain base through which states can cooperate with each other to maximize their security, power, development and stability. Katzenstein defines regionalism as 'a process that engages actors'¹. This engagement can be political, economic, military and social in nature. States through regionalism has also institutionalized certain common parameters that address their problems and issues. Thus regionalism aims to bring states closer to each other for socio-political, economic and military issues. The process of globalization since post world war two has been given a fundamental role to regionalism as states have enhanced their cooperation through the notion of regionalism. Taking the concept further, inter-regional connectivity is one such conception that has become one of the prescriptions for economic and political stability between the regions and states within. Regional actors have tended to outreach the states of other regions to bring about cooperation and opportunities for their own. This kind of networking within states from different regions has not only provided benefit to the states but has also brought the regions closer to each other. Furthermore, international environment is been reshaped through this kind of networking as it may bring about a tangible change in the power position of the state.

Asia is one such continent which is divided into very significant regions. Being the largest and the most populous continent of the world², it is embodiment of the geo-political diversity in terms of culture, history, politics, identity and civilization. Within the Asian continent, South Asia and Central Asia are not only

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strategically unique but are having substantial role in global politics. In addition to it, East Asia has a close proximity with both these regions because of China. The geo-political landscape of China has brought her closer to the politics of these two regions. The total distance between South Asia and Central Asia is estimated to be 2,369 km. Within the Asian region, Pakistan is one such state that is located at the convergence of three major regions of South, West and Central Asia. Pakistan provides the shortest access to the sea for all landlocked countries of Central Asia besides Western China³. In addition to it, China shares border with both south Asian and central Asian states. In south Asia, Chinese share border with India, Pakistan and Afghanistan and in central Asia it shares border with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. China's border with Pakistan is more secure as compared to its porous borders with India and Afghanistan. The regional rivalry of power and competition between India and China also leaves China much closer to Pakistan. Pakistan and China have old trust worthy relationship each other which is time tested and enduring. On the other hand, the growing power of China in economic and political terms have bring China in the centre of regional politics between these two important regions as China has important stakes at both ends. Moreover, the increasing US presence in these regions and her strategic partnership with India particularly since 2001 has also pushed China to seek a balancer in this area which can keep the power equation stable and sustainable. Resultantly, Pakistan is one such friend of China which despite being an active participant in US campaign of war on terror has sided with China. On the other hand, since the end of cold war, a new struggle of power has been started in the central Asian states in which China, Russia and USA is in a constant competition to attain an influential role in CAR states. Oil, gas, hydro and mineral resources are the main source of attraction to the major powers in central Asia. The pipe line politics to globalize the resources and oil-gas network reflects the long term opportunities attach to the central Asian states. It is pertinent to note that central Asian region is not only economically vital but politically it has a strong strategic placement. It has borders with the two veto members of UNSC (United Nation Security Council). Thus China has come up as a leading actor in the politics of central Asia as well. In this context, China's aim of increasing its economic and political power through developing networking in the region and Pakistan's central geostrategic position and its aim of developing its economy and seeking political strength in the region has developed an exceptional geopolitical and economic knot between Pakistan and China.

Challenges and Options for Pakistan and China Relationship in Central and South Asia

Since there independence, Pakistan and China have managed to come along a long way in their diplomatic relationship. In the contemporary era, economic development has become an integral pillar of political power, stability and peace. Pakistan, being at the centre stage of South Asia is exposed to numerous strategic, political and socio-economic challenges. Currently the issue of terrorism and extremism, hostile relations with India, growing instability and pace of independence movement in occupied Kashmir, US withdrawal from Afghanistan and its future stability along with porous Afghan border and its associated issues are grave concerns for Pakistan's policy makers. The rising pace of militancy in Pakistan is a major security issue which has both internal and external strings. Pakistan's military forces and law enforcement agencies are operating against the militants mainly in FATA (Federally Administrated Tribal Areas) along with limited target oriented operations in city centres. Numerous times Pakistan is being called in the state of war by the government of Pakistan. According to the economic survey of 2014, Pakistan had to pay a heavy price for war on terror in terms of security, economy, resources and infrastructure. A total cost to Pakistan for 13 years were estimated to be 102.5 billion dollars⁴ along with major repercussion on foreign direct investment and trade. In addition it, economic development is a major concern for Pakistan to deal with its socio-economic issues and a large population. In this connection Pakistan's relation with China has been beneficial to cater diplomatic support on the issues of fighting against terrorism and Pakistan diplomatic status on Kashmir along with the strong economic ties. President Xi Jinping's visit to Pakistan in 2015 and the historic investment have given a new direction to the politics of the region. During this visit China signed 51 memorandums of understanding with Pakistan which included upgrading project of Karakoram highway, facilities at the Gwadar port, the motorway project between Karachi and Lahore and other key transportation infrastructure projects along with a series of energy projects⁵. Moreover Pakistan China economic corridor was the main area on which both the states agreed to establish in letter and spirit through a network of roads, railways and pipelines. It will run some 3,000km (1,800 miles) from Gwadar in Pakistan to China's western Xinjiang region⁶. These projects would facilitate China by giving her direct access to Indian Ocean. In turn it would enhance China's influence in central and south Asia and Chinese companies in central Asia would be able to expand their networking through shortest distance. China's investment in the shape of these projects is worth 46 billion dollars⁷ which is one of the largest investments by Chinese so far. In this context statement of prime minister of Pakistan on the visit of Chinese

president reflected the importance of mounting economic partnerships between the two countries. Talking about China Pakistan Economic corridor, Nawaz Sharif said:

“This corridor will benefit all provinces and areas in Pakistan, and transform our country into a regional hub and pivot for commerce and investment. It will also enable China to create a shorter and cheaper route for trade and investment in south, central and west Asia, and the Middle East and Africa. This corridor will become a symbol for peace and prosperity.”⁸

Thus corridor politics of China would not only strengthen political ties between both the states as it is said to be a game changer in the region. It would place Pakistan in the centre of global trade and would consequently increase its power position in the region. Chinese investment in Gwadar port would facilitate China to attain the shortest distance for her trade and shipping. The grand Silk Road project aims to connect China with the outer in such a way that China would be able to independently move around the world. The dominance of the choke points of the world bring China into a new power horizon. Pakistan China relationship in this regard is not only bilateral in nature but they aim to connect the regions through this geopolitical and strategic partnership. As both share economic, strategic and military opportunities in South and Central Asia. China's partnership with Pakistan in terms of South Asian region provides a strategic and military advantage to Pakistan against China and its unstable relations with Afghanistan. In addition to it, Chinese diplomatic support on Pakistan nuclear program is significant particularly when Pakistan's nuclear program is subject to question by US and India lobbies. The issues chronic energy crisis and low GDP of Pakistan can also be resolved through this alignment. The economic interdependence between both the states would further brace such support and cooperation.

A fundamental challenge that Pakistan and China collectively faces is the security concerns. For more than a decade Pakistan is internally facing the issue of extremism and terrorism. More than fifty thousand Pakistanis have been killed so far. Moreover the areas of KPK and Baluchistan in particular are affected by these acts of terrorism. The security of this terrain is basic as it covers the large part of corridor politics. Therefore within Pakistan these areas must be secured by insurgents and militant outfits for the development of infrastructure and allied projects. In addition to it, for China her Xinjiang Uyghur autonomous region in the northwest is a major concern for Chinese authorities in terms of terrorism and extremism. It is an ethnically diverse area including Uyghurs, Han Chinese, Tajiks, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Mongols, and Hui. The emergence of extremist factions in these areas and their linkages with the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and Turkestan Islamic Party based in central Asia are growing concerns for China. For this reason China has overwhelm support for the efforts of combating terrorism in south and central Asia⁹. On the other hand peace at borders is also an issue. Atmosphere of crisis between Pakistan and India affects the overall environment of south Asian region. In 2015 Indian violated the line of control and working boundary with Pakistan 221 times. Furthermore 26 Pakistani citizens were martyred and 78 injured by Indian security forces in cross-border shelling¹⁰. Border skirmishes continued in 2016 and heightened the crisis when two Pakistanis soldiers were killed by the cross border firing in October 2016¹¹. Till now Indians have violated the LOC 91 times in 2016. On the other hand, recently China and India growing geopolitical tensions have further contributed to the south Asian security. Delhi's pre-emptive moves against Beijing by increasing military presence near China- India border and the way India has endorsed its support for US campaign against China over the South China Sea reflect the US-India pivot against China¹². In addition to it, deepening defence ties between India and US is also a concern both for Pakistan and China. Agreement signed in August 2016 between India and US allows the US military to use Indian bases for resupply, refuelling, and relaxation. The memorandum of understanding states:

“The Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement allows for exchange of logistics support, supplies and services between the two countries' armed forces. This includes food, water, fuel, spare parts, repair, transportation, communication and medical services”¹³.

It is significant that US is second largest defence-equipment supplier of India and within last three years both countries have stuck \$4.4 billion worth of deals.¹⁴ In order to counter this influence China's “One Belt, One Road” initiative to expand political and economic influence in South Asia is a major step towards it. As it would provide China's designed to expand China's landlocked, backward western provinces a sea route for commercial and trade¹⁵ activities. Pakistan involvement through Gwadar port and economic corridor situates Pakistan in the very heart of regional politics.

On the other hand, Central Asia is also significant for energy, economy and security of China and Pakistan. China, since the end of cold war, is consistently growing her influence and power in Central Asia which can be reflected through the formation of Shagari Five and later SCO (Shanghai cooperation organization) in 2006. Russian traditional influence in the region and America's renewed and enduring presence in Afghanistan and Central Asia, especially in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, since 2001 have brought an active change in Chinese regional policy¹⁶. Moreover, to maintain her bilateral connectivity in the region, it is an immense challenge for China to establish cordial relations with the government that are somewhat independent of influence of US and Russia. Furthermore, every increasing energy and industrial need of China and the accessible resources of CARs (Central Asian Republics) have pushed China to build strong bilateral and multilateral ties with CARs. Similarly Pakistan with the passage of time has moved towards developing close ties with Central Asian region due to its strategic and economic significance. It can facilitate Pakistan's growing energy and resource based needs and Pakistan can in turn become a gate way in providing them way to Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean. Consequently the interconnectedness of politics and business along with the geographical gain are the core attributes which paves the way for Pakistan and china in these two regions.

Table 1: Challenges and options for Pakistan and China in Central and South Asia

Challenges	Options
Security	Strategic communication
Terrorism	Trade Linkages
Rising militancy	Economic and trade cooperation
Logistics Constraints	Power position
External powers	Regional peace and security
Stable governments	Securing energy and industrial needs

Securitization of Inter-Regional Connectivity

The purpose of this study is to propose that securitization of inter-regional connectivity between south Asia and central Asia by Pakistan and China can be one of the basic prescription through which both the friends can apply to attain long term strategic, economic and political objectives. Belonging to Copenhagen school, Ole Weaver coined the term securitization by giving a multifaceted approach to security. Securitization aims at labelling an issue a security issue in such a way that extraordinary means of the state is invested in dealing with that particular issue. Through securitization states mobilize maximum resources along with motivation and political will. It brings statecraft into a particular direction in which diplomatic, economic, military and social means are utilized to achieve the objectives. Securitization have three main steps i.e. identification of the existential threat, effects on the inter-unit relations by breaking the traditional rules, emergency and extraordinary action. In this context Pakistan and China by securitizing the issue of inter-regional connectivity can gain maximum geopolitical and economic leverage.

Table 2: Securitization of Inter-Regional Connectivity by Pakistan and China

STEP-I :Identification of the existential threat	Security, economic and territorial threats,
STEP-II : Emergency and extraordinary action	Trade zones, shuttle diplomacy, land, seas communication routes, reshaping alliances, developing shortest sea route and connecting the globe
STEP –III : Breaking traditional rules	Outreaching new geographical hubs, connecting regions through networking

In case of Pakistan and China both states should comprehensively identify the existential threat in both central and south Asia. Security, terrorism and extremism, border skirmishes between India and Pakistan, US presence and influence in the regions, unstable Afghanistan, weak governments in central Asia and growing power players in central Asia are the main existential threats for both. Consequently extraordinary means should be taken by both the states to connect the regions into their own advantage on one hand and on the other increase bilateral cooperation and extend support to each other in two regions. Interestingly Pakistan and China has somehow been able to securitize this issue. The development like CPEC (China Pakistan economic corridor), speedy work at Gwadar port project, announcement of Pakistan army to raise new security division and

additional battalions¹⁷ for CPEC are steps towards securitizing regional connectivity. In addition to it, development of Gwadar as a city is equally important. The proclamation of five projects which include Free Trade Zone, Pak-China Government Primary School Faqir Colony, Business Complex of Gwadar Port Authority, Sawar and Shadikor dams and Gwadar University¹⁸ by the government of Pakistan in 2016 reflects the agenda of both governments. The first Chinese ship, 'Tianfu' that dock in Gwadar on 16th October 2016 is taken as a symbol of corridor politics of land and sea coming into a reality as it would become a regional trade hub in future which would facilitate the landlocked central Asian countries and the entire global trade. Furthermore the strong defence and military ties between china and Pakistan is also a source of stability and strength between both the countries. In this context the growing bilateral relationship of central Asian states with Pakistan and China are connected with this. China already has pipeline projects with central Asian states which can be extended via Pakistan to the north, east and west. China had built an oil pipeline from Kazakhstan, a gas pipeline from Turkmenistan and dry port on the Kazakh-Chinese border¹⁹. The shuttle diplomacy between the heads of the government between Pakistan and Central Asian states since 2015 have resulted in variant energy projects and market opportunities. The visit of Presidents of Tajikistan and Turkmenistan in Islamabad and PM of Pakistan's visit to Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan reflects the place of central Asian in Pakistan's foreign policy agenda and the overall Pakistan China regional politics. In this context, both china and Pakistan have multiple avenues to link South and central Asia.

Pakistan- China relationship is one which can set the grounds of reshaping the regional politics in which Pakistan can act as a geographical hub between Central and South Asia with the assistance, support and bilateral working with China. Through these two regions Pakistan and china can outreach the globe with shortest distance and multiple political, economic, military and resource opportunities.

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Academic Session: 2

Geopolitics of Corridors: Building Economic Linkages-I

Session Chair: Dr. Bilveer Singh

CPEC: AN INTEGRATIVE LINE FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND CENTRAL ASIA

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Abstract: *In the contemporary scenario, new economic developments have pointed towards the growing inter-regional trade through economic corridors which are becoming instrumental in the progress and expansion of the regional economies. This increasing perception is also prompting South and Central Asian states to consider options in terms of forming close relations through economic linkages and ultimately create strong inter-regional economic cooperation which is the need of the hour. For the realization of this goal, CPEC can be effectively exploited to create an integrative line between Pakistan and Central Asian States particularly Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan via Afghanistan to engage and involve these republics into this profit-seeking venture to create an environment for the comprehensive and sustainable progress to promote peace and stability in the whole region. Thus this paper explains that the CPEC can prove to be that much-needed economic lifeline for this region which has the capacity to provide various choices for shaping a mutually beneficial relationship and can increase the sanguinity regarding Pakistan benefitting from the economic powerhouse states of Central Asia whereas, the later facilitating with productive trade, pipeline routes and getting access to the outside world as well. The paper also argues that in order to create win-win outcomes, Pakistan not only needs to put attractive ingredients into the 'melting pot of Central Asia' but the hurdles in the way of faster interaction with these states must be resolved through prudent policy options to convert this region into a harmonious whole with coordinated regional economies.*

Keywords: Regional Economic Integration, CPEC, Central Asia, Pakistan, Afghanistan.

Introduction

In present world scenario, regionalism which is based on geographical speculation of preserving long-term collective interests of regional states has become very effective in the development of regional economies. The dynamic phenomenon of regional connectivity which is largely the essence of regionalism can be achieved through the development of communication network between two or more states and includes “widening, deepening and speeding up” of those links that integrates the regional states on socio-economic, political and cultural levels. On the whole, “the entire process of interconnectedness can be interpreted as the time and space compression, where physical distances though remain same, but, squeezed through the construction and development of corridors, roads or highways and railways”.¹ Economic corridors provide vital connection between various economic actors by accelerating trade activities as these corridors minimize transportation cost and save time which is a productive value in trade and to complete in the markets.

China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is one such regional integration project which would initially promote interconnectedness between China and Pakistan, and once fully constructed has the potential to assimilate South and Central Asian economies as it is going to be the most convenient and accessible network to link the two regions. The land-locked countries of Central Asia are all dependent on their neighbors and would benefit greatly from increasing their ties with Pakistan through enhanced cooperation and connectivity under CPEC that can help bringing prosperity and long-term stability to the region and would ultimately put South and Central Asia together.

CPEC: A Bridge to Integrate Pakistan and Central Asia

The wider and broader Central Asian region having substantial geopolitical significance is encircled by various important regional actors. At present, “the prospects for turning the wider Central Asia region into a land bridge on the Eurasian continent depends on collaboration not just among the countries of the region

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themselves, but with the region's important neighbors as well."² In this perspective, Pakistan's geo-political and geo-economic significance cannot be denied as it is located at the junction that allows it to offer most well-situated land and sea routes to Central Asian Republics (CARs) with comparatively short distances for trade and connectivity. "Pakistan enjoys three different land routes from Central Asia, via Afghanistan and the other through China".³ To realize the link between the two regions, Afghanistan is geographically significant linchpin to Pakistan's endeavors of creating connectivity and growing economic link with Central Asia. From Pakistan's perspective, Tajikistan, that has common borders with Afghanistan and China, is the most strategically located country and 'Wakhan Corridor', a narrow strip of 14 km of Afghan territory which separates Tajikistan from Pakistan⁴, could be the most suitable and shortest land link between Pakistan and CARs.

Due to its geographical proximity with CARs, Pakistan has always hoped to become a gateway to the Central Asia by building closer political and economic relations with the region, yet to make any breakthrough into the Central Asian region and even currently according to USAID report, Pakistan's imports and exports to Central Asia are negligible (more or less than 1%) keeping in view the trade potential of both sides.⁵ Presently, the potential growth of the economic relationship between Pakistan and CARs lies in the development of economic corridors like CPEC that will allow the development of transport infrastructure to open up trade routes and access to new markets and that will integrate the region to a larger extent. Nevertheless in this regard, Pakistan has a fair chance to play a central and meaningful role in these republics and CPEC—an incomparable trade route, could be used as medium for productive and more systematic regional collaboration between the South and Central Asian regions for tranquility and collective progress.

The advent of CPEC has ushered a new era of opportunities where Pakistan is looking at expanding its ties with Central Asian states not only in order to strengthen its economic potential, but also to advance its political and cultural relations with the republics. In this regard, efforts have been made by the high officials from both sides to amplify their bilateral relations through enhanced economic collaboration in various areas, mainly trade, energy sharing and infrastructure connectivity. Similar to Pakistan's wish to include CARs in the CPEC project, the leaders of various Central Asian republics like Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan in their meetings with the PM of Pakistan have welcomed the expansion of CPEC and are also desirous to connect their infrastructure networks to this venture which can steer economic development and stability for both sides. The development of Gwadar port under CPEC would lay the foundation for connectivity and interdependence between Pakistan and Central Asia states. Pakistan and Tajikistan have already approved some major road projects connecting Pakistan and Tajikistan through Afghanistan⁶, which if implemented would serve as the first significant road network connecting South and Central Asian regions.

Benefits for Pakistan and CARs

CPEC could become a major trade outlet between Pakistan and CARs which can boost up their economies by brining sustainable trade and commercial opportunities in various fields. Over the last ten years, "the major products that Pakistan has been exporting to the CARs are leather products, pharmaceuticals, textile products, medical apparatus and fruits. However, Pakistan has been losing its share of exports to the Central Asian markets for all of these products, with the exception of pharmaceuticals and medical apparatus."⁷ Trade will likely to grow between the two sides once the CPEC becomes operational. For Pakistan, greatest scope of trade is with Kazakhstan in food items, textile, construction enterprises, pharmaceuticals, engineering equipment and machinery⁸, but there is considerable demand for Pakistani products across the region, consequently, enormous potential for Pakistan to raise its exports to all of the Central Asian markets.

Pakistan also possesses the potential to provide skilled manpower in agriculture, marketing, business management and banking; consumer and engineering good, scientific and technical training to CARs. It can also help the land-locked CARs that have the huge reserves for the contribution to sale in the international market, to move towards global market economy by providing them with shortest trade routes to the outside world via Gwadar Port. "After fully functioning of the Gwadar Port, it will become a central point of connection for the landlocked countries of Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and exceptionally facilitate their cargo transportation destinations towards Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Iran, and Iraq."⁹ In return, the power-surplus countries of Central Asia having abundance of natural resources could become reliable supplies of electricity and gas import for the energy starved Pakistan. "If the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) connected with the CPEC, the region can linkup the natural gas resources of Uzbekistan that could easily overcome the Pakistan's energy crisis and would help boosting the ties of the country with all the states in

Central Asian region.”¹⁰ Another project is Central Asia-South Asia (CASA-1000) electricity transmission project that will help alleviate energy crisis in Pakistan and will help recover the economic condition of Pakistan and the CARs.

Hurdles in the Way of Economic Connectivity

With the advent of CPEC, Pakistan has shaped its strategic and economic policies towards the CARs and has attempted to revive and restore the political, cultural and historical ties, encouraged by modern incentives. However, Pakistan's economic development depends on how it takes advantage of the tremendous economic and trade potential of energy-rich Central Asia and vice versa. Where there are several opportunities under CPEC, there are also some irritants and challenges to be faced while availing those prospects which are hampered by internal and external constraints having a bearing on relations between Pakistan and CARs.

Pakistan's Political and Economic Limitations: An important factor that may affect the prospects of CPEC and hinder Pakistan's ability to expand its economic ties with CARs is the unsustainable situation in Pakistan that has increasingly worsened since 9/11 in the midst of a declining economy, poor law and order, terrorism, extremism and political instability. The province of Balochistan that has been under attack by nationalist insurgents and separatist movements but is a vital link to expand economic collaboration and cooperation with Central Asia, is certainly adding turmoil to the already bleak security scenario. Moreover, lack of better infrastructural condition and transportation system which is essential for the trade and transport activities has obstructed Pakistan's collaboration with CARs due to which it faces limitations in terms of their trade and export activities. Thus keeping its own house in order to get a progressive level of growth under the megaproject of CPEC may become a challenge for Pakistan which will eventually affect its vision to increase integration with Central Asia.

Political Instability in CARs: Despite all of its economic progress, Central Asia as a region is far from perfect in political context. In post-independence period, the CARs have encountered a litany of problems, including rapid economic and socio-political transformation, extremism, security challenges, human rights abuses and suppression of fundamental freedoms. High level of corruption and capital flight festers in each of the five nations, crippling economic growth and progress. Even within themselves, the CARs can be disruptive and suspicious of one another, depicted in the back-and-forth border closures between Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan¹¹, and between Uzbekistan and other four republics¹². All these factors are not conducive for the economic prospects of CPEC for Central Asia in longer perspective that might be prone to instability in the short-to-medium term raising concerns over whether the region has the capacity to absorb the proposed levels of investment. Thus political instability in CARs might become an impediment for these republics to get advantages of this project.

Afghanistan - The Bottleneck: The factor most essential to realize Pakistan's future policy plan on CPEC for developing a route to Central Asia via Afghanistan, is stability and normalcy between the two immediate neighbors as the progress between Pakistan and Central Asian states remains stagnant due to the frequent ups and downs in the relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The most recent issue between the two states is the Torkham gate incident of June 2016 that is likely to give birth to a new geostrategic and geopolitical shift in Pak-Afghan relations and this will definitely provide an opportunity to neighboring India to exploit this situation and work on Chabahar port to secure its trade route to Central Asia. Although the visit of Afghanistan's envoy Dr Zakhilawal in October 2016 was quite positive in which he showed his country's desire to become a part of CPEC, the long standing issues between the two neighbors and Afghanistan's tilt towards India can create problems in long run. Many times President Ashraf Ghani, explicitly threatened Pakistan that the land route for transit of Pakistan's export goods to Central Asia will be shut down if the Wagah land route is not opened by Pakistan for Afghan trade with India. Afghanistan has time and again pressed Pakistan to allow India to become part of a proposed trilateral transit trade agreement between Pakistan, Afghanistan and Tajikistan.¹³ Thus, Pakistan's access to Central Asia seems to be unlikely unless Pakistan solves its issues with Afghanistan.

Another added ingredient that had a very negative impact on the trade links between the Pakistan and Central Asia is instability and wars in Afghanistan. Pakistan and Central Asian States have signed several trade agreements to develop the communication links, including road and rail links that could be effectively implemented once CPEC becomes operational however, the security environment in Afghanistan will be the major hurdle in trade through this channel as all areas connecting to Pakistan from Afghanistan via CPEC are

facing worst law and order situation due to ongoing war inside Afghanistan. The Afghan government does not have writ on its peripheral provinces. Some of the areas are still under the control of Taliban which does not let Afghan government to negotiate long term project with other countries. Thus the pursuit of economic cooperation between Pakistan and Central Asia may become difficult due to the uncertain situation in Afghanistan that threatens the viability of economic connectivity between two sides.

Indian Dilemma

- ✓ **India's Foreign Policy:** Indian foreign policy in the region and its growing relations with Afghanistan, Iran and Central Asian states have seemed to stall Pakistan's regional policy. India's ties with Central Asia grew after 9/11 and since then both actors have been engaged in close collaboration in order to contain cross-border terrorism, extremism and drug trafficking. Moreover, due to the legacy of Soviet-Indian relations, they often hold pro-Indian approach towards regional policies which poses a challenge for Pakistan regarding its position in Central Asia. Further to this, "India's cooperation with Iran, their agreement regarding Chahbahar Port and their mutual support to Afghanistan to preserve India's trade route to Central Asia also creates a long-persistent threat to CPEC. The Salma Dam's inauguration in Afghanistan by PM Modi depicts Indian approach of amplifying its relations with regional states like Afghanistan that will never allow any possible threat to India's interests within its territory."¹⁴ Indian opposition to CPEC has been openly declared and it is certain that India would continue to utilize Afghanistan as a base and would support anti-Pakistan policies there to destabilize Pakistan and undermine the CPEC.
- ✓ **CPEC v/s India's New Road Network:** Apart from already operational North-South Corridor that connects Iranian Chabahar Port with Central Asia via Turkmenistan, in April 2016, India has decided to finance and develop another road network inside Afghanistan to facilitate Iran to reach as far as Tajikistan in a shorter way comparing to its North-South Corridor. "The apparent reason for instant Indian investment through India-Iran-Afghanistan trilateral consultations for this new road networking seems to offer Iranian Chabahar Port as the shortest and safer port to CARs for their international trade comparing to CPEC that will run through western parts of Afghanistan where civil war is going on since many years and where Taliban and Daish are strongly present. The new route will run in Northern Afghanistan in the proximity of Central Asian borders where law and order situation is comparatively under control. The New road networking, which will enable Chabahar to connect with CARs while bypassing Turkmenistan and through Afghanistan, minimizing journey and cargo cost for the republics of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to reach Chabahar Port for international trade"¹⁵, is definitely a cause of competition for Pakistan.

Economic Competition with Turkey and Iran

Regionally besides India, Iran and Turkey are countries that cast their economic influence on CARs and export substantial amounts to the CARs and thus have been huge competition for Pakistan as its exports to the CARs are considerably less compared with those of its neighbors. "Turkey maintained its rank as 5th largest supplier of products to CARs from 2003 and 2012. Iran was ranked number 10 in 2003 and in 2011 it was ranked at number 12. Pakistan, on the other hand, has not been able to maintain its share of exports to the CARs. While it was ranked number 39 in 2003, its position has dropped to number 60 in 2012."¹⁶ If Pakistan effectively exploits the CPEC in the context of its economic links with CARs, it might have to face some resistance from these two regional countries pursuing an assertive role in CARs, which may try to limit Pakistan's position in the region.

Russian Influence

For over a century, Central Asia has been under the domination of Russia that perceives it as a 'strategic backyard' and seems to be sensitive and skeptic to any aspect that might affect this resourceful region. Under the rule of U.S.S.R, the republics of Central Asia were mostly isolated from the rest of the world; U.S.S.R dealt with foreign affairs and direct collaboration even among the CARs was restricted. It would not be wrong to say that only the Soviet Union has collapsed; its deeper links with CARs still remain having a dominant presence in Central Asia in one or other way which represents the past, a valued cultural and historical connection. "The majority of the ruling elite in Central Asia comprise former leaders and members of the Communist Party. Russians are a major ethnic group in Central Asia and wield influence in decision making bodies." Pak-Russian relations have never been so cordial, largely due to Pakistan's support for the Mujahedeen in the Soviet-Afghan

war. "Though after 9/11, Russian ties with Pakistan have improved and that has been a factor in warming of the latter's relations with the CARs,"¹⁷ yet Pakistan may face problems while developing closer ties with CARs if does not remain vigilant in its dealing with Russia whose role is center of influence in CARs.

United States New Silk Road Initiative

Another party to the nexus is the U.S. who envisioned the 2011 New Silk Road revival plan that aimed to connect Central Asia to India and Pakistan via Afghanistan which is similar with China's One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative. This could possibly lead to a competition between the two giants and further generate a 'new great game' in Central Asia which might disturb the success of CPEC and exacerbate regional insecurities. From the very beginning, this initiative of US was received with significant skepticism in China that routinely dismisses the project and considers it an attempt of US to maintain influence in the region. On other side, the picture of U.S. regarding its interest in CPEC is not clear yet and is based on competitive-cooperative relations with China. "If the U.S. has its economic interests close to its head and heart, it would view the Silk Road as a development-pie which it can also have a share and would support the flagship project CPEC. However, if viewed from military prism of U.S. pivot to Asia-Pacific against the so-called String of Pearls, the U.S. will have little interest in the success of CPEC."¹⁸

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Though states get potential opportunities under the umbrella of regional economic cooperation to work collectively, enhance trade, manage their common issues and promote economic development, till recently this strategy did not receive due attention in South and Central Asia. Nevertheless, the initiation of CPEC presents an opportunity for both regions as the dynamic growth of diverse economies present in this region could be connected to CPEC to experience transformation never happened before in this part of the world which is now at the turning point. CPEC cannot only pave the way for economic and trade integration between South and Central Asia but can be used to bring an economic renaissance in the entire region of Asia and beyond if materialized in its true sense and if the potential threats that could hamper the project to be transformed into reality could be effectively controlled.

- ✓ **Solving Domestic Issues:** To turn up the idea of regional economic collaboration among Pakistan and Central Asia, there is also a need to meet the prerequisites like ensuring political stability, combating terrorism, countering extremism and maintaining peace in the region. At present, both sides are seeking to expand their role internationally and have much to offer to the world, including economic benefits and strategic advantages. However, the uncertain political future and security environment in both sides are least conducive to entering into long term arrangements with each other. While there is real interest among both sides regarding their connectivity via CPEC, attention must be paid to how domestic and regional politics in both sides might affect the prospect under the project, which is ultimately not going to be in the favor of any party.
- ✓ **Mutually Beneficial Economic Relations:** Sustainable and consistent economic integration between Pakistan and Central Asian States depends on how the two sides collaborates and takes advantage of economic and trade potential of each other by using the medium of CPEC. Thus in order to create a long-term and stable economic environment, emphasis must be on establishing mutually beneficial economic relations only where two sides could have equal chances of progress. The already existing inter-governmental Joint Economic Commission between the two sides should be revived on new line to give impetus to trade, economic and scientific cooperation. In order to best use the opportunities provided by the CPEC, both sides need to overcome deficiencies in their infrastructure and manpower.
- ✓ **Managing Afghanistan:** In the context of Pakistan's ties with the CARs, Afghanistan is a major stumbling block thus every effort must be made to get the Afghan leaders to settle the differences on negotiation table and regain the goodwill and confidence of Afghan government through trade and assistance to unblock Pakistan's physical access to CARs via Afghan corridor. Furthermore, Pakistan's decision to install a gate at the Torkham border which is against the will of the Afghanistan must be seen in the context of its security problem that simply wants a better management of its border. Afghanistan must also understand that it will not be in its favor to spoil its relations with Pakistan at the behest of India. CPEC expansion to Central Asia through Afghanistan would definitely be more beneficial for Pakistan, however, Pakistan has already began working to access Central Asia via China

through an alternative transit deal with the later that will be economically sufferable for the development-thirsty Afghanistan.

- ✓ **Indian Perception:** It's the high time for India to correct its negative perception for the sake of regional prosperity and change its rival mindset on bilateral and regional issues. India being a major economy could be the chief beneficiary of CPEC as it will certainly boost regional economic prosperity. India should see it as an opportunity to advance its interests in the region. Currently India wants to join the transit trade route for its economic linkages with Central Asia through Afghanistan, and is a partner of the TAPI, thus it should not resist the CPEC initiative through biased statements and by supporting the terrorism along the route of CPEC. Furthermore, tension between Pakistan and India on Kashmir issue is intensifying which would not be favorable in the creating amicable links under CPEC thus must be set aside for the long term goals of regional stability.
- ✓ **Pakistan-Russia Rapprochement:** While Pakistan is on the right track in its endeavors to attain a substantial level of involvement in CARs, improvement in Pakistan's relations with Russia and to follow a balanced policy towards the same is equally important. Pakistan must engage Russia to make its policy clear that it solely wants to engage with CARs for mutually beneficial economic relations than to obstruct Russian regional interests. In the presence of positive working relations with Russia, given the height of dominance it exercises in Central Asia, Pakistan would not face difficulties in terms of escalating regional engagement in Central Asia. Recently conducted Russo-Pak joint military exercise is a good omen of cooperation. Nevertheless, more trust needs to be built with Russia for which Pakistan should develop close economic linkages with her that would not only create confidence in Russian circle regarding Pakistan's pure regional intentions but could also remove any hurdle that undermine its relations with ex-Soviet republics.
- ✓ **Cooperation between U.S. and China:** For the sake of economic growth and stability across South and Central Asia, cooperation rather than competition between the two economic giants is indispensable. The U.S. must comprehend that the China's OROB initiative has the latent capacity to incorporate Afghanistan into the regional economy in a way the U.S. itself has wanted to do for some years, thus, in this context, the U.S. ought to be encouraging of China's endeavors in CARs which are vital for promoting progress in the region. The two states must not let their mutual mistrust get in the way of collaboration that possibly will advance their common interests, instead through cooperative approach they should become joint partners in maintaining peace and prosperity in South and Central Asia.
- ✓ **Inclusive policy on CPEC:** It is said that "economic stability and independence come from having multiple outlets to the world; multiple sets of pipelines, multiple transport corridors, and multiple trading partners."¹⁹ Therefore, in order to integrate the wider Asian region, a well-thought and deliberated collaboration among the regional neighbors is required on CPEC. While regional and international scenario may conspire against this mega venture, for things to happen correctly in future, the project should not be permitted to become prey of vested interests of regional and international actors; Pakistan and China need to share this development-pie with other states while adopting an inclusive policy on CPEC which would be a major step for resolving issues and bringing an end to the prevailing mistrust between the regional neighbors. China has already given signal to include Iran in CPEC, so inclusion of other regional countries in the project will minimize its opposition.

To make the 21st century for the Asian region, the states of South Asia and Central Asia need greater and organized regional economic connection which is possible only by reinforcing a broader collaboration under CPEC that would become a unification factor between Pakistan and Central Asia and would open up new avenues for enhancing trade and cooperation in various fields. Economic growth of the two sides will not only eradicate poverty but overcome extremism and other issues. This is possible only once the perennial issues which create hurdles in the way of CPEC would be set aside to properly re-assess the future precedence. At present, in the form of CPEC Pakistan has a better opportunity to revive and formulates its policy towards Afghanistan and other Central Asian states on new grounds and adopt a more coherent strategy based on economic plans rather than pretentious political motives that will ultimately help Pakistan and other South Asian state to strengthen their economic development and connect themselves not only with Central Asia but with the rest of Asia.

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AN ANALYSIS OF TWO CORRIDORS IN CHINA'S ONE BELT ONE ROAD INITIATIVE: CHINA-PAKISTAN AND CHINA CENTRAL-WEST ASIA

Jonathan Fulton*

Abstract: *The One Belt, One Road (OBOR) initiative is transforming China's position across multiple regions. In particular, its role in South and Central Asia is increasing significantly, commensurate with its rising interests in both regions. Central to OBOR are five cooperation priorities: policy coordination, facilities connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration, and people-to-people bonds. This paper presents case studies of two corridors, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the China-Central West Asia Economic Corridor (CCWAEC), mapping political and economic interactions to each of these cooperation priorities. This paper will analyze levels of existing interdependence between China and the states in question in order to determine which cooperation priorities require greater resources and which have already achieved a measure of success. As such, it anticipates future areas of focus for Chinese policy in both regions, indicating a possible trajectory of China's political and economic interactions in South and Central Asia.*

Keywords: Chinese Foreign Policy, One Belt One Road, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, China-Central Asia Economic Corridor, Central-South Asian Connectivity

Introduction

The Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, or One Belt, One Road (OBOR) has signaled China's plan for a greater presence across Eurasia, and Central and South Asia have prominent roles in the development of the architecture of OBOR.

Central to OBOR are five cooperation priorities articulated by the Chinese government in its policy document released in March 2015.¹ These priorities - policy coordination, facilities connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration, and people-to-people-bonds – indicate the shape of OBOR cooperation, and also indicate the what kind of role individual states can be expected to play within OBOR. Policy coordination calls for intergovernmental cooperation, enhanced political trust, expanding shared interests, and coordinated economic development strategies and policies. Facilities connectivity calls for improved connectivity through infrastructure projects. Unimpeded trade calls for removal of trade and investment barriers, with the goal of establishing regional free trade agreements. Financial integration calls for developing a common economic system throughout OBOR, under the framework of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), BRICS New Development Bank, Silk Road Fund, and Shanghai Cooperation Organization Development Bank. People-to-People bonds are the soft power initiatives of OBOR, promoting cultural and educational exchanges, tourism, and media cooperation.

This paper begins with a short discussion of the introduction of OBOR in late 2013 and its immediate impact as the signature foreign policy initiative under President Xi Jinping. It then analyzes two OBOR economic corridors, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and China-Central West Asia Economic Corridor (CCWAEC), assessing four of the five policy goals: policy coordination, facilities connectivity, unimpeded trade, and financial integration. Measured against these goals, CPEC is clearly the better developed corridor for the time being, and the bilateral nature of CPEC, as opposed to the multilateral CCWAEC, indicates that China's OBOR objectives can be more easily achieved with CPEC than CCWAEC.

The Development of One Belt, One Road

In September 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping gave a speech at Nazarbayev University in Kazakhstan, in which he announced a cooperative initiative in which China and Central Asian states would build what he called the Silk Road Economic Belt. In articulating this policy initiative, Xi discussed a range of issues in which China and Central Asian states could enhance cooperation, such as improved transportation networks, facilitated trade and investment, an increase in people-to-people exchanges, and sharing economic strategies with the goal of finding ways to complement development.² Given the existing membership of China

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and the Central Asian states in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), this policy announcement appeared to be building upon SCO initiatives.

In October 2013, President Xi delivered a speech to the Indonesian Parliament in which he called for “a more closely-knit China-ASEAN community of common destiny so as to bring more benefits to both China and ASEAN and to the people in the region.”³ He presented a five-point strategy: build trust and develop good-neighborliness, work for win-win cooperation, stand together and assist each other, enhance mutual understanding and friendship, and stick to openness and inclusiveness. Within these general policy expressions were the seeds of what has become known as the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. He suggested upgrading the China-ASEAN Free Trade agreement with the goal of expanding trade to \$1 trillion by 2020, and announced the establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), stating that it would prioritize development projects in ASEAN states. He said that China was interested in enhancing security cooperation with ASEAN states, and also called for greater people-to-people exchanges between China and ASEAN countries, referring to the China-ASEAN relationship as a “community of shared destiny.”⁴ As with the speech in Kazakhstan, this speech appeared significant only as an extension of existing Sino-ASEAN relationships, and did not represent a bold policy shift for China.

One month later, the significance of these two speeches became clearer, as the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China formally endorsed the construction of OBOR. This gave the initiative a much higher profile, and its scope started to come into greater focus. Throughout 2014 and 2015 a wide range of bilateral agreements were announced as part of OBOR, and planned multilateral programs, such as the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor, indicated that its geographic focus extended beyond Central Asia and South-East Asia. Ultimately, it became clear that OBOR was going to connect China to the Middle East, Africa, and Europe as well, meaning it potentially connects China to over 4 billion people in over 60 emerging market countries, representing 65% of global land trade and 30% of global maritime trade.⁵

With OBOR’s increased profile, it has clearly become the signature foreign policy initiative of the Xi administration. Wu Jianmin, former president of China’s Foreign Affairs University and a member of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ Foreign Policy Advisory Committee, has described it as “the most significant and far-reaching initiative that China has ever put forward.”⁶ It has also been described as “the largest programme of economic diplomacy since the U.S.-led Marshall Plan.”⁷ One western diplomat concluded that rather than a new doctrine, OBOR is instead “a new slogan on stuff they’ve wanted to do for a long time.”⁸ However it is conceptualized, the Chinese government is committing tremendous emphasis on it, with OBOR the key focus of Chinese diplomacy since it was announced. One Chinese observer made this point, commenting, “The fact that a single initiative is taken as the focus of China’s diplomatic work for the whole year shows the weight given to the One Belt, One Road Strategy in China’s diplomacy.”⁹

The actual shape of OBOR was articulated by Vice Premier Zhang Gaoli at an Asia-Europe Meeting in Chongqing in 2015, when he announced six economic corridors, funded by the AIIB and the Silk Road Fund, connecting Asia and Europe:

- ✓ China-Mongolia-Russia
- ✓ New Eurasian Land Bridge
- ✓ China-Central and West Asia
- ✓ China-Indochina Peninsula
- ✓ China-Pakistan
- ✓ China-Myanmar-Bangladesh-India¹⁰

Each of these economic corridors serves a different geopolitical objective for China, and taken together indicate an ambitious plan to increase China’s presence across a range of issues throughout Eurasia.

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor

Of the six OBOR corridors, CPEC is currently the best developed. Andrew Small referred to CPEC as “the flagship project for China’s Belt and Road initiative, essentially the only fully-developed section of the entire scheme, and hence an important test case for Xi Jinping’s ambitious plans.”¹¹ Analyzing the features of this corridor, it appears consistent with the aforementioned quote that OBOR can be seen as a new slogan for “stuff they’ve wanted to do for a long time.” Indeed, CPEC actually predates the announcement of OBOR,

having been formally proposed in May, 2013, six months before OBOR was articulated at the Third Plenary Session.¹²

CPEC has been represented with the formula of a 1+4 cooperation structure. 1 represents the economic corridor and 4 represents the pillars that support it: the Gwadar port, energy, infrastructure, and industrial collaboration.¹³ Underwriting this formula is close political cooperation, security coordination, trade, and FDI. In examining CPEC against the vision statement for OBOR, it is clear that the policy goals of OBOR are already at an advanced stage in this corridor, especially relative to CCWAEC.

Policy Coordination

Sino-Pakistani relations have evolved over time from primarily a Cold War era response to external threats to a relationship that also encompasses domestic stability for both states, emphasizing the importance of the bilateral relationship. China's importance has been described as "the cornerstone of Pakistan's strategic foreign policy."¹⁴ The resulting relationship has expanded to include extensive trade ties and geopolitical considerations, as Pakistan also provides China with a bridge to the Middle East. The diplomatic relationship has been useful for China over the years, as Pakistan was used as a diplomatic conduit for establishing ties with the USA and Saudi Arabia, and today Pakistan has come to be regarded as "a central part of China's transition from a regional power to a global one."¹⁵

Diplomatic relations have intensified in the post-Cold War era. President Jiang Zemin made China's first state visit to Pakistan in 1996, and announced the establishment of an "all around cooperative partnership." The relationship deepened with a visit from Premier Wen Jiabao in 2005, when China and Pakistan signed the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Good Neighborly Relations, and announced the beginning of negotiations for a free trade agreement. When President Xi Jinping made a state visit in April 2015, the first of 51 Memorandums of Understanding signed established the all-weather strategic partnership, which is generally viewed as China's highest level of bilateral relations, involving the "full pursuit of cooperation and development."¹⁶ These existing high level bilateral relations provide opportunities to enhance policy coordination within CPEC, as evidenced with the CPEC Summit held in Islamabad in August 2016.

In addition to bilateral relations, Sino-Pakistani policy coordination is facilitated by participation in multilateral organizations, especially the SCO. Pakistan had observer state status since June 2005 and its request for full membership passed in June 2016 at the SCO Heads of State Summit at Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Pakistan is expected to become a full member by the next summit in Astana in June 2017.¹⁷ While SCO policy coordination involves security related issues rather than the economic and development coordination stressed by OBOR, full membership status in the SCO will further promote intergovernmental cooperation, expand shared interests, and enhance political trust.

Facilities Connectivity

This objective is central to CPEC. As noted above, the 1+4 cooperation structure is the basis of CPEC, and requires dense levels of cooperation in terms of infrastructure development. Gwadar represents an end point to this corridor, and China's role in developing the port as well as the associated infrastructure demonstrates a clear commitment to this goal, as well as political and economic interests for the Chinese government in the continued development of CPEC. Currently there are several infrastructure projects associated with CPEC, including the Peshawar-Lahore-Karachi railway, power plants in Tharparkar and Port Qasim, the Gwadar-Nawabshah natural gas pipeline, the Karot hydropower project, the Jhimpir wind farm, Gwadar airport, the Karachi-Thatta expressway, and the M-9 Hyderabad-Karachi motorway.¹⁸ With \$46 billion promised in infrastructure development loans from China, facilities connectivity is a major component of CPEC.

Unimpeded Trade

During Premier Wen's state visit in February 2005, China and Pakistan announced the beginning of negotiations on a free trade agreement (FTA) that was signed when President Hu visited in 2006. Since then, trade has intensified significantly. China has become Pakistan's most important trade partner, with 8.8% of its 2015 exports directed to China, and 28.2% of its imports coming from China, representing a tremendous increase from 9.8% in 2006.¹⁹ According to IMF data, China has been Pakistan's top source of imports every year since 2006. (See Table-1)

Table 1: Value and Ranking of Pakistan's Imports from/Exports to China (Millions of US \$)

Year	Pakistani Imports from China	Pakistani Exports to China
2006	\$4,664.81 (1)	\$915.61 (4)
2007	\$6,363.41 (1)	\$1,004.78 (4)
2008	\$6,590.55 (1)	\$915.53 (5)
2009	\$3,774.17 (1)	\$973.82 (4)
2010	\$7,629.26 (1)	\$1,572.70 (4)
2011	\$9,281.85 (1)	\$1,929.88 (4)
2012	\$10,206.93 (1)	\$2,855.63 (2)
2013	\$12,117.16 (1)	\$2,915.51 (2)
2014	\$14,573.27 (1)	\$2,509.44 (2)

Source: (IMF, Direction of Trade by Country)

Table 2: Value and Ranking of China's Exports to/Imports from Pakistan (Millions of US \$)

Year	Chinese Exports to Pakistan	Chinese Imports from Pakistan
2006	\$4,664.81 (34)	\$915.61 (64)
2007	\$6,363.41 (35)	\$1,004.78 (59)
2008	\$6,590.55 (40)	\$915.53 (64)
2009	\$3,774.17 (34)	\$973.82 (58)
2010	\$7,629.26 (36)	\$1,572.70 (62)
2011	\$9,281.85 (37)	\$1,929.88 (64)
2012	\$10,206.93 (37)	\$2,855.63 (56)
2013	\$12,117.16 (35)	\$2,915.51 (56)
2014	\$14,573.27 (33)	\$2,509.44 (67)

(IMF, Direction of Trade by Country)

As with many of China's bilateral trade partners, the relationship is heavily one-sided. While China ranks as Pakistan's top import partner, Pakistan ranks as China's 33rd largest source of imports. In terms of export destinations, China is 2nd highest for Pakistan, while Pakistan is 67th for China.²⁰ The trade deficit is significant, with the value of Pakistan's imports from China consistently considerably larger than the value of its exports to China. (See Tables 1 and 2) In terms of trade, China is much more important to Pakistan than Pakistan is to China. However, Pakistan's geopolitical significance gives it a weight incommensurate to its trade volume.

Financial Integration

This OBOR policy goal also indicates a pre-existing cooperative relationship. Pakistan is a founding member of the AIIB, and was the recipient of funding for one of its three initial projects, a 64 kilometer stretch of highway connecting Khanewal to Shorkot.²¹ The AIIB has also announced a \$300 million loan for an expansion at a hydropower project, co-financed by the World Bank.²² Likewise, Pakistan was chosen as the first investment for the Silk Road Fund, with a \$1.65 billion investment to construct the Kohat dam on the Jhelum River, a 'priority project' for CPEC.²³

China-Central Asia Economic Corridor

The size and scope of this corridor, as compared with CPEC, underscores the difficulty in realizing such an ambitious and wide-reaching initiative. CCWAEC requires China to coordinate with actors in six states of varying levels of development and political stability: Turkey, Iran, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. To emphasize the disparity among the states in this corridor, Turkey's 2016 GDP forecast is three times larger than the four Central Asian states combined.²⁴ While there are a number of shared interests between

China and the CCWAEC states, and several pre-existing cooperative initiatives, this corridor appears more difficult to successfully coordinate than CPEC.

Policy Coordination

In terms of bilateral relationships, China has official diplomatic relations with each of the six states in this corridor. It has comprehensive strategic partnerships with Iran (January 2016) and Uzbekistan (June 2016), and strategic partnerships with Turkey (2010), Tajikistan (2013), and Kyrgyzstan (2013). In 2014 China and Turkmenistan committed to developing their relationship to a strategic partnership by 2018. Given the resources devoted to OBOR, it can be expected that each of the strategic partnerships will be upgraded to comprehensive in the near future; partnership upgrades are used to emphasize the importance of diplomatic events and usually take place during state visits.²⁵

As multilateral partners, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are all members of the SCO, and Iran has observer state status while Turkey is a dialogue partner. Turkmenistan alone has no formal status within the SCO, attending as a guest but committed to permanent neutrality since a declaration at the United Nations in 1995, under which it does not participate in multilateral defense organizations.

One concern with policy coordination is the issue of political trust. While Sino-Iranian ties are well-established, China and Turkey have little in the way of a shared cooperative history. Tensions with China's Uighur population in Xinjiang presents a potential stress point in its relations with Turkey. Central Asian states also are reluctant to become overly reliant on relations with China, with the concern that the volume of Chinese trade creates potential political influence, a concern for states that have a long history of being dominated by larger neighbors. For China's part, the Central Asian states are seen as vulnerable to terrorism and radical Islam, and a base for Uighur separatists.²⁶ The recent embassy bombing in Bishkek emphasizes the Chinese concern of security threats in the region.

Facilitates Connectivity

There is significant room for development with regards to this goal. Turkey has over \$35 billion invested in current infrastructure development projects, mostly in transportation and logistics, representing opportunities for cooperation in emerging projects. Given China COSCO Holding Company's recent purchase of 67% of the Port of Piraeus in Greece, Turkey's continued infrastructure development will be a priority for China.²⁷ Iran also has significant infrastructure investment needs, and in the wake of the July 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, Iran's economy is expected to record 4.5% growth rates in 2016-2017, the highest in the Middle East.²⁸ Chinese firms are currently involved in several Iranian transportation and energy projects, including oil and gas fields, the Tehran-Mashhad railway, and a high speed rail connecting Tehran, Qom and Isfahan.²⁹ The Central Asian states in CCWAEC are especially in need of infrastructure investment, and Chinese companies are investing in energy and transportation projects, including the Central Asia-China Gas Pipeline that runs through Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, the Kara-Balta oil refinery in Kyrgyzstan, and highway construction projects.³⁰

At the same time, the nature of CCWAEC underscores the potential problems in coordinating projects with a wide range of states. Turkey and Iran pose little in the way of infrastructure risk, whereas Central Asian states have significant physical infrastructure needs that limit connectivity and availability of facilities required for sourcing projects, and relatively higher legal and regulatory risk as well.³¹

Unimpeded Trade

This OBOR policy goal is at a considerably less advanced stage than with CPEC. This can be attributed to the difficulties inherent in managing relations across a group of six states rather than one. Whereas CPEC meets this goal with a pre-existing FTA, China does not have an FTA with any state in the CCWAEC, and none is currently under negotiation, or even under consideration.

That is not to say that there are not considerable trade relations between China and these states. According to IMF data, the total volume of trade between China and CCWAEC states reached over \$96 billion in 2014, up from \$3.7 billion in 2000. (See Table 3) Of course there is significant variation in trade among CCWAEC states. On one end of the scale, Turkey had a GDP of \$733.6 billion in 2015. On the other end are the four Central Asian states, with a combined GDP of \$115.826 billion. In between is Iran at \$387.6 billion.³² Taken as a whole, this represents a combined GDP of \$1.237 trillion, more than four times greater than

Pakistan's GDP of \$270 billion in 2015. As a bloc, therefore, CCWAEC provides a larger potential source of trade than CPEC, but the lack of free trade agreements means that the OBOR objective of unimpeded trade does not yet exist within this corridor.

Table 3: China-Central West Asia Economic Corridor Volume of Trade

Year	Iran	Turkey	Turkmenistan	Uzbekistan	Tajikistan	Total
2014	51,739.32	27,779.27	9,700.18	4,393.28	2,759.46	96,371.51
2010	22,311.15	19,449.99	1,523.8	2,477	685.13	46,447.07
2005	8,588.86	7,417.62	116.75	663.25	98.2	16,884.68
2000	2,177.29	1,440.74	24	54.31	15.3	3,711.63

Source: (IMF, Direction of Trade by Country. Data for Kyrgyzstan is not available)

Financial Integration

In terms of financial integration, cooperation is at an early stage. All CCWAEC states but Turkmenistan have joined the AIIB as founding members. Tajikistan has already been approved for funding in one of the AIIB's first projects, a joint project with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). Each bank has loaned \$27.5 million for a project to upgrade a section of highway that connects Tajikistan's capital city of Dushanbe to Uzbekistan.³³ No other projects involving states in CCWAEC have been announced by the AIIB.

With a relatively deep representation in the SCO, many opportunities exist to deepen financial integration among its member states, with regular annual meetings for Ministers of Finance. The SCO Development Bank is expected to facilitate this goal, although this institution is still at a nascent stage. Leaders of SCO member states signed an agreement in 2011 to establish the Development Bank, with the expectation that it would provide mechanisms to facilitate financing for the SCO's strategic projects.

Conclusion

In analyzing these two economic corridors, the first conclusion to be drawn is that CPEC is already at a more advanced stage of development. This can be attributed to three factors. First, it is a bilateral agreement between two states with a long history of cooperation and shared interests, making the coordination of OBOR policy objectives less complex than the multilateral CCWAEC. Second, much of the framework of CPEC was in place when OBOR was announced, and was consistent with OBOR policy objectives, making it a relatively easier corridor to develop. Third, that Gwadar Port is the end point of this corridor is important; China's economy is reliant upon Persian Gulf energy, a situation that is projected to increase. In providing a direct link to the Strait of Hormuz, Gwadar will play an important role in China's energy security.

The second conclusion to draw from this analysis is that CCWAEC can be expected to become a larger focus of Chinese investment and development. This corridor has two end points: Iran, also in the Persian Gulf, and also an important source of energy, and Turkey, providing land and maritime access to European markets. The potential economic benefits of this corridor are significant, and it is in China's interests to see a stable political and economic environment in the four Central Asian states that link it to Turkey and Iran. As such, more Chinese funding for OBOR projects in Central Asia should be anticipated.

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ECONOMIC CO-DEPENDENCY: A CONDUIT FOR PEACE IN THE REGION

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Abstract: *Frederic Bastiat, the French economist from the liberal school of thought said that “if goods don’t cross borders, soldiers will”. This view has been taken as a gospel by most liberals who have propagated the theories for economic co-dependency and free trade between the nations. A number of research studies have been carried out by prominent economists and political scientists on the linkage between economic co-dependency, trade, and peace between nations. Increased trade would significantly raise the direct and indirect cost (opportunity cost) of war. Both of these factors would prevent a country from initiating or engaging in war. Economic co-dependency would also mean that disposal income for the masses would be greater which could lead to better literacy rates. Once the literacy rates are higher coupled with more social and cultural exchanges, people would be incentivized to understand each other’s culture and be less susceptible to allow anything which destroys peace.*

Keywords: Co-dependency, laissez-faire, free trade, economic interdependence

Introduction

In his 2004 article, McDonald demonstrated, through a series of statistical tests, that higher level of free trade reduces military conflict between the states. Elaborating McDonald’s research, Adorney, in his 2015 study explained as to how McDonald analyzed the behavior of every country in the world for the past 40 years. His analysis showed a negative correlation between free trade and conflict. This means that more freely a country trades, the fewer wars it engages in. Countries that engage in free trade are, thereby, less likely to invade and less likely to be invaded.

A study by Hyun and Pyun in 2009 confirmed that an increase in bilateral trade, interdependence, and global trade significantly promotes peace. It, however, suggested that the effect of trade openness varies depending upon the geographical proximity of countries. The peace-promotion effect of bilateral trade integration is significantly higher for contiguous countries that are likely to experience more conflicts.

Interest in exploring the link between increased trade, economic co-dependency, and peace is not a new phenomenon. Even in the 17th century, some academics and philosophers had started to contend that increased international trade between the countries could greatly improve the prospects of peace in the world. These ideas were brought to the mainstream by Adam Smith’s remarkable book ‘Wealth of Nations’. Adam Smith propagated the idea that increased trade between nations through specialization would bring increased prosperity to the world.

There is however an opposing view which states that a number of wars in the history have actually been fought mainly due to trade interests. For example, East India Company started off with setting up trading posts in the Indian subcontinent and then gradually brought most of the subcontinent under their rule. Other prominent examples, in this regard, may include the Anglo-Chinese disputes over British trade in China, most commonly known as Opium Wars, or the wars fought during the transatlantic Slave Trade. However, one commonality that can be pointed out with respect to all these wars is that existential trade was minimal between the two nations before the wars broke out.

Economic Co-dependency in the Contemporary World

Alfred Nobel, the inventor of dynamite as well as the founder of noble peace prize once aptly said that “My dynamite will sooner lead to peace than a thousand world conventions. As soon as men will find that in one instant, whole armies can be utterly destroyed, they surely will abide by golden peace”.

However as we know, that has not turned out to be the case at all. World Wars, Russian Civil War, Vietnam War and countless other wars have annihilated millions of human beings around the world since this statement was made.

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In early 1803, when war with Spain was imminent, an article in *The Times* argued against war propagating the rationale choice of trade over war,

"She is our best customer; and by the gentle and peaceable stream of commerce, the treasures of the new world flow with greater certainty into English reservoirs, than it could do by the most successful warfare. They come in this way to support our manufactures, to encourage industry, to feed our poor, to pay taxes, to reward ingenuity, to diffuse riches among all classes of people".

Liberal academics have also spent a considerable time analyzing the reasons as to why wars happen. A very insightful political and economic explanation (Keynes, 1936) has been provided below as to why wars have raged in the past.

"War has several causes. Dictators and others such, to whom war offers, in expectation at least, a pleasurable excitement, find it easy to work on the natural bellicosity of their peoples. But, over and above this, facilitating their task of fanning the popular flame, are the economic causes of war, namely, the pressure of population and the competitive struggle for markets".

No-where in the above definition do we see the so called "religious reasons" or "religious fundamentalism" as a cause for nations giving up peace and starting war. Perhaps these causes remain more pertinent and relevant now that they were in 1936. The question that arises, therefore, is as to whether trade and economic co-dependence have any implications on a nation which is bent on destroying peace for so called "religious" reasons. There are a limited number of theocracies in the world such as Iran and Bhutan and they too have closed economies (for political or intended reasons). Therefore, the question as to what extent trade would bring more peace to these countries remains a theoretical discussion. However, trade and economic co-dependence have brought states with other kind of extremist ideologies closer to peace. China, once closed for outside business, is now integrated in the global commerce to the extent that it is now known as the factory for the world. As a result of its opening up and consequent regional and global co-dependence, China is now known to have developed a more peaceful relationship with its neighbors and the world.

In 2012, the Nobel Peace Prize was given to European Union. This marked one of the most practical and cognizant examples of a trade block promoting peace in what had been previously the world's most volatile region. European Union (EU) has established the EU Single Market wherein goods and resources can move freely between the countries. For instance, Airbus makes its wings and sources engines in United Kingdom (UK), fuselages are manufactured in Germany whereas the assembly takes place in France. In this way, co-dependent manufacturing between different companies, a common practice in Europe, has done wonders for this region. As a result, Europe has witnessed the longest stretch of peace in its history now. This was the same continent which had a long history of conflicts, including the two world wars. Nobel Peace Prize committee applauded EU for its contribution over six decades to 'the advancement of peace, reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe' and being instrumental in 'transforming most of Europe from a continent of war to a continent of peace.'

Another example that can be cited in this regard is that of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Historically, in what is now UAE, there existed a tribal society marked by intermittent clashes and infighting. However, after the tribes synthesized into a modern nation-state and setup the free trade areas, no armed conflict has occurred between the members of the tribes.

In contravention of economic co-dependence and trade, adversarial countries may end up adopting policies of embargos or sanctions against one another. Often these are put in place to force a country to come around. However, an analysis of embargoes and sanctions that have been placed by rival states would demonstrate that they often do not achieve intended objectives. There has been effectively a trade embargo against Israel by the Arab League since 1940s, which later Pakistan has also joined. If anything, that trade embargo has only worsened the situation of peace in the Middle East region. As of now, Israel does not depend on its existence on any of its neighbors. It can be argued that the bargaining power of Arab League could have been significantly higher if it had been one of the major investors and trading partners of Israel.

Similarly, the restrictions on trade and economic sanctions did not help in alleviating the situation of Iraq. Eventually, a war toppled the regime there. Similarly, sanctions and embargoes have not contributed much towards defusing the situation in North Korea. Whilst it is often claimed that trade restrictions hastened the end

of apartheid in South Africa, there are alternate explanations as to why the unjust and unnatural discrimination system over there was inherently unsustainable. Generally, the embargoes and trade restrictions play into hand of the politicians who exploit them to channel the frustration of the public and create an “us versus the world” type mentality. North Korea, for example, does not trade with South Korea even where sanctions do not apply. This exclusivist policy plays well into the hands of propaganda driven North Korean rulers.

Economic Co-dependency in Central Asian Region and South Asia (CARSA)

Peace is the natural effect of trade. Two nations who traffic with each other become reciprocally dependent; for if one has an interest in buying, the other has an interest in selling; and thus their union is founded on their mutual necessities. (Montesquieu, 1748).

There is a large disparity between the economies of the CARSA countries. For instance, GDP (Purchasing Power Parity (PPP)) of India currently standing at US \$ 1.87 trillion dollars dwarfs that of other countries such as Nepal and Bhutan. One remarkable aspect of the regional economy is the lack of substantial inter-regional trade between larger economies. There are, however, smaller exceptions such as Nepal, Bhutan and to an extent Afghanistan who have a significant amount of trade within the region. Large economies like India and Pakistan do not trade substantially within the region. In fact the bilateral trade which at the time of independence of two nations stood at 60% of overall trade has now plunged to 3%. At the same time, if we observe the political environment of the region, we can deduce that major armed conflicts have also taken place between these two large economies.

There have, however, been some successful examples of economic co-dependency as well. Indus Water Agreement has survived three major wars and countless skirmishes between India and Pakistan. Similarly, Afghan Transit Trade agreement between Pakistan and Afghanistan has been operational since 1950s in some shape and form and has survived countless ups and downs in diplomatic relationships between the two countries. However, such economic co-dependencies, which are a norm in European Union or in Far Eastern economies, are still far and few and the region still has insignificant bilateral co-dependent trading.

Central Asian Region (CAR) has abundance of hydrocarbon reserves, which at the moment are not effectively being utilized by other countries from the region. Thereby, these land locked countries are dependent on Russia for exporting oil and gas through Black Sea. Besides, CAR countries also export oil and gas through few pipelines entering into Russia and China. Meanwhile, energy deficient countries such as India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh do not have direct access to these hydrocarbon reserves. Similarly, CAR countries, due to lack of infrastructure, also do not have access to the ports in Iran and Pakistan (such as Gwadar, Bandar Abbas and Chabahar) for exporting their reserves via Strait of Hormuz which currently accounts for 35% of the petroleum traded by sea. Access to these ports can end the economic and political dependency of the CAR countries on Russia, besides solving the energy needs of both India and Pakistan and providing a cheaper and convenient way for CAR countries to access the global markets. This would also result in bringing in much needed finances for the Afghan Government in the form of royalties and employment generation through transit arrangements.

Potential of Economic Co-dependency in the Region

Imagine the potential of Kashmir, arguably the most volatile area in the region, being transformed to a peaceful transit through trade and economic co-dependence. Imagine a world where India and Pakistan agree to accept territorial status-quo on Kashmir, and begin marketing Kashmir as a tourist destination together. Imagine the hundreds of thousands of tourist who would be able to flock to one of the world’s most beautiful valleys. Both countries will be able to expand their tax revenues, the local populations would be prosperous and the region would be safer. Besides, the amount of money saved from purchasing military supplies could be spent in education or other productive areas. Whilst to even think about this might be preposterous at this moment, imagine if this type of economic co-dependence was already in place, would either country want to disturb the peace?

As discussed already, huge economic dividends would emerge if CARs and energy deficient countries of South Asia expand their trade. Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India (TAPI) pipeline can be an important feature of this arrangement. Similarly, China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) would ensure that the western most provinces of China have access to the Pakistani ports. CPEC could also assist land locked CAR countries, Afghanistan and western provinces of India to acquire a shorter and quicker route to ports in Pakistan. There also exists a corresponding potential to increase the Afghan Transit Trade. Currently, India does

not have a direct land route to export to Afghanistan and China which can be provided via CPEC. The Chinese are currently also working on reviving the Silk Route between the CAR countries and China. If CPEC can be connected to this route, this would open up huge market for regional trade.

As of now, CPEC is being considered a threat by the Indian Government since it passes through Pakistan-controlled Kashmir and parts of the route are located close to India-Pakistan border. Further Chinese investments and the attendant lease of land to Chinese companies would mean that the already complexed Kashmir issue would assume greater interest for China. Besides, Indian interest vis-à-vis Straits of Hormuz may also be impacted as a major part of oil imported by India passes through the region. However, a contrasting view of the CPEC can also be adopted by the Indian government in the long run. CPEC can potentially open up the CAR countries, Afghanistan, and Chinese markets for Indian exports. Furthermore, a stable and prosperous Pakistan could also mean improved education and employment opportunities for average Pakistanis which could result in a more tolerant society. However, it ultimately boils down to the requisite political vision from the leadership of the countries involved whereby they may contemplate over the long-term implications of regional partnerships.

Even at micro-level, increased trade and mutual cooperation can provide for necessary confidence building measures. Abolishment of negative lists between the countries, establishment of regional finance houses and investment firms, cultural exchange, exchange of research, cooperation in poverty alleviation etc can assist the countries in finding alternate ways to work together. The mutual advantage of working together would make it difficult to break away from trade and economic co-existence and would result in a more prosperous and peaceful region.

A free trade area, similar to the European Free Trade Agreement amongst the CARSA can potentially change the fortunes of the region. In the long run, this could make the countries more competitive, lower the cost of trade, make the economies more resilient and bring peace and security to the region. However in order to achieve that goal, a lot of spade work is still needed.

Whilst economic co-dependency and increased trade can help the region be more prosperous and peaceful, there are practical impediments to the process. Among them is the lack of an effective leadership with the vision to work at regional level and bring about these changes. The current trend of right wing nationalist parties taking over governments is not helpful in improving either the trade or diplomatic ties in the region. Physical security is also one of the biggest impediments in realizing the true potential of CPEC and all other major regional infra structure projects. Impact of terrorism has been felt across the region which directly hampers foreign direct investments in the region. Literacy amongst the region is one of the lowest and the skilled work force to deliver is not in abundance. The general levels of corruption are high across the region which can result in interest of the nations being conflicted with that of their leaders'. All of these impediments will need time and good effective leadership to overcome.

Peace and prosperity can be a rallying point for all the countries in the region. Whilst the countries in the region may have different cultural backgrounds or belief systems, once they are economically dependent on each other, trade could overcome any barriers between them. As put in words by Rudyard Kipling, once resident of this great city:

Oh, East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgement Seat;
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, Nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face,
Though they come from the ends of the earth!

Conclusion

Wars have been fought between countries for number of reasons including settling of disputes, assumed right over land and resources, access to markets, religious grounds etc. However, in a rationale and logical world, these wars could have been avoided if the cost of war would have been so much that it impacted the long run prosperity of the nation.

We have seen examples in the world where active trade has resulted in long periods of relative peace between countries, for example founding of European Union has resulted in the longest stretch of peace on the

continent. Various studies have been undertaken by contemporary and classical researchers and academics on this area which support that trade and economic co-dependence promotes peace.

There has been an increased trend of nationalistic politics in the region. Examples of these include BJP coming into power in India, the rise of the religious rightwing nationalism in Pakistan, nationalistic renaissance in Bangladesh and Afghanistan. Policies made out by these governments are resulting in additional sabre rattling and have resulted directly in reduction of trade.

In order to have a prosperous and peaceful Central Asian Republics and South Asian (CARSA) region, it is imperative that policies are made which promote trade. By co-depending on each other and exchanging goods and services, we will be able to provide prosperity and literacy to our population and improve their quality of life. There are a number of areas where countries in this region can cooperate and trade. These include fully exploiting the potential of hydro carbon reservoirs in CAR countries, taking full advantage of the connectivity offered by CPEC and increasing general trade between the countries. This would result in a peaceful and prosperous region.

There are impediments to this such as lawlessness in Afghanistan (a major link the CARSA region), trade policies of the governments of the region, lack of governance, leadership and tolerance. These impediments are needed to be overcome by the Governments and trade and economic co-dependence needs to be improved for ensuring we have a prosperous and peaceful region.

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GEOPOLITICS OF CORRIDORS: BUILDING ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL LINKAGES

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Abstract: *Central and South Asia have been historically interconnected; with ideas, goods and people moving along these routes and beyond. This two way connectivity was cut off by the Cold War, but now efforts are afoot to reestablish this historic connection. The 21st Century is not the century of geographical expansion but of economic progress and dominance. In this regard the strategic objectives are opening up of trade. This has been facilitated by the rapid improvement in technology, which has brought the World closer, by converting it into a Global Village. One aspect of this stress on greater trade is the phenomenon of Economic corridors. Economic corridors have been established across the Globe, with the CPEC being the newest addition. China has given a great push to this trend through its Road and Belt initiative. However, the establishment of economic corridors requires political stability and mutually agreed upon systemic methods and mechanisms of interaction, which in turn require a certain minimum level of mutual trust. This paper will explore the geopolitics of such linkages, and their contribution to bringing countries and peoples closer and at the same time bringing peace and prosperity, through forging closer political and economic ties amongst states. The paper will also explore the issues and problems and challenges in the way of such linkages and look at ways, as to how to get maximum political and economic benefits out of them. There seems to be a geo-strategic shift towards Eurasia, with China and Russia coming closer. It is in this background that after signing of CPEC, the bringing together of Central Asian states and South Asia has greater relevance and economic and strategic importance.*

Keywords: Geopolitics, geoeconomics, corridors, transit trade routes,

Background

Pakistan's geography has historically been its bane. It is said that one of the arguments given to Nehru to convince him to accept Pakistan, was that it would provide a buffer from the troubles of Central Asia, through Afghanistan. The Afghan wars and the perennial internal instability of Afghanistan has meant that any country adjacent to it, would have to struggle to keep itself immune from Afghanistan's historic instability. Pakistan's problem has perhaps been exacerbated by the fact that one ethnicity straddles the border, thereby providing an easy passage for the instability to be transferred. Central Asia and Afghanistan are land locked states. Historically the Central Asian states were connected with the rest of the World through overland trade routes, primarily the Silk Road. However, during the 19th Century, the ever expanding Russian Empire engulfed the Central Asian states and made them a part of it. Since then these states were made to look towards Russia for everything including trade. The historic Russian desire to reach warm waters, eluded the largest Empire of its time, and the largest country of the modern day. Even the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 is viewed in the context of the desire to reach the warm waters through Pakistan. It was only through the bravery of Pakistan that stood solidly behind the Afghans that they were able to tire them out, coupled with the cost of the war effort, of course. It speaks of the great need and importance for the Central Asian states to be connected to a sea port.

The energy rich Central Asian states still have close links with Russia, however, that is a long route and they are desirous of looking for shorter routes and also developing other trade linkages as well. They are doing that with China, amongst each other and also looking for relations with Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and India. There is a mutuality of interest, with the Central Asian states having ample natural and energy resources, and countries like Pakistan having shortage of the same. However, there are a number of problems in the implementation of it. In the opinion of many analysts the problem in this otherwise desirable project remains hostage to the instability in Afghanistan and the fear amongst some Central Asian states of possible flow of terrorism and drugs from Afghanistan. However, in spite of the challenges, the profits are so great, that all concerned are striving to establish trade and connectivity between the regions.

The people of Afghanistan have historically been in a state of internecine warfare. The other problem is that Afghanistan has consistently reportedly refused the demand and pressure from Tajikistan and Pakistan to allow a passage through the peaceful Wakhan corridor. This is why the problem exists, otherwise the link

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would already have been established. On the other side, if India had not unleashed its reign of terror on the people of Indian Occupied Kashmir and retained its illegal occupation, then, there would have been a regionally conducive environment for mutually beneficial projects to take off. Therefore for any quick solution both these issues need to be addressed.

This highlights the fact that the compulsions of geopolitics don't only dictate positive steps that states need to take, but also encompasses the negative steps that states take to achieve some strategic goals they perceive to be in their national interest. In this case the negative acts of states, to isolate a country (Pakistan), are proving a hurdle in the process to connect the Central Asian States with Pakistan through the shortest and most convenient route.

Importance of the Issue

In this part this paper will discuss the importance of the issue, then in Part III, it will briefly discuss the various proposals and agreements and what they envisage, in part IV the paper will discuss the Challenges to such linkages, and in the final part the paper will conclude and discuss the Way Forward. Geopolitics has been defined variously, “ a study of the influence of such factors as geography, economics, and demography on the politics and especially the foreign policy of a state ,2: a governmental policy guided by geopolitics, 3: a combination of political and geographic factors relating to something (as a state or particular resources)¹. Additionally it has been defined as a study of the effect of geography and economics upon international relations.

It includes an effort to understand the effect of technology, including improved travel and communication through modern means of transport, coupled with geographic features². The world has moved from two large super powers, to a world which realizes the importance of interdependence, and does not believe in autarky or economic independence. It is in this background that interconnectivity between states has taken center stage.

As discussed above, Geopolitics makes countries take both positive and negative steps. Positive, meaning to induce them take pro-active steps for the protection and advancement of a country's interests, and the negative being, so as to take steps to stop another country from benefitting from such moves.

In 2013, the Chinese leader Xi Jinping announced his initiative of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road. Essentially, the 'belt' includes countries situated on the original Silk Road through Central Asia, West Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. The initiative calls for the integration of the region into a cohesive economic area through building infrastructure, increasing cultural exchanges, and broadening trade. Apart from this zone, which is largely analogous to the historical Silk Road, another area that is said to be included in the extension of this 'belt' is South Asia and Southeast Asia. North belt goes through Central Asia, Russia to Europe. Central belt goes through Central Asia, West Asia to the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean. South belt starts from China to Southeast Asia, South Asia, and the Indian Ocean. Central belt is spoken down due to complex religion problems and separation movement along the belt³.

Since the time of the ancient Greeks geography including access to the sea routes has been considered a factor of importance in international relations⁴. The evolving technology has continued to change the effect of these things, as through technology, that which was not possible earlier, is becoming, possible now.

The Central Asian states are rich in natural energy resources, such as oil, gas, coal, and hydropower potential. They have vast raw material deposits⁵. This has given impetus to the scheme to revive the old Han Dynasty Silk Road; a road network of trade connecting South and Central Asia with the Middle East and Europe⁶. Central Asian Republics' (CARs) landlocked status and major technical, economic, and political challenges restrain their global market access and trade flows, impeding the region's internal and external connectivity. They had been closed to the outside world during the Soviet times. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, and the advancement of globalization ever since have enabled them to connect with the global economy as independent units.

The Central Asian States show different states of economic and political development. Overall the CARs remain relatively weak and continue to rely on external forces to bridge their connectivity gaps. The CARs have huge energy resources and great potential for hydel power. At the moment they are dependent on their giant neighbors; Russia and China for connectivity with the rest of the World. However, the rest of the World is now getting interested in tapping the rich resources of the Central Asian states. Some examples are the

Russia-led Customs Union (CU) and Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), China's Silk Road Economic Belt strategy, India's "Connect Central Asia" policy, the U.S. Silk Road Strategy, and economic engagement by Japan, the EU, and Turkey.

The World is now moving towards geo-economic strategy. The thrust is on free trade markets, trade or economic corridors, and trans-states pipelines etc. Some such examples, are of course the European Union, NAFTA, with regard to free trade, but regarding corridors, there is the ASEAN-Korea Free Trade Area (AKFTA) an Optimal Free Trade, the Southern Economic Corridor, the Southern Economic Corridor's (SEC) of Cambodia and Lao. Then the Walvis Bay Corridor (WBC), which is a network of routes that links the SADC to the Port of Walvis Bay on Namibia's southwest coast, offering the region a gateway to transatlantic trade routes and markets. The WBC is composed of the Port of Walvis Bay, the Trans-Kalahari Corridor, the Trans-Capri Corridor, the Trans-Cunene Corridor and the Trans-Oranje Corridor. It runs through Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Angola and South Africa and indirectly to the Democratic Republic of Congo. The corridor system consists of roads, railways, and shipping services. Then there is the EU Corridor from Latvia to Frankfurt, to name a few⁷.

Pakistan occupies a strategic location in the region. Similarly, Central Asia's most logical route, both geographically and historically, to the seas is through Afghanistan and Pakistan to the Arabian Sea. Karachi is the nearest port city for Central Asia and Islamabad is closer to Tashkent than it is to Karachi by air. Dushanbe is only an hour's flight from Islamabad, and an hour and half from Lahore. By road through Afghanistan, the distance from Dushanbe to Karachi is 2,720 km. In contrast, the port of Bandar Abbas (Iran) is 3,400 km, Vladivostok (Russia) 9,500 km.

There is a great opportunity for the transit trade through Pakistan with the ongoing China-Pakistan Economic Corridor being a great impetus in this regard, as it is already creating better roads and enhancing the energy resources of the country. The Central Asian states had been under the Russian expansionist empire for close to 100 years. The demise of the now defunct USSR led to the independence of the Central Asian Republics. This has led to the independence of these states who had been dependent on Russia, and had cut off their contacts with their neighbouring regions, under the compulsions of the then USSR diktat. As discussed above, the Central Asian Republics have started developing trade and cultural linkages with the regions and countries around them. The one thing common amongst all these states is that they are land locked. Historically they had developed trade linkages with neighbouring countries to overcome the fact that they were landlocked. Now they wish to reestablish the same. Their economies and democracies continue to be tenuous, but they are rich in energy sources.

Projects

The World is increasingly focusing on the energy resource-rich Central Asia as a potential trade conduit. Some of the projects are; the proposed Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline project, the Turkmenistan-Uzbekistan-Kazakhstan-China gas pipeline initiative, Kazakhstan-China gas and oil pipeline schemes, and China's transcontinental railway and trade initiatives, among numerous other transcontinental projects, are already reconnecting Central, South, and East Asia.

In 1995, a Quadrilateral Agreement on Traffic in Transit was signed by Pakistan, China, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan which came into force in May 2004. Traffic in transit has been operational since then. Transit traffic requires proper regulatory including accession to international conventions to harmonize procedures, and regional, multilateral and bilateral transit agreements, such as; Rights for transit traffic, Transit transport corridors, Mutual recognition of driving licenses and vehicle registration documents, Availability of multiple entry and transit visas for drivers, Customs control and other regulatory procedures, etc. There are a number of important international conventions to which Pakistan should accede in order to ensure that its procedures are harmonized with international practices. Pakistan has already acceded to the following International Conventions:

The TIR Convention is a successful and globally acceptable mechanism providing relief against customs duties / taxes, most of the International Road Transport Agreements emphasize accession to the TIR Convention. For example, CAREC Cross-Border Transport Agreement (CBTA) and ECO's Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA) envisage accession to it by Member States. Pakistan joined the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program in 2010, in a bid to look for new ways to overcome barriers

to growth. Pakistan is also improving its national road corridors, which serve as routes to the Middle East and South Asia for the country's northern neighbors. These corridors will eventually be part of a streamlined land transport network stretching from Azerbaijan, in the west, to China in the east, and north to Kazakhstan and beyond.

Pakistan's road network is connected to CAREC Corridor 5 and 6, which opens a vital trading link between landlocked Central Asian nations and the country's warm water ports of Gwadar and Karachi, on the Arabian Sea. CAREC member countries reached agreement on a Regional Transport Sector Roadmap (2005), which seeks to develop an integrated and efficient transport system that will improve transport links of the CAREC member countries, enhance their access to outside large markets, reduce transport costs, improve transport services, and facilitate cross-border and transit traffic in the region.

Challenges

In the opinion of many analysts there are many challenges in the way of creating this connectivity, primarily the instability in Afghanistan. This instability is based on many historic factors, primarily that historically Afghanistan was artificially made by Ahmad Shah Abdali, where he yoked the Turks, with Afghans, and imposed an alien identity on them (Afghan-nistan). This led to a historic distrust and dislike between the two ethnicities, and the current regimes are primarily dependent upon the Turks. And they distrust Pakistan, because they think Pakistan supports the Afghan (pathans) because of the pathans in Pakistan. Therefore there is a need to bring peace and mutual trust amongst the various ethnicities within Afghanistan. Secondly many experts feel that the Afghan has traditionally been a mercenary and the various warlords and tribes have multiple times changed their loyalties since the Soviet Invasion of 1970s and this has created a very complex web of enmity and hostilities, which makes it difficult to achieve peace. However the problem is that the overland route has to pass through Afghanistan, and peace and stability in that country is therefore a prerequisite.

There is a peaceful short strip of land, called the Wakhan Corridor. It is a narrow strip in upper North-Eastern part of the country. This was carved out to provide a buffer between the Russian Empire of the 19th Century and British India. This route can easily connect Pakistan and Central Asia, through Tajikistan. However, reportedly in spite of many attempts by Pakistan and Tajikistan, Afghanistan refuses to allow the building of a land bridge through this Corridor, as this would probably reduce its 'nuisance value'. This was used as a trade route between China⁸, Central Asia and south Asia.

The unresolved issue of Kashmir and India's continued forced occupation and suppression, has created a narrative of distrust in South Asia, which coupled with India's desire to use the principles of the South Asian diplomat, Chanskya, by sandwiching Pakistan, between enemies, has led to a non-conducive environment for connectivity. India is widely believed to be influencing Afghanistan with a view to create problems for Pakistan, rather than find common ground for the betterment of the people of the region. And its denial to give Kashmiris their right, has vitiated the environment which is posing a hurdle in the way for the region from realizing the potential that their geo political positioning warrants.

Conclusion/ Recommendations/ Way Forward

The Central Asian region is in the Centre of Asia, but not the world. To become that it needs to be connected to the rest of the World in a much more robust and effective manner. On the face of it, Central Asia and Pakistan have mutually beneficial relationship prospects. Pakistan needs energy and connectivity to expand its economy and the Central Asian states have energy to sell. So far, however, this cooperation has not been fully developed, due to a number of factors. Some analysts believe that this is in part due to the fact that the CARs fear that greater connectivity and openness may lead to spread of Islamic radicalism and drugs from Afghanistan, to their countries. However, at the same time the countries of the region realize the potential for economic progress that such a connectivity can usher in. There is therefore progress on this front, with some projects being in place and new ones in the pipeline. For example TAPI and CASA- 1000, have received international support and funding, and tangible progress has been made in implementing both projects.

Insecurity remains a significant impediment in any project involving Afghanistan and Pakistan. Recent tensions between Pakistan and India are important reminders of the challenges these projects face in becoming a success. The region's future lies in linking together in trade. It is imperative therefore on the states in the region to understand that and bridge their differences. As mentioned above, Afghanistan has historically never been a country. It is an artificial entity created by Ahmad Shah Abdali and lasted only a few decades after his

death, before it started disintegrating. It is a multi-ethnic society, where there are deep rooted distrusts between the Turks and the pathans. Some analysts feel that many of the Turks strongly dislike Ahmad Shah Abdali for taking away their identity. It has historically been an unstable region but its stability is the key to the success of any such project. Centuries of internecine fighting with frequent changes of loyalty, has perhaps turned it into a country where no one can trust anyone. However, for the sake of its future and its people's future, it needs to move beyond it.

Business requires dependability and a set and predictable environment. The Geopolitics of the connectivity has led to India opposing any role for Pakistan, and Afghanistan disallowing the Wakhan Corridor to retain its influence and extract maximum price out of it. However, both countries need to realize that the actual beneficial policy of geopolitics would be to work for connectivity and trade, which would boost prosperity and bring progress to the peoples of the region.

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GEOPOLITICS BEHIND GEOECONOMICS: OBOR - CHINA'S NEW STRATEGY

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Mehmood Hussain**

Abstract: China the amenable stakeholder of the world has recently launched "One Belt, One Road" initiative in its Foreign Economic Policy to support weak global economy. OBOR will directly influence 4.4 Billion people with a collective GDP of U.S \$ 2 trillion once completed, simultaneously connects China with Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean, the Middle East, & ultimately Europe. Chinese leadership enunciated it in 2013 after China's "New Normal", a policy shift to sustain domestic economic growth rate. The principle aim of this paper is to enlighten that Why China initiated OBOR? What were the domestic requisites for China to precede this project? This paper argues that Geo-economics plays an invigorating role to gain the Geo-political interests. China is very systematically & strategically building political leverage in its geographical periphery through the promotion of its economic policies, which are based on cooperation, coordination & then development. The new Foreign Economic Policy of China (OBOR) will substantially contribute to sustain the domestic growth rate of China, increase its political prestige and compel the world towards harmony.

Keywords: Geopolitics, Geoeconomic, New Normal, China dream and OBOR.

Introduction

Strategies interplay a conclusive role in the accomplishment of state's ideology so the fusion of diplomatic, economic, military, and political factors used by state leaders to defend their respective state. As, the dominant paradigm of the Cold War was the geo-political factor, which was primarily articulated by ideology, rather than mainly economic. Geo-economic strategies play the role of building blocs side by side with geo-politics. Geo-politics and geo-economics always run parallel with each other throughout the history of International Politics. Both are interconnected and complex phenomena's to study but intriguing as well.

The attributes in International Politics have dynamic in nature, changed with passage of time; now geographers who do research in International Relations are more inclined towards constructivism relatively to realism. Colin Gray – a foreign policy advisor of the Reagan administration advocated that geographical conditions of any state do not merely dictate foreign policy. The proponents of geographical foundation only constitute the stage that formalize the plot – but not write a script,¹ it (foreign policy) significantly varies with respect to the national interest of the state.

Non-geographical factors are the intervening factors like – ideological motivations –interfere with the foreign policy of a state. These ideological motivations compel states to stage their foreign policy initiatives with respect to their ideology. Throughout the history of International Politics ideologies forced states to look beyond their geography, the prerequisite stance varies like they might be military, economic, diplomatic or political. In the contemporary time, those geographical practices that are aligned with the objective realities are more able to achieve their ideological motivations.

States have economic motivations so the geo-politics is further providing the manageable tools and guidance for their political actions. When we characterize the concept of geo-politics, we can more relate to it with the realm of political science or political sociology as compare to merely geography². Friedrich Ratzel, the spiritual grandfather of Geopolitics urged in his Political Geography that the whole phenomena is interconnected and it could only be developed upon a geographical foundation³. Hence, economic factors are just exploited the strategies of the states on the pursuit of their political power and geography is providing the foundational bases.

The traditional concept of geo-politics was based on confrontation, while geo-economics relied on cooperation. The deepening of global economic integration have been changed the concept of traditional geo-

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politics like-wise geo-economics among states and this shift occurred after the rise of China as an economic power. In the past world seek from the economic practices of China that politics, cooperation, economics and competition can be worked together⁴. China practically changed the traditional geo-political philosophy and provides a new geo-political thinking by strengthening the geo-economic factors through her behavior. China, as a policy maker, more inclined to achieve the peaceful grand strategy through security (harmonious) by executing the economic prosperity.

China's "One Belt One Road" (a strategy or strategies) is a combination of economic or foreign policy initiatives thereby will be a source of the practical implementation of the "China Dream", which is more than an ideology for China. The profound essence in this strategy is the combination of both politics and economics, apparently nor a traditional outlook of geo-politics neither according to the Chinese government. The Belt and Road Initiative is a systemic project to satisfy the interests side by side efforts should be done to integrate the 'development strategies' of all the stakeholder states.⁵

This research is an attempt to glorify the concepts of geo-politics and geo-economics of China by shedding light on her new strategy "OBOR". Behind the OBOR, there were some domestic desires of China, which forced it to start this mega strategy and this paper will slightly elaborate the China's those desires by breaking down into sections. First section will throw light on the Chinese economy after 2008 financial crisis then New Normal, China Dream and at the end explain the One Belt One Road initiative.

The Global Financial Crisis of 2007-2008

The global financial crisis of 2008, which started in 2007, brought down the world's financial system. The world economy faced its most severe contagious crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930's. According to the Lord Adair Turner proclaimed in February 2013, the former chairman of the UK's Financial Services Authority, "The financial crisis of 2007- 2008 occurred because we failed to constrain the financial system's creation of private credit and money."⁶ The world's leading economies received a major shift back in their economies, especially in Europe, where the global financial depression have been evolved into euro crisis.

The global economic recession hit the Chinese economy hard especially a sharp drop in trade but the consumption level remained strong due to the proactive responses and strong measure of the government. The growth factor in China is more dependent on investment and exports, and there has been stated by the world's economists that this kind of economic model is not sustainable so there is an urgent need to change its economic growth system.⁷ After the financial crisis of 2007-2008, the economic growth of China slowed down, right after that China got the chance to reform its economic policies.

Right after, the financial crisis of 2008, China made a shift in its economic policy to re-balance the economy. The 12th Five Year Plan was more focused on the transformation of economic policies into a more sustainable model; consequently the country will be able to grow better for another 30 years.⁸ In 2007, at the National People's Congress the Premier Wen Jiabao cautioned, "The biggest problem with China's economy is that the growth is unstable, unbalanced, uncoordinated, and unsustainable".⁹ Pragmatically the Financial crisis became a sound source for China to reform its economy.

New Normal: Economic Policy Shift

In the past three decades, China has grown rapidly - often at double-digit rates by pursuing the strategy of high investment, strong export orientation and energy-intensive manufacturing. And significantly added \$2 trillion to world GDP, lifted hundreds of millions out of poverty but despite these facts this growth system also widened the gap of inequality in-between personal, regional and urban-rural. To eradicate the economic issues, China made a shift in its economy and introduced a new economic development model "New Normal" in 2012.¹⁰

This new strategy is now playing out in China's economy, initiated by President Xi Jinping in 2012. New Normal is basically a new economic policy of China – primarily focused on better quality growth. Growth of China's GDP decelerated to 7.8 % in the first half of 2012 from 9.6 % a year ago. This structural change made by Chinese economist to rebalance the economy through transformation for better or sustainable growth. The 7% growth target would generate more additional output than a 14% pace did in 2007.

Before new normal, China more inclined towards investment and export led model thereby through its new economic model entered into the phase of consumption led model. As John Maynard Keynes mentioned, "Consumption – to repeat the obvious – is the sole end and object of all economic activity."¹¹ This

comprehensive new approach will shift the balance of growth away from heavy-industrial investment and toward domestic consumption, particularly of services; innovation, as a means of raising productivity and climbing up the global value chain; reducing inequalities, especially urban-rural and regional inequalities and environmental sustainability.¹²

‘China Dream’: The China Way

States have an ideology which shape their future so do China has “China Dream”, merely not a dream but a set of beliefs or goals. President Xi Jinping in November 2012, after the conclusion of the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), proclaimed about the idea of the China Dream for the first time on his visit to “The Road towards Renewal” exhibition at the National Museum of China. The great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation “is a dream of the whole nation, as well as of every individual.”¹³

“In order to build a moderately prosperous society, a prosperous, democratic, civilized and harmonious modern socialist country to achieve the China Dream of great rejuvenation of the nation, we need to achieve national prosperity and revitalization of the happiness of the people, which deeply reflects the Chinese people’s dream glorious tradition. [In other words: Only by pursuing economic reform to improve living standards and maintain national stability by enforcing social harmony can China become both a wealthier country and a great power. This is what the Chinese people want and it will allow us to return to our greatness.]¹⁴

The China Dream has an ideology, a soul, based on a set of principles, which are above mentioned, clearly by President Xi Jinping. An ideology needs a potential to accomplish, well, no doubt with respect to Chinese potential as mentioned by many experts from over 20 states in the two-day dialogue on Chinese Dream. A senior visiting fellow with the London School of Economics and Political Science, Martin Jacques said about the potential of China’s Dream, “The Chinese Dream will change the global landscape, which was shaped by Western countries over the past two centuries during industrialization.”¹⁵

It is an admirable perception that China wanted to integrate the world through the ‘China Dream’ and make the world harmonious, secure and peaceful. Security comes after the development and development comes after economic prosperity as President Xi Jinping mentioned, “Development is the foundation of security, and security the precondition for development.”¹⁶ After the global financial crisis of 2007-2008, a major drawback happened in the trade sector of China. Despite the fact that China is the second largest and fastest growing economy but still holds the position of a developing state not a developed state.

According to the emerging conventional wisdom, President Xi Jinping is aggrandizing China towards more ambitious and comprehensive era of foreign economic policy. After the Global crisis of 2008, China continuously improving and making reforms for development, as took many initiatives in their economic or foreign policy e.g. new normal, BRICS, AIIB, CPEC and mainly OBOR. These initiatives represent the future strategies of China and strategies always based on ideology. The ‘China Dream’ is a set of principles leading towards goals which clearly depicting the ideology of China, and the above-mentioned initiatives are the helping tools, which will help China in implementing their ideology.

One Belt One Road: A Masterstroke of China

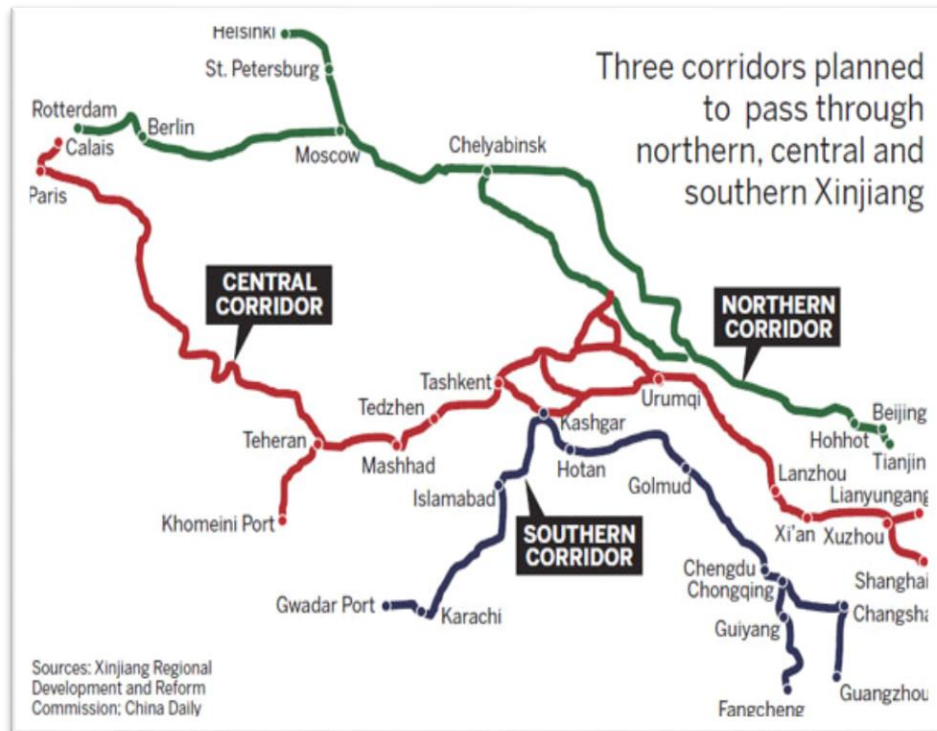
An ambitious plan “One Belt One Road-OBOR” raised by Chinese President Xi Jinping when he visited Central Asia and Southeast Asia in September and October of 2013 and ‘officially’ announced by President Xi Jinping at the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting in 2014. The, ‘One Belt’ will be a land-based economic corridor started to run from Xian in Shaanxi province, China, and continuing through Central Asia and Europe, meanwhile it will be a source to connect the vibrant East Asia economic circle at the one end and the developed European circle at the other point.

The Road refers to the 21st century Maritime Silk Road – focuses on bringing together China, Central Asia, Russia and Europe (the Baltic); connecting China with the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean Sea through Central Asia and West Asia; linking China with Southeast Asia, South Asia and the Indian Ocean.¹⁷ A sea-based route starting from Quanzhou in Fujian province China, and then covering the entire Strait of Malacca in order to reach Nairobi (Kenya), before merging with the land-based route in Venice.

The initiative with respect to land route will primarily focus on building a new Eurasian Land Bridge, simultaneously will involve in developing China-Mongolia-Russia, China-Central Asia-West Asia and China-Indochina Peninsula economic corridors. They will rely on important core cities that are present along the Belt

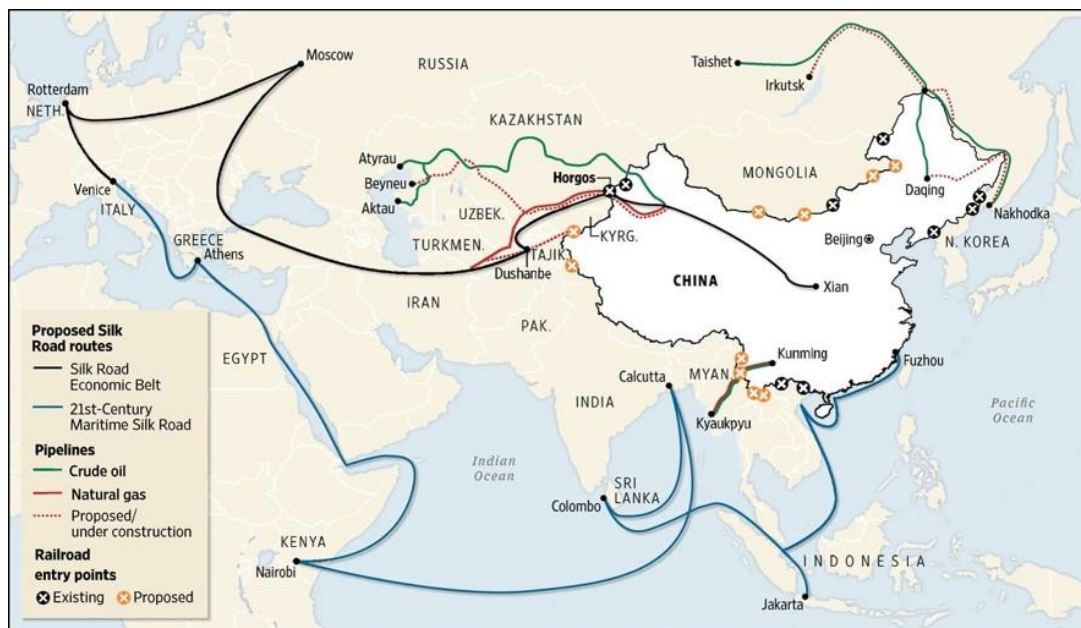
and Road and take the advantage of international transport routes. At sea, the initiative will focus on building a secure and smooth sea routes, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor are very relevant and most significant for the Belt and Road initiative.

Figure 1: China's New Silk Road (Overland Corridors)



Source: *China Daily*

Figure 2: 21st Century Maritime Silk Route



Source: Google Maps

According to the report issued by National Development and Reform Commission, PRC, the OBOR initiative holds the same principles of the UN Charter; it upholds the five basic Principles of Peaceful Coexistence:

- 1- Mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity.
- 2- Mutual non-aggression.
- 3- Mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs.
- 4- Equality and mutual benefit.
- 5- Peaceful coexistence.¹⁸

The OBOR will connect the 40 to 60 states, including 16 states in the Middle East and Europe, 16 in West Asia and North Africa, 8 in South Asia, 11 in South-East Asia, 11 from the Commonwealth of Independent States, plus Mongolia and Russia or China as well and these countries consist of 65% of the world population and it generates 30% of the world's GDP. It is believed that this mega project 'OBOR' is most probably to be completed on the 100th anniversary of the China.

The broader and ambitious initiative demands a heavy amount of investment for its completion so the AIIB will serve as the main financing arm. The AIIB established with authorized capital of \$50 billion and it will be approached to \$100 billion. The proposed or projected investment for OBOR will be \$1.4 trillion, according to some of the reports this figure is 12 times larger than the Marshall Plan. Apart from AIIB, Chinese financial institutions will play a significant role in financing OBOR like China Development Bank, the Export Import Bank of China (China Exim bank) and the economic institutions have a principle to import the China's national interests.¹⁹

'OBOR' as a masterstroke of China in their foreign economic policy will significantly be a source to enhance the trade and political relations especially with Europe and Asia, simultaneously granting China to boost its growth through exporting its capital, technology globally. According to a report, which published, by National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) in March 2015, that the development strategy would seek to improve connectivity in five areas; policy, infrastructure, trade, currency and people.²⁰

The economic activity will facilitate new ways to maintain the China's economic growth at 7%, according to China's National Bureau of Statistics, growth of 7% will generate more output than previously.²¹ The overheated economy of China and specifically the overproduction areas like cement, steel and construction material will get an edge with respect to export ways. The regional integrity due to the connectivity through economic corridors will remove the trade and investment barriers and provide the facilitation measures amongst the states along the Belt and Road.

As a leading stakeholder in OBOR or in AIIB, China will get a political edge, but OBOR has a multiple ends of interests especially economically will find new ways of growth for construction companies. The most profound aspect of OBOR initiative after AIIB will be the internationalization of the RMB, as China's export products promote trade settlement in RMB and Chinese officials increasingly invest and lend in RMB.²² The 'going out' global strategy of China will further significantly contribute of China's trade sector after the implementation of OBOR initiative and add support for RMB internationalization.

Conclusion

'One Belt One Road' is a masterstroke of China in her foreign economic policy, most significantly, presents a new structure of regional economic cooperation model unlike traditional regional cooperation models. If this initiative implemented successfully than it will lead Asia into a new wave of economic prosperity, simultaneously reshape the regional growth mechanism through its investment and trade opportunities. The economic potential of this grand strategy would provide a myriad of convenient stakes for states along the Belt and Road, so it will be wrong to link it with any kind of political conspiracy. Although this initiative has the main economic and trade incentives but respectively has a strong political and security dimensions. China is using its political leverage for crafting rules to make the harmonious world thereby OBOR would better provide the economic, strategic and political stakes to the stakeholders.

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Academic Session: 3

Geopolitics of Corridors: Building Economic Linkages-II

Session Chair: Dr. Sarfraz Khan

CPEC'S IMPACT ON PAKISTAN'S REGIONAL TRADE AND CONNECTIVITY

Zhou Yuan*

Abstract: *The CPEC is the pilot and flagship project of China's One Belt One Road Initiative which aims to revive China's cultural and trade connection with South Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East and Europe. For Pakistan, improving regional connectivity through trade corridors has been an important policy. CPEC, which is expected to transform Pakistan's economy will help promote the country's regional trade and connectivity. This paper mainly focuses on economy and trade, and discusses Pakistan in the context of regional integration and how CPEC will promote its economy, regional trade and connectivity.*

Keywords: CPEC, Pakistan, Economy, Trade, Regional Connectivity

Introduction

In today's geopolitics, China's One Belt One Road Initiative has drawn huge attention. The OBOR aims to promote policy coordination, facilities connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration and people-to-people bonds.¹ And six economic corridors have been designed under the initiative, among which the CPEC is considered as a flagship project. China and Pakistan's cooperation on economics, trade, energy and infrastructure has enjoyed a long history. But no doubt the inauguration of the CPEC has started the process of transforming Pakistan's economy in a more rapid way. New economic developments, improvement on transportation and modernization of trade corridors creates the growing inter-regional trade and enhance economic linkages between Pakistan and other countries as well as regions.

Pakistan in the Context of Regional Cooperation and Integration

Regional integration has been an important policy objective of Pakistani government. Vision 2025 - Pakistan's long-term development blueprint- mentioned the country's aim to create a globally competitive and prosperous country providing a high quality of life for all its citizens². It aims to ensure energy security, sustained and inclusive higher private sector led growth, and modernization of infrastructure including improving regional connectivity through trade corridors, motorways, energy, water and urban infrastructure. Government's Federal Board of Revenue has also highlighted the importance of Pakistan's strategic location as a hub for trade and transit.

Pakistan has a total area of 796,095 square kilometers. From Gwadar by in its south-eastern corner, the country extends about 2 thousand kilometers to the Khunjrab Pass on China's border. Pakistan has a coastline of 1,064 kilometers. It shares borders with India, People's Republic of China, Iran, as well as Afghanistan and all of whom have great influence on regional politics and economics. Pakistan is located at the confluence of three vital regions of South, Central and West Asia and Pakistan lies at the heart of tremendous trade prospects between Central and South Asia. It provides the shortest access to the sea for all landlocked countries of Central Asia as well as Western China's provinces like Xin Jiang. Strategic cooperation and trade linkages among these three regions passing through Pakistan have the potential to transform the country into an economic hub that helps boost inter-regional economic activity.

Pakistani Government's Regional Integration Initiatives

Pakistani government has been actively discussing with its neighbors on trade, energy and investment cooperation and has carried out many initiatives in these fields.

Trade: Focus on regional trade has always been one of the top priorities for Pakistan. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is an important regional integration initiative that would link the western region of China with the port of Gwadar through roads and railways. The connectivity would not only enhance China's trade competitiveness by reducing shipping time for markets in Europe and Africa but also will help Pakistan upgrade its existing logistics infrastructure and facilitate establishment of economic zones on the proposed routes.

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Besides CPEC, Pakistan's membership of other regional organizations such as Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) all have shown its desire to further facilitate inter-regional cooperation.

TIR is a transit framework simplifying the transit of goods between contracting parties will enable the private sector of Pakistan to reach out to Central Asian markets and would also provide an option for the Central Asian countries to use the ports of Pakistan for trade.

Pakistan also offers a market and critical connectivity for mutually beneficial energy transactions both intra-regionally and inter-regionally. Afghanistan has become one of the major export markets for Pakistan and both countries have also concluded the Afghanistan Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA) to facilitate Afghan trade through Pakistan. Pakistan is considering granting Most-Favored-Nation (MFN) status to India in order to open further opportunities for regional economic cooperation and development.

Energy: The abundance of energy resources in Central Asia and the high demand and current shortages Pakistan in particular makes for an ideal opportunity to expand regional trade in energy. In addition to meeting its own needs, Pakistan can also act as a gateway to South Asia for energy supply to India and beyond.

CASA-1000 is an important regional connectivity initiative that would establish an energy grid connecting Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. It will transport electricity from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan and Afghanistan in summer when these Central Asian states have surplus electricity produced through hydel resources. It is expected that in 2020, 1000 megawatts electricity will be transmit for Pakistan and 300MW for Afghanistan.³

Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline, Turkmenistan-Uzbekistan-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (TUTAP) interconnection concept are some of the projects prioritized by the Government to meet the growing energy needs of Pakistan and India.

Established in 2001, CAREC has been playing an important role in bringing together ten partner countries and promoting the implementation of regional projects in energy, transport and trade. It aims to achieve development through cooperation and share prosperity among the ten partner countries. From a modest start in 2001, the number and value of CAREC projects—including loans, grants, and technical assistance—has grown rapidly: from \$247 million to (with investment loans and grants worth) almost \$27.7 billion in 2015.⁴

All the initiatives have shown Pakistan's vision of promoting regional economic cooperation, and have laid solid foundation for trade in goods and energy transactions intra-regionally and inter-regionally.

CPEC: Benefits for Pakistan's Economy, Trade and Regional Connectivity

In the last sixty-five years, Pakistan and China have developed cordial and cooperative relations in the political and defense fields. However, a matching relationship at the economic front has not been forged until recently. Since the 1990s, both countries realized the missing economic dimension in their relationship and started to enhance the economic cooperation in order to achieve peace and stability in the region.

CPEC, which was offered by China to Pakistan in May 2013 during Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang's visit to Pakistan is Pakistan's important initiative for regional integration. It aims to facilitate trade along an overland route that connects Kashgar and Gwadar, through the construction of a network of highways, railways, and pipelines. It is intended to rapidly expand and upgrade Pakistani infrastructure, as well as deepen and broaden economic links between Pakistan and China. Now the project is being carried on smoothly and the first phase will be completed sometime during 2017-18. The second phase of this long-term, broad framework, multiple sector project will be completed by 2020 and the third by 2030. It will help Pakistan deal with the problems of poverty, unemployment and expand the scope for a sustainable development of economy. It will also help overcome energy crises and promote Infrastructure development. It is believed by Pakistani scholars like Dr. Rashid Ahmad Malik that CPEC will benefit the economy of Pakistan, and thus promote regional trade and connectivity.⁵

This paper highlights the benefits that CPEC brings to the following fields.

Transforming Pakistan's Economy: Pakistan's economy has already been boosted to a great extent in the past two years. The Government sets 5.7 percent growth rate for the next fiscal year.⁶ International rating agencies have upgraded the trends of the economy of Pakistan. According to Morgan Stanley Capital

International, Pakistan is becoming an emerging market because of the improvement in transparency, liquidity, and stock exchange.⁷ US\$ 46 billion's package of CPEC occupies 17 percent of Pakistan's GDP. And 14 billion in the 30 Early Harvest Program are under construction. This will endow with the country a great leap forward in GDP growth. CPEC will also help overcome Pakistan's energy crises and gives a strong boost to the country's economy. It is believed that the major reason behind Pakistan's poor power generation is the political instability and the exponentially increasing demand for power and lack of efficiency. Planning Development and Reforms Minister Ahsan Iqbal said CPEC framework will cover four major areas and energy zone. In the energy sector, project totaling 10,400 megawatts had been included in the early harvest (first priority) programs, which could be completed by 2018. In all, Chinese firms will put up \$35 to \$37bn in the foreign direct investment for independent power production (IPP) under an investment policy that was available to all investors.⁸ These projects would be based on wind, solar, coal and hydropower generation of 16,400 MW as well as the transmission system and would be located in all the provinces and Azad Kashmir. He further said China would be setting up 10 projects of 6,600MW in the Thar Desert that would transform this remote and underdeveloped region into Pakistan's energy capital and open up economic opportunities for the people.⁹

Investment is an integral part of trade. Ever since the CPEC's inauguration in Pakistan, the country's foreign reserves have been showing an upward trend in the past three years. The number was extremely low in the year 2013 at US\$7.6 billion but almost doubled the next year. At present Pakistan's foreign reserves have climbed to US\$ 23 billion, three times as much as 3 years ago. In addition to that, the rate of unemployment will decrease since the CPEC's projects would create at least 2 million new job opportunities. The Multan-Sukker Motorway has created just over 10,000 jobs.¹⁰ This is just an example. Every project has unprecedented job opportunities. This would also poverty in the country.

Promoting Bilateral and Regional Trade: Although Pakistan and China have been enjoying close relationship in politics and defense, the bilateral trade between the two countries was kind of disappointing. For example, in 2000, bilateral trade was hardly US\$ 722 million. But after signing of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in 2007, the number jumped to US\$7.5 billion that year. And as can be seen from Table 1 that since the offer of CPEC, this number has risen to US\$ 18.93 billion in 2015.¹¹ Pakistan's trade deficit with China has been a concern in bilateral trade. The number of deficit which reached US\$ 13 billion now is expected to decrease largely. CPEC will play a role in increasing Pakistan's exports to China for a variety of reasons especially when shortage of power in Pakistan would be eased.

Table 1: Pakistan-China Bilateral Trade 2011-14 US \$ Million

Year	Trade
2011	11,211.6
2012	13,061.14
2013	15,033.02
2014	17,082
2015	18.93

Source: IMF: Direction of Trade Statistics. Washington: International Monetary Fund, 2015(Various years).

Besides bilateral trade, the CPEC will boost Pakistan's regional trade. Gwadar Port is a ray of hope to convert Pakistan into a "Transit State" in South Asia catering the needs of China, Afghanistan, and Central Asia. When more oil would be exported to China via the Gulf and Iran, a major source of Chinese oil imports, could also boost Pakistan's trade indirectly. ¹²A pipeline will also be built from Gwadar to Kashgar to transport oil from the Persian Gulf and Iran. The Gwadar Port has the potential to act as hub port not only for the natural resources of Central Asia but also for regional trade in all kind of consumer goods, electronic items, and garments imported by Afghanistan and CARs (Central Asia Republics) that ought to flow through a seaport. Similarly the exports of CARs including cotton, metal ores, machinery gas and oil could also find way through the Gwadar Port. More importantly the Quadrilateral Trade Agreement between Pakistan, China, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan along with the extension of KKH contribute profoundly to the regional significance of Gwadar Port. Pakistan exported goods worth US\$ 22.1 billion and imported goods worth US\$ 44.2 billion in 2015, thus

making the total trade of US\$ 66.3 billion.¹³ A new trading infrastructure would drastically increase Pakistan's trade with countries in and outside the region.

Table 2: Pakistan's Regional Trade with Neighbors 2014 US \$ Million

Country	Exports	Imports	Total
China	2,509	14,573	17,082
India	481	2,400	2,881
Iran	501	1,801	2,302
Afghanistan	2,222	195	2,417
Total	5,713	18,969	24,682

Source: IMF: Direction of Trade Statistics. Washington: International Monetary Fund, 2015(Various years).

Enhancing Regional connectivity: For ages, because of difficult terrain and regional geographical dis-connectivity as well as exploitative colonialism in South Asia, East Asia, and Central Asia, economies were disjointed and neglected. But China is always willing to integrate the economies of the whole Asian continent as well as giving benefits to nearby Africa and Europe. The One Belt One Road Initiative was just designed to fulfill this aim. The CPEC as the flagship project of the OBOR will definitely play its role in this regard. The CPEC will not only benefit Pakistan and China, but also improve the regional connectivity and transportation by providing a modern and efficient corridor for regional trade. Under the CPEC project, China has announced financing for US\$10.63 billion worth of transportation infrastructure so far; \$6.1 billion have been allocated for constructing "Early Harvest" roadway projects at an interest rate of 1.6 percent. The development of roads, ports and highways is an important segment of CPEC which will not only change the whole environment for economic growth but also promote connection with all sub regions in Asia, and between Europe Asia. After the complementation of this Project, Pakistan will become modernize and attract whole world for economic and trade assistances.

The Karakoram Highway had been identified for the first phase and Khunjerab-Havelian-Islamabad section of the road was expected to be completed in three years. AJK, Fata and Gilgit-Baltistan to expand benefits of the initiative across the country. Three corridors have been identified for cargo transport: the Eastern Alignment through the heavily populated provinces of Sindh and Punjab where most industries are located, the Western Alignment through the less developed and more sparsely populated provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, and the future Central Alignment which will pass through Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, and Balochistan.

The CPEC project also emphasizes upgrades to Pakistan's old railway system, including rebuilding of the entire Main Line 1 railway between Karachi and Peshawar by 2020; this single railway currently handles 70% of Pakistan Railways traffic. The CPEC, in other words, is a symbol of connectivity. It is a system of communications network to connect all parts of Pakistan and the region. This would also transform Pakistan "most physical infrastructural developed country" in Asia on modern telecommunication lines.¹⁶ China will invest in a 200-kilometer long tunnel at Babusar that will ensure year round rail service, something that will revolutionize inter-regional travel and freight carriage. An optic fiber cable has been planned from Kashgar to Rawalpindi to provide faster and safer internet services to Pakistan from China.

Transportation infrastructure development will remove all investment and trade barriers for the creation of a sound business environment within the region and in all related countries. After the complementation of this Project, Pakistan will become modernize.

Conclusion

China-Pakistan relations began in 1950 when Pakistan was among the first countries to end official diplomatic relations with the Republic of China on Taiwan and recognize the PRC. Since then, both countries have placed considerable importance on the maintenance of an extremely close and supportive relationship. The two countries have regularly exchanged high-level visits resulting in a variety of agreements. For Pakistan,

China is the most trustworthy and true friend in all circumstances. The economic relations at present can be termed as evolving and getting stronger. Bilateral trade, investment and projects all are witnessing an upward trend. The CPEC, offered by China is expected to be a win-win project for the two countries. It is also expected to bring about an economic miracle on the land of Pakistan.

We believe that the bright future of Pakistan's economy would be greatly linked with the CPEC. The CPEC is modernizing Pakistan's transportation infrastructure and improving its investment environment, which would greatly help convert Pakistan economy on modern complete patterns and develop the country's potential to be an economic hub giving boost to inter-regional economic activity. In a word, the CPEC is believed to be a "game changer" of Pakistan's trade, regional connectivity, and the economy. It is Pakistan's shared future destiny not only with China but with the entire Asian countries.

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CENTRAL ASIA AND INDIAN GEOECONOMIC AMBITIONS

Faseeh Ahmed*

Abstract: *The main argument of this paper is to articulate as to how security and commercial interest of India shape its relationship with the countries of Central Asian region after 9/11. Security interest figures most prominently in India's Central Asian policy. Besides, India also possesses significant commercial interest in Central Asian energy reserves. With the rapid growth of Indian economy, its reliance on energy from abroad has surged. The paper also attempts to explicate Indian strategies to gain foothold in Central Asia.*

Keywords: Soft power, security, strategic interest, energy, hard power

Background

Historically, India and Central Asia were linked through trading routes as well as successive invasions on Indian subcontinent from the North West. These historical relations led to creation of cultural bonds between these two regions. In the post-independence era, relations of India with Central Asia were shaped primarily by the Delhi's closeness with Kremlin¹. After the collapse of Soviet Union, India's foreign policy shifted away from ideological alliances towards pursuit of alternative pragmatic approaches. But these relations got a phase of impediment (1996-2001), when Kabul was captured by Taliban. During the heydays of Taliban regime, Afghanistan had become the epicenter of worldwide militant activities. In this scenario, Indian influence in Afghanistan was very limited. Correspondingly, it also restrained Indian geo economic interest in Central Asia.

After 9/11, the stationing of NATO forces in Afghanistan provided a renewed opportunity for India to establish strong ties with Central Asian countries. India started to strengthen its relations with Karzai Regime with every possible initiative it could take. India was the first country which sent diplomatic mission to Afghanistan. At the same time, India also started to expand its geo economic diplomacy to other Central Asian countries particularly Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The new "Afghan Scenario" that emerged after 9/11 had triggered a vulnerable situation in which Pakistan and India started to compete for their influence in Afghanistan and Central Asia. Among the areas where interests of both countries clashed were:

- ✓ The gas and oil reserves in Central Asia: Both South Asian states seek access to vast energy resources for their economies².
- ✓ Central Asia offers a geo-strategic advantage point for both competing states in relation to USA, Russia, and China. By gaining geo strategic prominence in Central Asia, each state seeks to gain international reach at the expense of the other³.
- ✓ India and Pakistan both are willing to use their influence in Central Asia to advance their interest in relation to Kashmir valley⁴.

This paper deals with two main themes of Indian geo-economic interests in Central Asia after 9/11. Central Asia is not only economic pool for India to invest, but it also holds consequential impact for Indian security. Indian commercial interest in Central Asia chiefly drive from its energy needs.

Central Asia and Indian Security Concerns

India's Central Asian policy figures most prominently with respect to its national security interests. For India the greatest security concerns vis-à-vis Pakistan are closely interlinked with Central Asia. This remains at the root of India assessment of Central Asia⁵. New Delhi has two major objectives in Central Asia: gaining access to hydro carbons for Indian energy concerns and preventing Pakistan from forming a broad Islamic coalition against India.

According to Meena Singh Roy, senior researcher at India's Institute of Defense Studies and Analysis, India has a vital interest in the security and political stability of this region. Obviously given the Kashmir angle, India cannot be walked off political developments which take places in the Central Asian region. Any advance by the Islamic extremist group in CAR could invigorate similar elements in Kashmir. For reasons dictated by

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geography. India's strategic concerns tied up with the regions bordering its north and North West. Pakistan in its north west continues to be antagonistic towards India. According to India Pakistan is sponsoring cross border terrorism in Kashmir. For India, the Kashmir issue pertains not to four million Muslims in Kashmir valley alone, but to the peace and security of 130 million Muslims elsewhere in India. Therefore, for India the geostrategic importance of CAR is immense. Under no circumstances India can ignore this region.⁶

The above mentioned excerpt by Indian defense analyst clearly indicates the basis of India's Central Asia policy. Since the demise of Soviet Union, Central Asia -especially Afghanistan- has been a fertile recruiting ground for radical militant groups. For India, these radical groups are a strategic threat to the region. The transnational nature of these groups generates a high degree of unease in New Delhi. These groups also pose a serious threat to India's control over the contested state of Kashmir. India already remains increasingly anxious with the exacerbated situation of Afghanistan. For these reasons, India is keen to play a bigger role in Central Asian security matrix.

For the past decade, New Delhi is also continuously enhancing its military assets in Central Asian region to deny Pakistani settlements from developing in the region. For this purpose, India is offering training programs for Afghan security personnel, governmental officials, media professionals, parliamentarians, and others. In 2011, India signed a strategic partnership pact with Afghanistan that declared India's support for US efforts to better integrate Afghanistan into regional security structure. Under the agreement, India also pledged to train 600 Afghan military personnel every years⁷.

Ayni airbase is the first military outpost of India in Central Asia (Tajikistan) to gain a strategic foothold. This air base is located under the suburbs of Dushanbe and used to be a Soviet base during war in Afghanistan. Ayni airbase was seen by some as indicative of India's growing strategic aspirations in the region. Besides this establishment in Tajikistan, India is also continuously strengthening its security corporation with other Central Asian states⁸. In July 2011 Indian defense minister visited Kyrgyzstan and announced plan to open joint military exercises. This was an initiation to train Kyrgyz soldiers in order to serve in UN peace keeper mission. On July 2015 Indian Prime Minister visited Kyrgyzstan and signed four agreements related to culture and defense.

India's military presence in Central Asia has two main objectives. First it wants to "be in close touch with the strategic situation that develops in Central Asia where the states do not have the strong militaries to defend themselves or to resist disruptive forces within from outside." Second, India wants to not only scuttle Pakistan's designs for strategic depth but also force Islamabad to shift its attention to the western border."⁹ India's security ties are not restricted to military cooperation only. Since 2001, India has adopted a 'soft power strategy' in Central Asia and Afghanistan. This soft power policy is continuously surpassing New Delhi's hard power strategy. In 2012, Indian minister of external affairs explicate Indian soft power strategy with phrase "Connect Central Asian Policy" which is based on the premise of four Cs: commerce, connectivity, consular and community¹⁰.

Afghanistan, in fact, represents the victory of India's soft power policy. New Delhi soft policy goals are similar to its hard policy- to curb, restrain and contain the strategic role of Pakistan and China in Central Asian affairs. For this purpose, New Delhi has adopted taken up projects in the areas as diverse as humanitarian assistance, capacity building, and infrastructure growth. India has always seen Afghanistan as a land bridge to Central Asia. For this reason, India is also keenly pursuing Chahbahar project in Southern Iran. Once the Chahbahar port opens, it will curtail Afghanistan's dependence on Karachi port. The project will not only connect India with Afghanistan but it may also expand New Delhi's reach to other Central Asian and West Asian countries.

The building of Afghanistan's new parliament has also been constructed by India. Salma dam is another grand project of India in Afghanistan. Furthermore, the banking sectors of India and Central Asia have also reached agreements to enhance cooperation. Canara Bank of India has setup links with the commercial banks of Tajikistan. State Bank of India has established links with Turan-alem Bank of Kazakhstan, the commercial Bank of Kyrgyzstan, the National Bank of Tajikistan, the State Bank of Turkmenistan, and the National Bank of Uzbekistan¹¹.

New Delhi has also signed many bilateral agreements with these countries for technical and economic efficiency under the Indian Technical and Economic Efficiency Program. Thousands of students from Central Asia study in India in such disciplines as banking, diplomacy, finance, and management. In education sector,

India gives 1,000 long term undergraduate and postgraduate scholarships annually to Afghan students to study in various universities and colleges across the country. These fellowships are sponsored by the Indian council for cultural relations. In addition, 675 annual slots for short term technical training courses are being provided since 2006¹². Kandahar National and Agricultural Science University was inaugurated by Indian Foreign Minister. Indian Prime Minister also announced additional scholarships for 500 children of martyred Afghan security personnel, reiterating that the current schemes too will continue. Capacity building programmers are also underway in the fields of diplomacy, media, tourism and public administration. More than 20 civil servants served as coaches and mentors under Afghan Public Administration programs supported by UNDP and governments of Afghanistan and India. It also has assisted in expansion of Afghan national TV network by providing an uplink from Kabul and downlinks in all 34 provincial capitals for greater connectivity. On infrastructural level India has built 218 km long Zaranj-Delaram road in south- western Afghanistan. This road has strategic significance for India as it facilitates movement of goods and services from Afghanistan to the Iranian border and onwards to Chahbahar Port. India has also funded Salma Dam, a multi-millionaire hydro-electric and irrigation dam which is also called “India Afghanistan Friendship Dam.” The Indian soft policy is not ineffectual as far as its implications are concerned. Afghans have positive perceptions about Indian activities in their country. The survey conducted by the BBC, and ABC in December 2009 indicated extremely favorable opinion about Indian activities among Afghan people¹³.

Commercial Interest

Most important concern of New Delhi regarding commercial interest in Central Asia is about energy. Energy plays a vital role in order to sustain the strength of India’s economic supremacy in the region. India is not self-sufficient in petroleum production. According to Oil & Gas Journal, India had 5.5 billion barrels of proved crude oil reservoir at the end of 2012. It produces only 30% of its demand and imports 70% of fossil fuel from abroad¹⁴. India is the fourth largest importer of crude oil after USA, Japan, and China. India’s domestic gas market is booming and India needs uninterrupted supply of natural gas¹⁵.

Moreover, as an agro based economy, India is highly dependent on Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt for urea because India does not possess any significant natural gas reserves. In order to control the shortage of crude oil and raise the gas based power, India needs continue supply of natural gas. Moreover, New Delhi also wants to reduce its dependency, over politically unstable Middle East. Central Asia, extended neighbor of India, could be sole alternative. It is also predicted that China and India together will account 45% of the global coal demand by 2030¹⁶. For this reason India is always aware of the enormous energy reserves within its geographical proximate Central Asian region that could potentially fulfill its demands. Under this background we can easily understand why New Delhi seeks that Central Asia including the Caspian region can play an important role in its energy strategy. The unprecedented Indian energy requirement and its stupendous foreign dependence will fulfill by Central Asian reserves, which are highly qualitative, largely untapped and investment environment is also open.

Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan are the most oil and gas rich countries. Kazakhstan energy resource have not even been fully explored. It has 10-22 billion barrels of established crude stores and 53- 83 trillion cubic feet of gas. Turkmenistan has substantial gas saves (95 to 155 trillion cubic feet of gas)¹⁷. An expansive region of Turkmenistan remains uncharted. It is also truly believable that critical findings will made coastal and seaward in the part of the South Caspian bowl that has a place with Turkmenistan¹⁸. These hydrocarbons riches offer the alluring possibility of meeting India’s thirst for energy. Moreover, Central Asian states have reserves of Uranium which may help India in developing its civilian nuclear program to diversify its energy base. Kazakhstan has three of the world’s richest oil fields.

However the main problem is how to transport this oil to the Indian market. New Delhi has no access to Central Asia as Pakistan would not allow India to use its soil to get economic access to Central Asia. India government has been engaged in 1680 km-long Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline, which is estimated to incur a cost of 1.6 billion. The TAPI project is intended to transport 30 billion in Turkmenistan via Afghanistan and Pakistan to India¹⁹.

In this commercial scenario, New Delhi sees China as the main competitor in extracting resources of Central Asia. China’s long border with Central Asia and its massive economic muscle gives it considerable mileage in the region. This has enabled China to outpace India from Central Asia in terms of trade, investment, energy acquisition, and the building of transport infrastructure networks²⁰. In 2012, India’s overall trade volume

with the five Central Asian states was estimated \$ 500 million. In contrast, China's trade with CARs in 2012 amounted to nearly 46 billion²¹. As Kaplan rightly observed "as China and America become great super powers, the direction in which India tilts could determine the course of geopolitics in Eurasia in the 21st century. India in other words, looms as the ultimate pivotal state."²²

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ONE BELT ONE ROAD INITIATIVE: THE ULTIMATE MODEL FOR REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

Fatima Raza*

Abstract: *In the current world of economic interdependence, it is important to create connectivity between regional countries. The regional integration between South Asian and Central Asian countries is extremely crucial for the collective economy of Asia. Pax-Sinica, the period of 'Chinese Peace', is a theoretical construct that was developed to describe the age of Chinese glory in Asia. The term is being revived in present day literature as a perfect historical analogy for China's 'One Belt, One Road Initiative' (OBOR). The world is abuzz with speculations and predictions regarding the expansive economic endeavour that China has undertaken.*

Keywords: OBOR, connectivity, silk route, economy, China's ascendancy.

Introduction

Nations rise to power with one of two things; transcendent ideologies or bleeding swords. It is easy to guess which prevails. Ideologies that annihilate man-made borders, in order to reach out and connect men to men, are the bedrocks of grand civilisations. While swords and brawn can invade, ideologies can tame. Thus nations, who learn to expand, connect and sustain their ideologies by sharing them with the world are the ones that manage to stay above water, through thick and thin. China's 'One Belt One Road Initiative' is not merely a project of humungous proportions and economic dexterity; rather it is an interconnectivity ideology that offers to connect multiple cultures to one another. Is the world ready for it? First and foremost, there is a need to comprehend its objectives, dimensions and different routes that fall under it. Only after understanding OBOR, one can begin an analysis of its durability and give a prognosis regarding the nature of connections that this project will help forge. It is also imperative to examine the different obstacles that it may encounter.

OBOR is basically an interconnectivity initiative envisioned by the Chinese President Xi Jinping consisting of two parts which are the economic land belt (containing countries of Central Asia, West Asia, the Middle East and Europe) and the maritime road link between China's ports and the African coast, via the Suez Canal into the Mediterranean. It is being extensively researched and weighed for viability and economic durability but a rather major aspect is the ultimate connection that it provides between continents.¹ This paper aims to explore its facets of regional connectivity between South and Central Asian countries as it progresses so that its feasibility as an 'Ultimate Model for Regional Connectivity, can be judged. OBOR is the representation of an iconic moment in the history of China's ascendancy into the world order as a major power. Such decisions require a great deal of foreign policy shifts that are difficult to initiate and sustain for countries like China, which have a concrete and coveted system of governance and state institutions. Thus it becomes imperative to learn these foreign policy decisions that prevail at the heart of OBOR. The third aspect of this study is the debate regarding the establishment of the initiation of a new 'economic model' by China which due to its sheer size and financial quantification will dominate the world in the near future. These objectives have been transformed into research questions which are as under:

Research Questions

- ✓ How can OBOR play an effective role in regional connectivity between South and Central Asia?
- ✓ What are the foreign policy decisions that led to the initiative of OBOR?
- ✓ Will OBOR enable China's ascendancy and will a new economic order be established?

Significance of the Study

The Chinese philosophy of extending out a hand to the countries of the region falls right under the precipice of 'Love thy neighbour'. The basic premise of OBOR is its vast expanse sprawling across continents, reaching out to countries and connecting continents. South and Central Asian countries will enjoy greater deal of interaction with each other through these routes. The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a flagship

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project of OBOR.² As work has already started and different subprojects have been taken off the ground, thus it is important to analyse how these projects connect countries with one another. OBOR is being extensively discussed in political and literary circles all over the world but its importance increases tenfold when contemporary global politics is analysed. Britain's decision to leave European Union (EU), Syrian refugee crisis at the doorsteps of European countries, US policy to prop up India to contain China's growth and TPP (Trans Pacific Partnership) plan announced by US, are a few paradigm shifts of world politics.³ Thus, the position of OBOR in face of all these developments is of paramount importance and must be discussed.

Literature Review

Extensive literature review has been carried out to ensure objectivity. OBOR as the initiative of proposed investment on a multi-continental level can prove to be a promising endeavour as it predicts the forging of relations and partnerships which will last longer. With economy at its core and geo-strategy at its core, the OBOR initiative will attract due attention. Following is an appraisal of various researches related to the theme under discussion.

Prabhat Prakash Shukla's article⁴ focuses on the historical aspect of the OBOR, calling it the 'revival of the ancient silk route' and rightly so. It further elaborates the two portions of the OBOR initiative, the Economic Belt and the Maritime Silk Road. The article clearly points out how the US has been excluded from both the economic belt and the maritime road. Moving away from the rival economic strategies, China has, in order to counter the US thrust into Eurasia, put forward the Silk Road Economic Belt, and in the Asia-Pacific to counter the US Rebalance, they are promoting the Maritime Silk Road. And to confront the US-sponsored New Silk Road through Afghanistan, they are pushing the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, which cuts across the Central Asia - South Asia link.

Vladimir Fedorenko's paper⁵ provides an overview of all the Silk Road initiatives on the international level by countries like China, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and the US proposal for its 'New Silk Road Strategy'. This perspective provides a fresh insight into the factors that led to the transformation of these different initiatives into what OBOR represents today in Central Asia as it offers holistic routes through South Asia into Central Asia and beyond. It also compels the readers to think whether the previous initiative of several silk roads interconnected to one another with financial burdens being shared by all the countries involved was a better idea or is the OBOR a more fruitful venture?

According to Xinning Song⁶, China's foreign policy has seen several shifts before it came around to developing the 'One Belt One Road Initiative'. This research explores how their policy transformed from 'Bilateral' to a 'Multilateral' one through which they are now connecting the regional countries to their cause of development and expansion. It stems from the need for development at home. Internal urbanization of China with the dream of modernizing its own provinces has been one of the most important driving factors in formulating such a foreign policy which gave birth to the idea of OBOR.

Paper written by Gisela Greiger⁷ explores the different sections and routes of OBOR but it focuses primarily on the effects that it can have on EU and its economic development. While in Eurasia, the different trade and energy routes meet and overlap, both EU and OBOR can play complementary roles for one another. OBOR is like a connector and facilitator for the ambitions that EU has in Central Asia. Rather than presenting a conflicting perspective, this research focuses on how OBOR in its full functionality can be linked to the economic expansion of EU as it clearly is the biggest infrastructure based connectivity project that the world has ever seen. It aligns completely with the 'EU Neighbourhood Policy' and the 'EU Maritime Security Strategy'.

Academically interesting research by Ritika Passi's⁸ elaborates on the Indian perspective and opinion about OBOR. It challenges the widely popular notion of OBOR being the initiative for regional integration as it highlights the antagonistic approach of India towards the project. India being wary of the Chinese intentions in the region has been hesitant to dip its toes in the OBOR yet but it is also likely that after the feasibility reports appear, India may decide to not pass on an opportunity as comprehensive as this one. However, if the current Indian policy prevails, then the chances of its involvement in this huge Chinese initiative will be slim as it will toe the line of US policies in South Asia. While it is quite an attractive endeavour, there might be some rationality behind Indian hesitance, the economic durability of the OBOR is not quite concrete yet as it is

premature to actually crunch the numbers. However, all evidence and anticipation points to a substantive future turn over. Thus it depends on India's decision to accept and embrace or not. Only time will tell.

Hypothesis

OBOR is the ultimate model for regional connectivity which will make China a dominant economic and political force of global dimensions.

Methodology

The historical and descriptive method of research will be employed to analyse the data and deduct conclusions.

Theoretical Framework

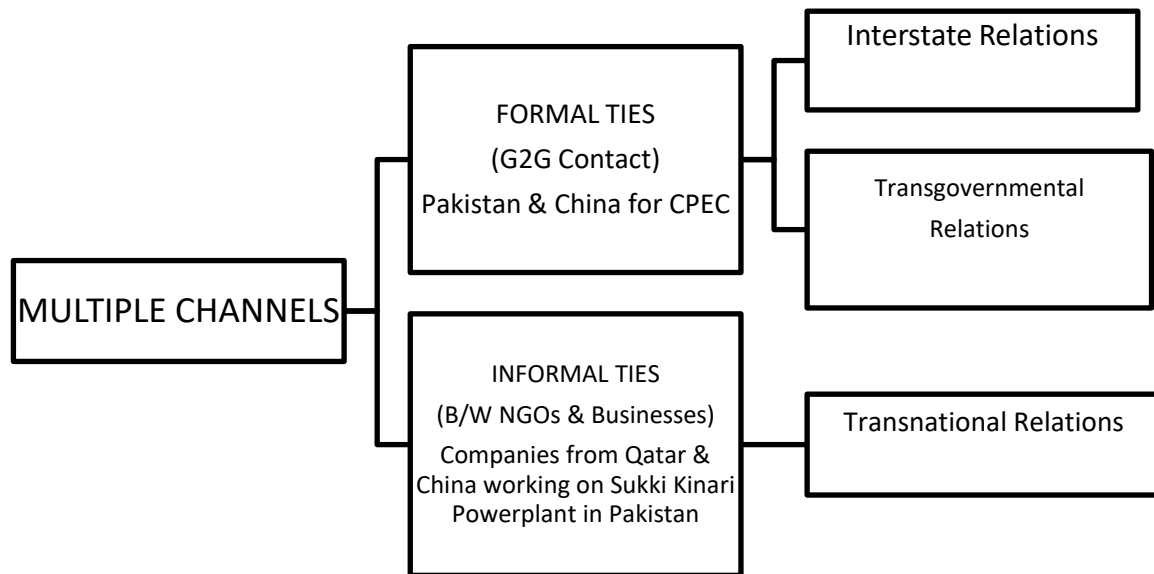
Complex Interdependence Theory was put forth by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye in 1977. The theory envisages concepts that are constituted under the bigger paradigm of Liberalism and Idealism. The term 'complex interdependence' existed long before its theoretical construction into an applicable theory of International Relations. It was coined in 1925 by Raymond Leslie Buell for describing emerging economies, cultures and social modification in the world that could be more connected.⁹ In the world of today, this theory from International Relations is befitting in a multiple ways, especially when it talks about non state entities being instrumental in forging relations that are both economic and prosperous in nature. The ascendancy of China in the world as an economic power that not only wields monetary supremacy but also ensures inclusive economic growth for the entire region is all but an excellent experiment for the application of economic interdependence.¹⁰

The theory constitutes of a few components and terminologies that can be postulated to all aspects of OBOR as the perfect model of interdependence and interconnectivity.

Multiple Channels: The multiple channels are basically different aspects of the theory that can be applied to OBOR. The theory primarily talks about two countries or agents that have such governmental and non-governmental channels of economic connectivity. OBOR takes this several steps further. More than 60 countries as part of this venture, from Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, West Asia, Middle East, Africa, Central and Eastern Europe will all be woven into this chain of economic interdependence. The nature of their connectivity can be represented via different channels such as through governmental liaisons and through non-governmental channels such as businessmen and entrepreneurs.¹¹

The Military Factor: As complex interdependence stems from the basic premise of liberalism, it reiterates that the military factor in maximising state power is not as dominant as believed by realists. It is no doubt, a serious factor in conflict zones, traditionally but in the world of today, it is rapidly being replaced by economic gains. States learn that inclusive economic growth can help them substantiate their fiscal development in a peaceful and interactive manner that is neither bloodthirsty nor expensive. It is important to note here that absolute elimination of the military aspect or the security aspect is not an option but its importance varies on a circumstantial basis. Hence, the 'Marshall Plan by China' as a part of OBOR is also an issue that is being extensively discussed all over the world.¹² There is a supposition that China's plan for expansion along road and sea routes has an ulterior motive for the implementation for grand marshal supremacy of some sort but it is an oversimplification of the issue. China has assured the world that military presence in different parts of the world is not in its agenda of OBOR but more importantly the security aspect is only limited to the safety of China's investment along the route of OBOR. Thus it can be safely established that the military factor is not at the heart of the OBOR initiative of China but it is also a factor that is quite significant. The secret of success lies in equilibrium between all economic and military factors.

Absence of Hierarchy: Complex interdependence entails that there is an absence of hierarchy in the governmental and non-governmental liaisons between nations. Yet another aspect of the complex interdependence theory is evident in OBOR. Countries that are included in this project are free to facilitate trade along this route through governmental institutes as well as private owned businesses so there is no hierarchy of power involved.



OBOR: An Overview

One Belt One Road, referred to as OBOR for brevity, is the brainchild of the China's leader Xi Jinping which he doled out to the world in 2013 but the idea had been in place for many years. In fact the ancient Silk Road is now being revisited by China in order to recreate the robust trading era that once connected the West and the East.¹⁵ The difference however, lies in the nature of the project as it is now being constructed and linked with the help of several countries and their cooperation while the ancient Silk Road was a result of years of travelling and interaction. It came into being on its own, was a need-based construction in part by different contenders. It was not the initiative of any singular country or civilisation. It was tradition. It was nature. This is exactly what China hopes to achieve. To rejuvenate the road that was buried deep under the sands of time and oblivion.

Figure 1: Old Silk Route



Source: <http://fileserver.net-texts.com/>

Historical Roots: As OBOR finds its roots in the old Silk Route, it is important to trace back at least a rough estimation of its origin, however ambiguous it may be. Most historical sources date it back to the age of the rule of Han Dynasty of the Chinese empire.¹⁶ It was a majestic route, extending from Xian in the east to the Mediterranean in the West which was the edge of the great Roman Empire. The term 'Silk Route' was coined by a German geographer, Ferdinand von Richthofen, after the famous Chinese export, Silk. It is mostly referred

to as a 'road' which is a commonly erroneous term because it constitutes a network of roads and paths that connected several countries to one another. These trade routes were the basis of all trade and strategic links among the Indian subcontinent, the Chinese empire, Persia, Greece, Rome and all countries beyond the Mediterranean. As the countries and empires that lay along the Silk Route prospered, their singular ambitions and projects grew higher, the harmonious trade networks broke and there came a time in 1453, when they altogether ceased to exist. The reason was the opposition towards the West during the rise and influence of the Ottoman Empire. It saw many eras of continuous trade and vigour even after this. However, this new initiative stands out from all the rest. Subtle statements had started coming in even in 2012, when the Chinese Premier Wen Jibao proclaimed that, "the ancient Silk Road regained its past vigour and vitality."¹⁷

Project Details: The project has two trajectories, the Silk Road Economic Belt which is being modelled on the Eurasian overland trading route connecting Central Asia, Russia and China with Europe and the other one is the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road which also connects China to Europe through Southeast Asia, India and Africa. China has also shown interest in building maritime bases in the Indian Ocean. It is also known that the naval bases were inspired from the idea of the Chinese Admiral Zheng He who undertook several voyages to Africa from China during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).¹⁸

OBOR was at first supposed to only encompass Central Asia. It was announced as a vague idea which was later on filled with a concrete plan to connect all nations at once. It would not be exaggeration if this initiative is claimed to have well-rounded global dimensions. Buzzwords were generated and it was called, 'harmonious', 'inclusive', 'flexible' and 'open'. China now highlights that potentially 65 countries and 4.4 billion people are part of OBOR. Imagining its impacts becomes overwhelming when one realizes that this one project represents the following:

- ✓ 70% of the world population
- ✓ 55% of global GNP
- ✓ 75% of world energy resources
- ✓ 6 Economic Corridors (CPEC is the first one)

OBOR projects while open to all have certain loosely attached pre-requisites that function to keep a check on the feasibility of all projects. This criterion is a 3 point formula which is as follows:

- ✓ Must be publicly proposed by China.
- ✓ Must be categorically announced as part of the Belt and Road initiative as China.
- ✓ Must designate fund from Chinese companies or governmental organisations.¹⁹

Major Benefits from OBOR: While there is no doubt in the lucrative nature of this project, it is important to point out these pros and summarise them. They are as follows:

- ✓ Diversification of Chinese economic success.
- ✓ Promotion of China's domestic trade partners, Pakistan and Indonesia.
- ✓ Member countries already have sound bilateral ties with China.
- ✓ Infrastructural development is the bedrock of OBOR and it also happens to be most scarce feature of growth in member countries.
- ✓ Entire Chinese establishment is unified at this venture.

OBOR contains six corridors laced with a plethora of economic benefits and energy projects along their way.

OBOR: An Ultimate Model for Regional Connectivity

Pax Sinica, meaning 'Chinese Peace', 'Harmonious rise', 'Prosperity for all' and many other constructs have been used to describe China's One Belt One Road Initiative (OBOR). However, there are several other terminologies that are being circulated which may be construed as rather negative, such as the 'Our bulldozers, our rules', regarding this project.²⁰ But negative comments or objections are not enough to discourage such endeavours this easily. China has been a fortress of consistent growth which after 30 years of humungous growth, realized that it was imperative to open its gates to the world in order to survive. Whether it is called Multilateralism, globalization or peace for all, they are all interchangeable with the term, OBOR.²¹

Planes of Connectivity: OBOR as the ultimate model for connectivity regarding Asia, Europe, and Africa is a self-explanatory terminology but certain plains of connectivity have been defined in this research to organise the train of thought, which are as follows:

- ✓ **Coordination of Policies:** It will mean China's engagement with other countries or partners in order to forge overlapping partnerships with multiple stakeholders who can connect and brainstorm. Such 'shared destinies' as dubbed by China, are only achieved by sharing knowledge economy which will include starting cultural exchanges, people-people contact, student exchange programs, think-tanks, business and academic nexuses, etc.
- ✓ **Facilitation of Connectivity:** This step will assure that China will basically help these countries stand back up on their feet. Most Central Asian nations along this route are developing economies with gaping holes in their infrastructural setups. Thus this initiative will require China to first build transport and communication mechanisms in these countries such as the construction of Karachi-Lahore-Peshawar Motorway in Pakistan under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).
- ✓ **Facilitation of Trade:** Tariff barriers, quarantine procedures, trade blocks and other kinks in the system are being speedily removed by China in order to keep the trade smooth among all these member states. By simplifying its own foreign investment systems, China has taken the first step to ease the access of other nations to its deep pockets.
- ✓ **Trade Integration:** Institutions have been made by China which facilitate the promotion of Chinese currency in both bilateral and multilateral trade agreements. Renminbi is being promoted through commercial banks, foreign branches of commercial banks, domestic bank branches, policy banks, city banks and etc.²²

Figure 2: Six Economic Corridors



Source: <https://walizahid.com/2015/10/chinas-world-reshaping-one-belt-one-road-obor/>

Promotion of Connectivity: A Corridor based Approach

As different facets of the OBOR are being explored, there is a great need for specifying geographical locations of the countries and corridors and analyse how they are connected. It is the only way to put counter proposals to rest which are being highlighted as more 'effective'. Such an example is the US initiative of TPP (Transpacific Partnership) which has been in the picture for the past 5 years but now it is being propped up as an equal to OBOR. While it is an extremely significant project, TPP is a multilateral trade agreement which is not open to all countries and OBOR is a global strategic initiative that is meant to encompass all countries because it remains open to embrace more partners.

An overview of the corridors and connectivity is given below for the purpose of clarity:

- ✓ **The New Eurasian Land Bridge:** It connects Jiangsu province to Rotterdam in Western Europe. It will be a logistics pathway and will bring European provinces to the doorsteps of Chinese provinces.

- ✓ China-Mongolia-Russia Corridor: It is connected with high speed rails and the two routes are Beijing-Russia (via Inner Mongolia) and Dalian to Chita in Russia. This route has freight trains.
- ✓ China-Central Asia-West Asia Corridor: It connects Xinjiang to the Arabian Peninsula, Turkey and Iran. It is a proposed gas and oil gateway for the entire region.
- ✓ China-Indochina Peninsula Corridor: Linking Pearl river Delta Economic Circle (Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Shenzhen) with the South-East Asian countries of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam.
- ✓ Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor: Connects China with South Asia.
- ✓ China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: Links Kashgar to the deep sea port of Gwadar.

OBOR promises to practically reduce distances in a way that its sheer size becomes the embodiment of regional interconnectivity. It translates into a scheme that links not only economic prosperity but different models of economic growth such as the EU model with the Russian system, while passing through the eastern economic mechanisms of ASEAN. It links capitalism with neo-communism and mixes these up through a need based approach. Thus, the Belt and the Road will connect continents through an economic string of pearls that will change the course of world history entirely.

Conclusion

OBOR is not only an economic initiative, but also a major geopolitical one. The diversity and different economic and political situations of countries along the routes inevitably mean there are inherent risks, ranging from the fundamental legal and financial challenges of accessing new foreign markets to political or social instability and regional disputes. The 'One Belt, One Road Initiative' is the ultimate model for regional connectivity that has been orchestrated by China for developing a new world economic order. Whether this new economic world order is feasible for the indigenous economies of Asia, Africa and Europe; it will be clear after the physical infrastructure has been laid out across the continents. As capitalism seeps its way into the Chinese society and as the size of its economy is increasing, projects such as these become crucial for basic sustenance. Thus, OBOR can become a connective tissue between the regions of South and Central Asia with a promising economic destiny for all countries included in its fold.

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COLONIAL DEMANDS FOR COTTON: TRADE AND STATE FORMATION IN SOUTH ASIA AND CENTRAL ASIA

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Abstract: *This paper compares the sociopolitical effects of colonial cotton production in South Asia and Turkestan / Uzbekistan during the nineteenth and twentieth century. Both productions expanded quickly under Russian and British state-backed policies. Both empires built railroads and infrastructure linking their cotton production sites to ports. Unlike the Indian subcontinent, Uzbekistan continued to produce cotton for their colonial ruler, albeit under different names. While the British extracted cotton produce through the colonial economic arrangements, the Soviet Union continued to extract labor surplus under a planned economy throughout the twentieth century up till its collapse. Export prices were largely unknown to the laborers. Uzbekistan produced 70 percent of all of Soviet Union's cotton and had to rely on the U.S.S.R. for other goods. It impeded crop diversification and urbanization in Uzbekistan. In contrast, British colonization transformed an artisanal South Asian economy, where people had woven their own clothes, into an economy that imported artisanal goods (such as clothes) and exported primary extraction.¹ Indian diasporic traders in Central Asia who traded cotton from India to Central Asia also decreased over time.*

Keywords: Britain, Central Asia, Cotton, Russia, South Asia

Introduction

Studies argue that the first Indian traders travelled to Central Asia two millennia ago and have contributed to the Silk Route's overland trade.² However, formations of the imperial and nation-state obstructed this exchange, which will be studied in this paper. The "geopolitical anxieties" caused by the Great Game, "the Russian revolution and the subsequent Sovietization of Central Asia, the decline of the Ottoman Empire, and the de-Persianization of India" all affected the overland trade. In the 1990s, nations in Central Asia started their gradual path to independence. "In the process, national identities have been sharpened and frontiers made more impermeable."³ Thus the level of cooperation currently has difficulty regaining to the level of a pre-nation state past, despite certain rhetoric calling for reviving the Silk Route.⁴ But what is lesser known to this historical process is the urge for empires to centralize resources and gain access to agricultural produce.

Historian Henry Adams wrote in the end of the nineteenth century, "the amount of force controlled by society had enormously increased."⁵ The rush for states to extract resources in the 1800s served as one reason. Different empires used colonies to grow cotton and fuel their economic powerhouses and these lands were often forcibly integrated into the global economy. Colonization and cotton were inseparable. The British Empire was the pioneer in this regard, with its large appetite felt in South Asia, North America, and Egypt. Scholar David Washbrook has shown that cotton textiles manufacturing propelled the industrial revolution in Britain, in order to compete with the South Asian manufacturing capacity. Cotton first came to Britain from the east--mostly from India in the decades before industrial revolution. India also supplied knowledge of how to weave and design cotton.⁶ In other words, the British Empire's industrial revolution was connected and ignited by events in its colonies.

Other polities, including the Russian empire, soon caught up with the "cotton rush." Russia captured Tashkent and established Russian Turkestan in 1865, which later became an engine for cotton growth.⁷ In order to "support the burgeoning Russian textile industry in the early eighteenth century," Central Asia could provide the raw cotton. Furthermore, acquiring these materials could improve Russian trade balance vis-à-vis India is another reason for Russian expansion into Central Asia.⁸ By 1902, a traveler observed that most inhabitants of the Central Asian Khanates were engaged in the occupation of growing cotton.⁹ Central Asia benefitted "from its mediatory position in overland Eurasian trade as caravan traders responded to Russia's increasing demand for Indian textiles and raw cotton."¹⁰ While the Russian empire had its eyes on Central Asia since the 1600s, the need for cotton gave more incentives for imperial presence and consolidation in the 1800s.

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The case is complicated by the issue of land. Activist reformers of the late Tsarist regime sought to dismantle former land property relations, and the distribution of land to the peasants continued in the Soviet era.¹¹ The lesser known story is that the immense social changes triggered from land reforms in former Russian lands were alleviated through allocating the population pressures to Central Asian land, such as the Ferghana Valley. The communist policies of Soviet Union also added interesting layers to the colonial framework of analysis of the Soviet-Central Asia dynamic.

This paper will first introduce the history and impacts of the British colonial policies regarding cotton growth in South Asia. Then it will delve into the history and impacts of Russian imperial policies and its later Soviet version in Central Asia, with an emphasis on Uzbekistan since the advent of cotton in the eighteenth century. Then the paper will compare the two regions' cotton economies and the environmental after-effects. It will conclude by highlighting the significance of cotton agriculture for these two regions' current political economy, especially Uzbekistan's issue with monoculture.

History of British Colonial Cotton Agriculture in South Asia

Colonialism encouraged processes of de-industrialization and de-urbanization in South Asia. The cotton textile industry is a premium example. South Asia had an export cotton industry since the thirteenth century.¹² Cotton-weaving artisans were innovative and served diverse clientele and the British later adapted many styles from the subcontinent.¹³ Specialization happened in village areas, with raw cotton supply coming from hundreds or thousands miles away. In the mid-1600s, Gujarati traders traded cottons products from the growing Indian textiles industry to the Red Sea. The traders earned "gold and especially the silver coins that were in great demand" after the Mughal Empire's monetary reforms of the rupee.¹⁴ Numerous Indian merchants and "the thousands of Indian pilgrims who brought with them a few bales of cotton stuffs to pay their expenses for travel to the holy sites" competed with Gujarati merchants.¹⁵ In 1750, "India possessed 24.8 percent of the world's manufacturing capacity--at a time when textiles dominated manufacture."¹⁶ As late as the 1885, Frederic Holmwood, the British consul in Zanzibar, emphasized the how India produced better quality fabric at a less cost: "the comparatively flimsy material which the rising manufacturing industry of India is now producing can be sold at little more than half the cost of the heavier and more durable fabrics of Manchester and Massachusetts."¹⁷ But Britain soon engineered change in the South Asian agriculture and mechanized cotton production at home. Technological transfers abroad started in the 1830s and Britain also exported textile machinery to Russia, the other study case of this paper, in the 1840s. Up till World War I, many Russian textile mills used British managers and engineers.¹⁸ How did Britain gain advantage and divert the resources to their end?

Scholar Emily Erikson rightly calls Britain's shift from Indian cotton products to domestic production as a classic case of import substitution.¹⁹ The state heavily invested in production technology to gain market advantage for British exported products. It also led the industrialization process. Mechanization of cotton manufacturing in Britain was facilitated by a number of factors, such as the dissemination of technical knowledge through print and the development of credit markets for importing materials.²⁰ Britain developed legal institutions, such as intellectual property, to ensure their interests when capitalists published aspects of textile manufacturing. Indian artisans, like other groups that had technical knowledge in South Asia, kept their knowledge as secrets.²¹

The spark of innovation at the mechanization end had to do with the commercial mechanisms already in place and the nature of cotton market. The domestic market readily consumed products far from the producers, such as crops from colonies, including coffee, tea, and sugar. Similarly, the strong British oversea presence and commercial mechanisms facilitated the supply of raw cotton from abroad.²² Through military maneuvers, the British gained territory surrounding their port cities Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay in the 1800s and continued further towards the interior for export purposes.²³ The capitalists, motivated to reduce cost, focused on the processing end rather than the cultivation end, leading to mechanization. Furthermore, the fact that cotton was supplied from abroad aided a centralized control of supply. Cotton manufacturing quickly was dominated by concentrated merchant capital.²⁴ Indeed, even capitalists on the supply end gained access to Indian cotton-growing labor with British India's state guidance and "then found ways to mobilize that labor" themselves.²⁵

European militaries advanced their commercial interests across the Indian Ocean and their priorities at sea did not meet much reaction from Indian states.²⁶ Britain shipped their goods to trade in Asia. But the Indian traders also took advantage of British dominance and set up many trading spots in East Africa in the late

nineteenth century, including exporting Indian cotton products.²⁷ On the domestic front, the East Indian Company's goals were also assisted through local interests. Many bankers, agents and *zamindars* helped facilitate exports and grew in influence while British power increased over the subcontinent. Proximity to the Company offered the agents of new mercantilism "a short-cut to securing their own power and wealth."²⁸ This process displaced former forms of social organizations such as peasant councils. Historian Sumit Guha, referencing writings from a colonial officer, points out how British power imposed cotton agendas in the Khandesh district that were unthinkable in the collectorates near Bombay.²⁹

British access to cotton in India increased over time. The quality and supply of cotton was once inconsistent because most of the spinning was a part-time employment during non-harvesting seasons and subsidized by other agricultural activities.³⁰ Furthermore, "textile production often took place in regions hundreds of miles from where the raw cotton was produced, the material being brought overland by pack-bullocks driven by *banjara* herdsman."³¹ Still, "the efficiency of the industrialized textile mills enabled British companies to import raw cotton from India, clean it, spin it into yarn, weave it into cotton cloth, and export it back to Indian markets" and to some extent displaced India's own cotton textiles.³² In 1816, India had "its first negative balance of trade in textiles; in 1824 India imported one million yards of cloth from Britain; and in 1837 Indian textile imports from Great Britain exceeded sixty-four million yards."³³ British colonization transformed an artisanal South Asian economy, where people had woven their own clothes, into an economy that imported artisanal goods (such as clothes) and exported primary extraction.³⁴ India was allowed to raise its own tariff barriers in the 1920s to protect its economy, yet it was met with strong opposition from British manufacturing interests.³⁵

The 1870s and 1880s were "key decades when the legal and administrative apparatus for land management rapidly expanded" by the British and gaining access to raw cotton was one of the incentives.³⁶ The British Empire extended their scheme of cash crop agriculture to as far as the forested areas of Nepal.³⁷ The canal irrigation system introduced in Punjab also facilitated cash crop agriculture like cotton, with certain environmental affects explored in the following section.

Impact of British Colonial Cotton Policies on South Asian Agriculture

The British used various legal and political means to incorporate land for efficient cotton production and these measures had long term economic and ecological impacts. In the 1860s, the British pushed for a single cash crop in western India and that resulted in a more prosperous but also volatile economy. Trade depressions occurred in the 1870s and 1890s. Malaria became widespread as a result of irrigation.³⁸

Similar to the experience of western India, Punjab, one of the leading regions of agricultural today in both Pakistan and India, both benefited and suffered from the enormous historical changes. In West Punjab, most of the grazing grounds were categorized as "waste land" under the Forest Act of 1878.³⁹ While canals around the Chenab River existed prior to the presence of British policies, canals in Punjab under the direction of the British were built with more fervor incited by the Industrial Revolution. Yet the engineers lacked the foresight that swamping would occur. Once the subsoil water flooded the land, salt rendered much of the swamped land inadequate for future agricultural production.⁴⁰ The moist lands attracted malaria and induced numerous cholera outbreaks during the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century.⁴¹ The original settlers of these tracts had fewer rights and their fortunes depended on the position of land they possessed. Many migrated away from West Punjab. According to the report on canal projects in 1904, those who lived by the right parts of the canals soon were "waxed fat."⁴²

Nowadays, both Pakistan and India have experienced periodic shortages of cotton partly due to the ecological toll experienced by the environment, such as the Indus River Basin.⁴³ In Pakistan, water salinity in the downstream rises as a result of reduced river flows. The downstream residents thus experience annual losses from failed crops and fewer fish catches due to the high demand for cotton. It accounts for 3.2 percent of Pakistan's GDP and the shortage has raised concerns of actors concerned with the economy and the environment.⁴⁴ After examining the history and effects of cotton policies in South Asia, this paper will now turn to Russia. Russia had a slower start than Britain, but mechanization also led to Russia's higher demand and thus further colonization, and thus brought similar impacts on the ecology and more severe effects on the economy of Central Asia.

History of the Russian Colonial Policies on Cotton Agriculture in Central Asia

From around the seventeenth century to the nineteenth century, Russian markets imported large amounts of Indian cotton textiles.⁴⁵ Many Indian traders and usurers lived in Central Asia since the mid-sixteenth century and facilitate the trade of cotton as well.⁴⁶ Once the British exported spinning machines to Russian textile mills in the 1840s, textile production was mechanized at a faster rate. In the early 1860s, the Russian cotton spinning industry ranked sixth in the world.⁴⁷ This changed the Central Asian textile supply and agrarian society.

Industrialization allowed for Russia to reduce imported textiles and increase in exports of finished products. Since the 1840s, Central Asian markets have been stocked with supplies of Russian textiles. This change also created a greater demand “for a regular, inexpensive supply of raw cotton.”⁴⁸ In contrast to Britain’s direct access to Indian cotton, Russia’s cotton supply still relied on middlemen. As late as 1821, Indian cotton textiles formed a significant part of Russia’s imports through Central Asian traders such as the Bukharans. By the 1860s, Russians accessed about one third of their cotton from India, supplied by Britain and shipped to Russia via Hamburg and Bremen. This dependence limited their profit margins and put them at disadvantage vis-à-vis Western European competitors. Russian merchants attempted many times in the eighteenth century to access Indian commodities directly but with little success.⁴⁹

Later, in the nineteenth century, Russia was importing cotton from the United States at a high cost. But the American Civil War disrupted the international cotton market and Russia relied on Central Asian cotton supply for some years. This availability partly “motivated Russian industrialists to press tsarist officials to produce an alternate supply by colonizing Central Asia.”⁵⁰ Central Asia had smooth land and an arid climate, ideal for cotton planting and was acquired by the Tsar. Cotton gins increased in Central Asia, despite it being lower in quality than the American strain. Russia’s mass market demand for cheap cotton goods nudged the state economy to use the Central Asian strain.⁵¹

Cotton became the primary cash crop of Central Asia’s Ferghana Valley and replaced traditional food crops such as wheat. A Russian officer commented that cotton served as “the link connecting Turkestan with Moscow and the rest of Russia.”⁵² Russian engineers built a railway line which facilitated cotton trade. The price of cotton shipped from in Central Asia to the mills of industrial towns close to Moscow decreased after the rail construction in the 1890s. Textile industries quickly arose in cities of the Ferghana Valley after 1875.⁵³ From 1892 to 1900, annual cotton production in the Valley increased almost 400 percent.⁵⁴ Prior to Russian colonization of Turkestan in the 1860s, the region supplied less than 7 percent of cotton to Russian processors. By 1915, this figure increased to 70 percent.⁵⁵ The decrease in demand for imported cotton became one of the reasons for Indian traders’ emigration from Central Asia.⁵⁶

The twentieth century spelled the beginning of Central Asia’s cotton monoculture.⁵⁷ Land confiscation and labor organization were key elements in the process. The Russians confiscated land from Central Asians in the late nineteenth century.⁵⁸ Ethnic Russian serfs came to Central Asia in the 1910s. Prime Minister Peter Stolypin’s Reform in 1906 under the Tsar allowed many poor Russians to resettle in the Ferghana Valley and in other parts of the region.⁵⁹ The Soviets also implemented collectivization in 1929 and peasants of the Ferghana Valley were organized into collective farms (*kolkhoz*). The extent of collectivization in the Valley reached its height in 1937.⁶⁰ Meeting Soviet state priorities, cotton agricultural land increased from 441,000 hectares in 1914 to more than one million in 1940.⁶¹ In 1980, the Soviet Union produced more than 5 billion pounds of cotton, and was the world’s second largest producer.⁶² The enormous production increases were only possible “because of massive state investments in irrigation, fertilizers, and machinery,” and came at a price.⁶³

The Soviet Union intensified the process of cotton monoculture but was not the sole culprit. Resistance occurred responding to preexisting tensions, such as the case of the 1916 Central Asia uprising. While the most notable reason was the opposition to World War I drafting in the region, one also can see the underlying ethnic tensions created by socio-agricultural reasons: just before the uprising, the number of ethnic Russians settlers was already twice the number of locals.⁶⁴ Unlike scholars who would place blame solely on communist land policies, it is important to notice the continuities initiated by Russian colonialism that manifest in Soviet Union rule in the Ferghana Valley.

Impact of the Russian and Soviet Colonial Policies on Uzbekistan's Political Economy

To this day, all of the Central Asian economies rely on raw material exports. "Problems of access to energy and of geographical landlockedness impede company operations and entail increased transport costs, thus slowing down the reconversion and modernization of the Central Asian economies."⁶⁵ Uzbekistan has attempted to diversify crops since independence in 1991, agriculture is still dominated by cotton production and collective farming continued.⁶⁶ The ruling People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan pushed for capitalization and private ownership of land.⁶⁷ But the process is partial due to both political and economic reasons.

The political reason is because the new state leadership wanted to maintain monopoly on raw cotton trade due to its crucial role in foreign exchange.⁶⁸ More than two thirds of harvested cotton is exported and serves as the major sources of foreign currency for Central Asian states.⁶⁹ The way cotton profits are distributed is conducive for state corruption practices and concentration of wealth. Uzbek farmers are required to sell their quota to a state-controlled company that operates Uzbekistan's cotton gins.⁷⁰ Those who control cotton exports in Uzbekistan can enrich themselves faster than by controlling vegetable or grain production, and thus the ratio of cotton in agricultural produce stays high.⁷¹

The economic explanation for monoculture is the lack of mechanization and unemployment. In the 1990s, many people preferred to return and resettle in their home villages to work individual plots.⁷² With many hands, the role of equipment in the harvesting economy decreased. The share of the mechanized harvest fell from 57 percent in 1990, to 35 percent in 1993, and stands probably at less than 20 percent in 2010s. Scholars have suggested that de-mechanization creates more jobs and alleviates social tensions.⁷³ Indeed, studies have shown that around 20 percent of Uzbek agriculture labor is unnecessary.⁷⁴ Political scientist has suggested that by reducing mechanization, the Soviet Union prevented migration tendencies characteristic of rural societies that experience technological advance.⁷⁵

Agriculture in most countries experienced centralization since the end of the nineteenth century.⁷⁶ The new countries with vast expansions, such as the Russian Empire / Soviet Union, specialized in agriculture. Demographic growth propelled agricultural productivity and mechanization, as was the case for Central Asia's cereal and cotton production.⁷⁷ This has had negative impacts on the environment. Irrigation played a large part in cotton production but the construction did not take sustainability into account. The Ferghana Canal between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan was completed in the 1930s and increased the ratio of cotton in agriculture.⁷⁸ To meet the demands of cotton production, irrigation was "expanded beyond the capacity of Central Asian rivers, the soil... kept getting saturated with chemical fertilizers," and pesticides and herbicides were widely used.⁷⁹

While many Uzbek farmers know that the yearly harvests can be "source of impoverishment," they still interpret the harvest as a way towards a peaceful and stable society and a source of income.⁸⁰ They are reluctant about land privatization because they rely on state-supported collective management and input for expensive tools in agricultural production.⁸¹ Cotton as a way of life going back generations, and left a clear mark on Uzbek labor and life.⁸² Around 70 percent of a particular *kolkhoz* had female cotton pickers. Experienced women "are expected to pick anywhere from 90 to 130 kilograms per day."⁸³ Model cotton pickers are those who "overfulfilled" plan targets and often are lauded on television and newspapers, with records such as "150 to 190 kilograms per day, and record breakers have exceeded 200 kilograms on a single day."⁸⁴ Uzbek women's work outside the fields and kitchen are usually cleaning cotton and spinning thread.⁸⁵ During work gatherings, women they often bring their own work and "acquaintances are invited to assist with cleaning cotton or beating fiber, sewing bedding, or picking cotton."⁸⁶ At around age eight or nine, "girls are taught to saw, clean cotton, and spin. It is usually the mother who teaches the girl and, more rarely, a female relative."⁸⁷ The effects of cotton on Uzbek values and everyday life were significant. In the mid-1970s, Soviet Union produced a quarter of global cotton output. However, cotton production declined due to financial and environmental reasons. In 2003, the former Soviet Union only produced 8 percent of the world's cotton.

Conclusion

This paper has briefly examined the history of British colonial cotton policies in South Asia and the impact of British colonial cotton policies on South Asian agriculture. Different social groups were impacted differently at different points of time, but overall trade was overtaken after the industrial revolution. The Russians also caught on the revolution and subsequently started their own colonial policies on cotton agriculture in Central Asia. Both Russia and Britain established trains and military presence in their colonies for facilitating

cotton trade. The intense demand for cotton also had a severe impact on the environment in both Central and South Asia. Finally, the paper examined the impact of Russian and Soviet colonial policies' particularly negative impact on Uzbekistan's political economy. Now the Central Asian region has become the attention for future trade connections. With this part of history in mind, one can realize that some effects of the state boundaries and centralization are hard to reverse. Trade connections that were in place prior to the industrial revolution could be difficult to restore.

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THE NEW SILK ROADS (NSR) DIPLOMACY: MYTH OR REALITY?

Saadia Saif Niazi*

Abstract: *The globalized world has made significant changes in conventional wisdom of trade and economic linkages by introducing innovative and updated ideas of economic cooperation. The idea of New Silk Roads (NSR) is an upgraded notion of the old Silk Road. The Old Silk Road was a political, social, economic and cultural connection among different civilizations (i.e Confucius till Roman Empires) of diverse regions. The NSR advocates are trying to refurbishing the conventional relations of Old Silk Road into the new narratives of NSR i.e pipelines, road, railway, and maritime linkages like ports. Currently, there are two visions of the Silk Road prevailing in world affairs: One the Chinese's enterprising idea of "One Belt One Road (OBOR)" and other the US-NSR initiative. Both initiatives comprise the states of Central and Southern Asia to encourage their multilateral relations by introducing different projects. The global politics and geopolitics interests of Great Powers have also made NSR a political forum rather than an economic endeavor. The topic investigates the practicality of the NSR, which is vital for the regional integration of Central and South Asia. This study is salient as Central and South Asia are crucial to the creation of "Greater Connectivity" with the benefactors of US for NSR and Chinese for OBOR.*

Keywords: New Silk Road (NSR), Old Silk Road, Connectivity, Benefiters, Benefactors and beneficiaries of NSR.

Introduction

Central Asia and South Asia is already having historical connections and it should be connected again by all means of linkages.¹ The term New Silk Road (NSR) is an up graded version of the old Silk Road, which in history was significant and made remarkable achievements in trade and commerce. Therefore, it has been taken as voucher of success again, in the globalized world by the superpower US and future super power China) to realize economic, political as well as social objectives. The notion of NSR is a foretaste of strategic relationships among different continents.

It is understandable from the Silk Roads phenomenon that it is a major investment of China. The significance of Silk Road is undeniable; therefore other major powers also adopted the same concept to gain the same goals. As the notion of NSR revolves on the implementation of economic cooperation on larger scale, one of the major powers the US have also introduced the same idea, named NSR. Here let us have a first look at Old Silk Road Paradigm and the notion of "Silk".

The Old Silk Road Paradigm

Traditionally, the Silk Road was traversed by different civilizations for trading purpose, mainly of silk. The Old Silk Road is fairly linked with the Chinese historical trade initiatives towards Western countries, which included Asian as well as Central Asian Republics (CARs) and Europe. The fundamental objective of was to promote trade of silk to different regions of the world. Throughout history, traders, diplomats, monks, eminent scholars, adventurers and priests have left written records about the Silk Road. Besides, number of incidents has taken place on this historical route. Over the time, the old Silk Road enhanced Chinese civilization under different dynasties.

With the passage of time, different products and commodities, such as gems, precious stones, spices, souvenirs of different civilizations were exchanged in parallel to silk trading. Overall, it was a trade route, extending for nearly 4,000 miles, and covering the whole of East to Western landmass between China and Eurasia Chinese civilization and the Roman empires.

The Old Silk route gave a importance to South Asia due to the fact that significant part of "Silk Route" passed through it. Similarly, the NSR will also provide lots of opportunities and incentives, to the region, especially "Pakistan". The proposed network of roads and gas pipelines by the NSR will need regime integration of states under a common and single platform. In this regard, multilateral institutions can play an important role

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in global governance. Multilateral institutions open up opportunities for new avenues for regional integration, especially addressing the social, economic challenges of Central and South Asia.

The Notion of “Silk”

Presently, the notion “Silk” stands for different connotation i.e commodities such as hydrocarbon, oil, gas, gold and strategic minerals like lithium etc with added bonus of new pipelines, roads, bridges and railway links among different nations. These are meant to facilitate trade and movement like older times. Therefore, it is called as “New Silk Road” (NSR).

No wonder, countries with “silk products” such as Central Asian Republics (CARs), Caucasian States, and Middle Eastern Republics will act as key players in the politics of the New Silk Road. Fortunately, Pakistan is having geographical links, as part of the Old Silk Road, and would be help the NSR benefiter by becoming a potential beneficiary in the new network of development infrastructure: pipelines, roads, railways and maritime linkages.

Currently China and the US are working on NSR strategy separately. Both NSR’s will play the role of regional connectivity for the deprived Central and South Asia, provided the regional states take immediate steps to benefit.

The US Concept of New Silk Road (NSR)

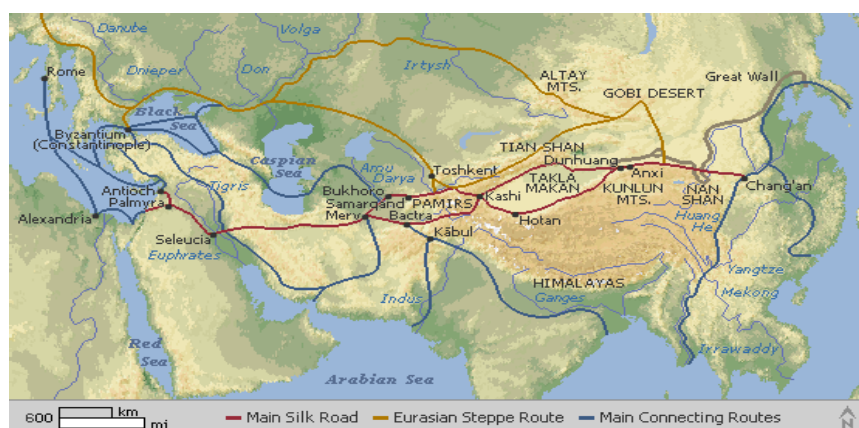
For the US NSR concept was launched by the US ex-secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, in her speech “New Silk Road Strategy” in 2011. This concept came to limelight in the late 1990’s by then Senator Sam Brownback with close collaboration of Dr. Professor Frederick Starr in his legislative initiative “Silk Road Strategy Act (S. 579)” of 1999.² The main concept was to boost up trade levels among different regions of the world to ameliorate living standards of poor regions.

The US planned NSR corridor will start from the Turkey, move down towards Caucasus region, then Central Asia linking it with Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and finally linking it to the Far East Asian region. NSR basically is about re-connectivity of the states, especially of South Asia with the CARs in west-east connectivity. In other words, it revolves around the old and new means of communications i.e rail, road or pipelines.

As the foremost proponent of US motivated NSR, Prof Starr, articulated in his interview that: “Central Asia and South Asia are already having historical connections and it should be connected again by all means of linkages”. This linkage will create fundamental changes in the biggest Asian continent. He adds that it is partially global program, where connectivity between east and west will occur. According to him, the NSR comprises of three main corridors,

- ✓ Northern Corridor.
- ✓ Middle Corridor.
- ✓ Southern Corridor. Linking Middle Eastern region with Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh towards Far East Asia.
- ✓

Figure 1: Corridors of Silk Route



It is imperative here to highlight Vali Nasr efforts to bring the real political element of NSR through his book, “The Dispensable Nation: American Foreign Policy in Retreat”. According to him Richard Holbrooke was the initiator of transit trade agreement between Pakistan and Afghanistan with help of ex Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, through which Afghanistan; Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA) became reality. The book also claimed that after death of Holbrooke, Americans promoted the idea of New Silk Road to make Afghanistan an “economic anchor” after NATO exit.³

Further he narrates, “The New Silk Road is a “lofty idea” that will only work through true American commitment with Afghanistan’s stability and substantial financial commitment to build infrastructure, develop industry, and facilitate trade, not to mention commitment to improved relations with Pakistan and engagement with Iran. Without this commitment, at best the idea will become the basis for a Chinese regional economic system.”⁴

Vali Nasr’s assessment regarding the idea of NSR seems to be a harsh reality, as the US real commitment is lacking regarding NSR goals. Although the US presence does exist in the above regions yet some of its benefactors such as Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India gas pipeline (TAPI), and Central Asia South Asia-1000 (CASA-1000) and APTTA are lacking in trust due to conflicting interest. Distrust among Kabul, New Delhi and Islamabad and tepid commitment by the US adds to early completion of these projects.

Benefactors of US and NSR

Some important benefactors, such as TAPI, CASA-1000 and APTTA shall be discussed below through which these regions would be able to fulfill their emerging needs and requirements.

Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan gas pipeline (TAPI): As “Silk” today stands for the “hydrocarbon reserves” and roads stands for trade and transportation routes for transfer from one state to another. TAPI is a gas project, worth \$10 billion, which is 1,814-kilometer long pipeline that would be providing gas from Turkmenistan to South Asian stakeholders. This project is under review from almost two decades with negotiations dead locked.

The Central and South Asian states including Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India discussed signed the project details on December 2015, in city of Merv, Turkmenistan. Due to conflicted strategic and economic values for each other the project is clouded still by politics “ifs and buts”. The ongoing hostility between Kabul, New Delhi and Islamabad is another aspect creating hurdles which needs serious attention if it has to be revived. Washington has developed its own concerns over the gas pipelines coming to South Asia.

TAPI seems to be an “economic dream” for Pakistan. The possibility of TAPI can come to reality with the US support. There are number of international companies such as Gazprom, Exxon, and GAIL that have evinced interests in the project.

TAPI if and when operationalize will produce new opportunities for members of southern corridor. First, it will connect the lucrative regions Central and South Asia by the isolation of Turkmenistan, and creating of North South corridor. Secondly, it will help Islamabad and Kabul to normalize their hostile bilateral relations. Thirdly, it might usher the process of Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) between New Delhi and Islamabad.

While highlighting the significance of NSR, especially of TAPI, Prof Starr repeatedly focused that “TAPI contains the potential to create peace and harmony among the states of South Asian. It would surely a great engine of stability and peace in the Afghanistan as well for southern corridor”.⁵ Afghanistan, itself remains hurdle in the project. The warlord tribal political system and unstable government plus the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Tajikistan and China (TATC) gas pipeline are the main hurdles for the development of gas pipeline projects. TATC is considered as a spoiler of TAPI.

TATC gas pipeline was proposed in mid-2012, on 12th annual summit of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), in which the presidents of Afghanistan and China tried to discuss TATC while discussing its main proposals. The proposed project is to carry Turkmen gas to China through northern Afghanistan and Tajikistan. It has also raised serious concern about TAPI.⁶

Central Asia-South Asia (CASA-1000): Central Asia-South Asia (CASA-1000) electricity project is yet another project through which integration process of two vibrant regions could be made possible. The main

concept in creating project CASA-1000 is to build a bridge between the two regions and to develop Central Asia-South Asia Regional Electricity Market (CASAREM). In May 12, 2016, in Dushanbe, agreement was signed among the principle stake-holders i.e Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

Like TAPI, CASA-1000 is hobbled economic and political problems. Both projects have generated a political tug of war between diverse regions involved in the TAPI.

Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA): The signing of APTTA in 2010 would be able to increase regional integration. As APTTA is a successor of 1965 Afghanistan Transit Trade Agreement (ATTA), this is considered an important landmark in the history of two countries, but it is still lack in practical foundation. Yet it is commendable and palpable step under the NSR framework and its regional implementation. The expansion of APTTA, including CARs and India will definitely benefit the whole region. Without inclusion of India, the economic project for CARs will be pointless and inane idea as Robert D. Hormats stated in speech "New Silk Road" Strategy: What is it? Where is it Headed?⁷

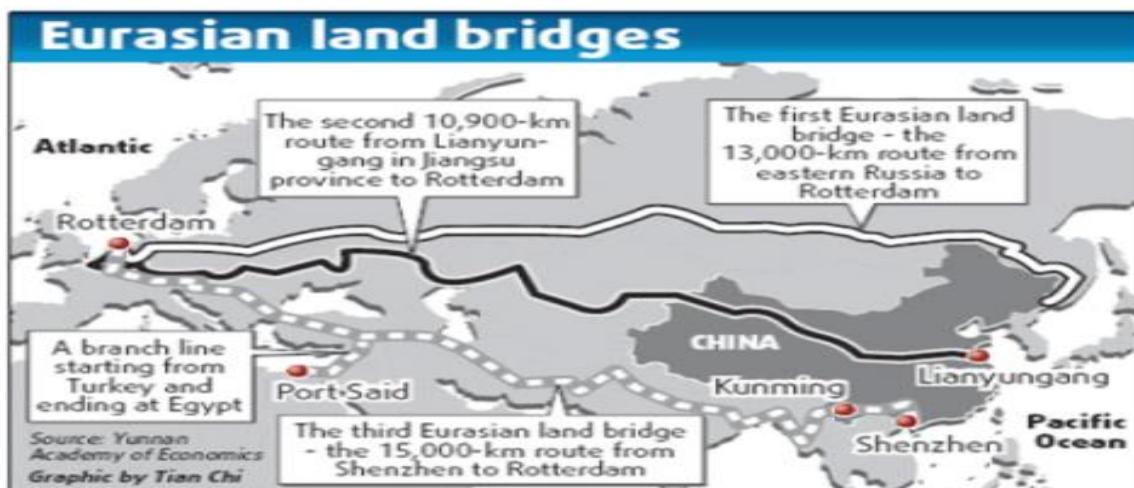
On APTTA, Pakistani side continued to be frustrated by Afghanistan's stance to allow India as a part of this agreement, which is a violation of the reciprocal agreement between the two. The role of Pakistan and Afghanistan is to minimize incompatible national viewpoints on disagreements which will ensure durable peace and sustainable development in the region. Although the TAPI and APTTA used to be considered as a success of the NSR projects, the impediments need serious attention of regional states. The stakeholders of these projects, and state authorities should attempt to reduce the trust deficit among its members.

China's New Silk Road Initiative: One Belt One Road (OBOR)

The idea of OBOR originally derived from the traditional Silk Road and based on futuristic economic relationship among China's neighbors. It is now an upgraded version that emphasizes the mega scale connectivity through vibrant corridors of road, railways and maritime linkages. This forms vital portion of the Old Silk Road.

The Chinese concept of the OBOR has unfolded with the creation of three corridors: across Eurasian land mass and southern Asia, which will consist of a network of railways, highways, pipelines and tunnels.

Figure 2: Eurasian Land Bridges



The above map clearly depicts the Eurasian land bridges of China that comprise three main corridors. The first (upper route) comprises of 13,000 km-long route on the existing Trans-Siberian Railway, running from Vladivostok (in eastern Russia) to Moscow and onwards to Western Europe and Rotterdam. The second, is 10,900 km-long which runs from Lianyungang Port in eastern China through Kazakhstan (in Central Asia) on to Rotterdam; the third comprises 15,000 km route that runs from Shenzhen to Rotterdam, crossing almost 17 countries including, South Asia.⁸

China's OBOR Heading towards Reality

Currently, and in some past years, the Chinese government has taken some landmark decisions in launching some bold ventures. Very recently in September 2016, Chinese government announced largest private provincial-level investment firm of \$2.4 billion in Guangdong province, aiming to jump-start a faltering local economy known for its entrepreneurial spirit.⁹

This is not one step only to furbish local industry other than this in May 2016; it also announced to develop its domestic infrastructure, especially in central and western China by allocating huge financial resources for new projects of Silk Road.

In 2013, China established strategic relations with the SCO members on behalf of the Silk Road endeavor to further its objectives, especially with western neighbors of (CARs). According to Congressional Research Service, by March 2014 the Chinese government had signed agreements worth of \$30 billion. These were with Turkmenistan, (\$8 billion), Uzbekistan (\$15 billion), and Kyrgyzstan (\$3 billion) for increasing trade and to develop East-West transportation links.¹⁰

Future plans of building rail links from eastern corridors to Rotterdam, "Trans-Siberian," building infrastructure and roads toward southern neighbor i.e China-Pakistan economic corridor (C-PEC) are some of the projects which have demonstrated the Silk Road diplomacy as harbinger of future development scenario of both regions.

Not only in neighboring region but far way, on 16 May 2016, China became one of the largest creditors in Venezuela as well, pursuing its maritime Silk Road objectives by establishing about \$50 billion investment to improve the conditions of an oil-for-loans deal.¹¹ Similarly, investment of \$1.4 billion to revamp "mini-city" on Colombo Port city, Sri Lanka is having the same stakes in mind.

Chinese economic expansion, especially towards western and southern countries i.e Central and South Asia respectively, would most likely open up immense opportunities for the two regions. This would further lead to a web of connectivity with the Middle East, Africa and Europe through the Arabian Sea and then the Mediterranean Sea.

One of the Chinese media report also observed that, "China has announced investments of \$150 billion in OBOR projects that are already under construction or planned. \$75 billion is earmarked for railways. Road building accounts for (\$18.4 billion); airports (\$17.5 billion); and ports and waterways (\$25.4 billion).¹²

Tbilisi Silk Road forum, evident from its name, that is Georgia and China are working on OBOR. This forum took place on 15-16 October 2015, indicating China interest in Eurasia and maintaining a platform by establishing strategic relations with Georgia i.e enhance transport, energy, trade and people-to-people contact through its traditional way of east-west connectivity.¹³

Poland Amber Silk road is having significant achievements on economic and cultural exchanges within Europe as well as creating linkages with the Chinese civilizations. In 2015, OBOR also took a bold step to reestablish its Old Silk road linkages with the emerging economy of Warsaw. In 2015, bilateral trade between Beijing and Warsaw was about \$17.1 billion, by reaching this graph China has become the largest trading partner of Poland.¹⁴

On the pattern of Old Silk Road, new mode of connectivity has started. The first cargo train entered through crossing the old Silk Road linkages in September 2016 in Afghanistan from China. No wonder, China is also gaining influence here through OBOR strategy.

In present global politics, economic relationship among states is in new mantra. The economic significance of the SCO is undeniable due to links with Eurasia region, which possesses a large proportion of the world's oil and gas reserves. The SCO and OBOR, both previews of Chinese Silk Road diplomacy, act as two terminologies which belong to one country: it is "China". China's significance in this regard in global affairs is beyond questions. The idea of "OBOR" will have symbiotic relationship with the SCO. Pakistan's future collaboration, especially in the economic domain, with the SCO will hopefully usher in economic, political and cultural dividends.

Pakistan at New Silk Roads

Pakistan, one of the important parts of world's ancient civilizations i.e Indus Valley civilization, is also having big stakes in the world NSR initiatives. Its strategic location compels it to be an important organ of NSR as in history it was an important appendage of old Silk Road. The Old Silk Road was a conduit of linkages between different regions of the world. The first commodity which was transferred from South Asia (Pakistan: Indus valley civilizations) to Afghanistan was "Lapis lazuli" (a precious stone).¹⁵ Thus the trade linkages have been developed right since 4,000 years ago through the Old Silk Road creating linkages between the Indian subcontinent (Indus Valley Civilizations) and the Middle East and even beyond.

Prof Starr stressed upon Pakistan, by stating "Pakistan needs to be an articulate champion of the NSR in these regions. Fifty years of self-isolation (not self but isolation) have taken the tow. This is an expensive idea, and it is not against anyone. It comprises of more positive thinking". For playing an articulated role in the NSR, different regional and global organization could play its role. Being part of NSR Pakistan can acquire its political, social and cultural objectives.

Pakistan, located in South Asia, is already in limelight because of the regional mistrust based on historical legacy. This is compounded by a plethora of problems from its big neighbors, clash of natural interests, humanitarian issues, hegemonic designs, poverty, fragile economy, exploding population, water issues, nuclearization of South Asia and War on Terror (WOT). The NSR is expected to be the peace initiator in "Greater Asia", which is also going to be a caretaker of new emerging markets, having huge potential for investments and trade in Pakistan.

The Central Asian Republics (CARs) are lacking in one particular aspect despite large territory and great proportion of the world's oil and gas reserves. As landlocked states, they lack "access to warm waters" or, easy access to sea trade. Strategic location of Pakistan will be able to provide land and sea routes and connectivity to the CARs, Russia and China. Secondly, the accessibility to warm waters (Indian Ocean) could become possible by establishing North-South Corridor. The Chinese investment of \$46 billion on China-Pakistan- Economic Corridor (C-PEC) is very consequential in this regard. Sea, as a major mode of traffic, happens to be comparatively cheap trade route than others like land or air. Pakistan's Gwadar port is going to be the second largest deep sea port in the world, bearing strategic significance, especially with reference to maritime links of Silk Roads.

Moreover, Pakistan has a tantalizing opportunity for investment in trade, marketing, business, and banking sector, as well as a sizeable market for common goods. Regional connectivity of regional states with Pakistan could unfold immense opportunities in trade, business, infrastructure, transportation and emerging markets for China and Russia.

As the CARs are lacking in north-south corridors, this could become a future reality by establishing links with Pakistan through the C-PEC. This north-south linkage will also offer Pakistan easier access to energy resources of Central Asia despite having no direct land access.

But as the nature and configuration of the world is changing, Pakistan is also responding to this landscape and adjusting its foreign policy, through the C-PEC mega project. However, it is necessary to work together in domestic realm for implementation of CPEC rather than to turn it into an arena of mutual recrimination, battle of turf, and privileges.

Conclusion

In conclusion, one can predict the Chinese NSR heading towards a reality. In near future the NSR could only be possible through establishing cooperation among different countries of diverse regions. The idea of connectivity for the stakeholders of southern corridor is an economic opportunity which possesses lucrative benefits for them. The southern corridor of the NSR attracts extra-regional states as a part of great game to secure their vital interests by creating new strategic environment. All players are consistently pursuing their strategic designs in resource rich region of Central Asia or South Asia. Pakistan's role as a pivotal country whose participation in the NSR is mandatory due to its strategic location it is expected that things will move forward in a positive trajectory. Pakistan should follow a multidimensional foreign policy. A "Balanced Idea" which was taken by Kazakhstan, then by Azerbaijan, and now all the CARs. It should be taken up by Pakistan,

too. Currently, Pakistani Government is losing a hefty volume of transit tariffs. Trade from Far East, Bangladesh and India via Pakistan towards the West will benefit a lot to Pakistan and stabilize its economy.

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Academic Session: 4

Geopolitics of Corridors: Building Political Linkages

Session Chair: Dr. Martin Hribek

CHINA-PAKISTAN ECONOMIC CORRIDOR: THE FLAGSHIP PROJECT OF ONE BELT ONE ROAD

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Abstract: *China-Pakistan Economic Corridor construction is an important landmark reflecting the China-Pakistan strategic cooperative partnership. CPEC and One Belt One Road construction are closely linked. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has played an exemplary role in One Belt One Road construction, and One Belt One Road construction will create more favorable external environment for China-Pakistan Economic Corridor construction. This paper analyzes the current situation of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor construction through statistical data. The paper argues that economic growth in Pakistan is only possible if it gets rid of the plight of energy shortage which is achievable through cracking in China's energy "Malacca Dilemma", pushing bilateral economic and trade cooperation, and enhancing the cultural exchange between China and Pakistan. The article also analyzes the risks faced by China-Pakistan Economic Corridor construction.*

Keywords: China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, One Belt One Road, economic cooperation, energy, Malacca Dilemma

Introduction

China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a series of projects currently under construction at an estimated cost of \$51 billion intended to rapidly expand and upgrade infrastructure in Pakistan as well as strengthening economic relations between Pakistan and the People's Republic of China. The corridor is considered to be the flagship project of China's One Belt One Road strategy, and the importance of CPEC to China is reflected by its inclusion as part of China's 13th five-year development plan.¹ Pakistani officials predict that the project will result in the creation of 700,000 direct jobs during 2015-2030, and an increase of 2-2.5 percent in the country's annual economic growth. If all the planned projects are implemented, the value of those projects would be equal to all foreign direct investment in Pakistan since 1970, and would be equivalent to 17% of Pakistan's GDP in 2015.² As the project is in its initial stages, a lot of development projects are in progress and foreign direct investment (FDI) and private inflows can be seen in Pakistan, as Chinese input enhances. These are some of the lines on which FDI into Pakistan is rising, and going into very productive and high-dividend sectors. This is amply indicated in the FDI inflows analysis undertaken by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), the central bank, for the fiscal year 2015-2016. While the Chinese private sector investment in Pakistan is closely related to China's \$46 billion investment in China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and its three-year early harvest programme which commenced in 2015-2016. United Arab Emirates is also planning to benefit from Pakistan as their key investment and export base to feed the global market. UAE and other investors also have an eye open to the big market as the upcoming production and export base will feed in the overall context of CPEC.³

In the future, it is probable that CPEC will link Middle East, Africa, and UAE in the south-west, Central Asia and EU in the north, and China in the East of Pakistan – a huge zone lying between ASEAN and EU. It will be a 21st and 22nd century economic miracle – economists and analysts say.⁴

All this is not just a bundle of dreams. Actual implementation and the project construction work have been commenced –in several parts of the CPEC within the Chinese territory and in Pakistan itself. Different scholars and experts have tried to theorize the CPEC and the correlated themes of inter-regional connectivity, movement of goods, security and the triumph of soft power over hard power in the upcoming future.

Dr. Hassan Askari Rizvi has examined the implications of the CPEC project with reference to three theoretical formulations of International Relations which include: regional cooperation and integration;

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economic connectivity and relevance in terms of movement of goods, services and people across the territorial boundaries of the states; and the soft power as opposed to military power.⁵ He further argues that the CPEC will defuse tensions in the region and promote regional cooperation, harmony and integration.⁶ Also this flagship project facilitates internal harmony and stability which in turn reduces conflict and increases positive relevance of a state at the international level.⁷

In an attempt to find the strategic meaning of CPEC, Moonis Ahmar has put forwarded five basic but very important questions about the project: What is the strategic significance of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor? How will the economic corridor be a win-win situation for both countries? What are the challenges and impediments to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor? How the two countries can cope with challenges and impediments which may occur in the mega-project? What is the future of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor?⁸

Ritzinger has emphasized on the risks to CPEC construction saying that, “For all of their fanfare, the announced investment projects face significant hurdles, including a fractured Pakistani political environment, in which an apparent change in the CPEC route has already sparked protests from local and provincial leaders in Pakistan’s underdeveloped western provinces of Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.”⁹

Xiaoqing Xie and Changqian Ma (2015) proposed that under the CPEC framework, a network of roads, railway lines, and energy projects and transport infrastructure will be constructed which will create more and more employment opportunities between China and Pakistan.¹⁰ The related issues of ‘One Belt, One Road’ have sensitized scholars to pay more and more attention. Yin Pumin (2015) argues that the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road initiative is expected to bring benefits to countries and regions along the route. Zhang Xudong (2015) discusses that China’s strategic initiatives to build the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road have witnessed bounding development. Chinese leaders are playing multiple roles as planners, publicists, and supervisors – actively and steadily promoting the initiatives. Muhammad Haris (2015) identifies possible industries for investment in Special Economic Zone proposed along the Pak China Economic Corridor. Hamid & Hayat (2012) propose that having a small economy as compared to China Pakistan is unable to compete, so it should keep in mind the needs of her local industries. Hussain and Ali (2015) argue that CPEC will increase social connectivity among people and exchange of ideas at political and cultural level. CPEC is significant for Pakistan as well as China. It will increase economic activity in Pakistan (Malik, 2012).

The Framework of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor

The starting point of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is Kashgar and ending point is Gwadar Port in Pakistan with a total length of 3000 km. It borders with silk road economic belt in the north and the 21st century maritime silk road in the south. It is the key hub to link the north and the south of the Silk Road economic belt, and a trade corridor including highways, railroads, oil and gas, and cable channels, and an important part of One Belt One Road.

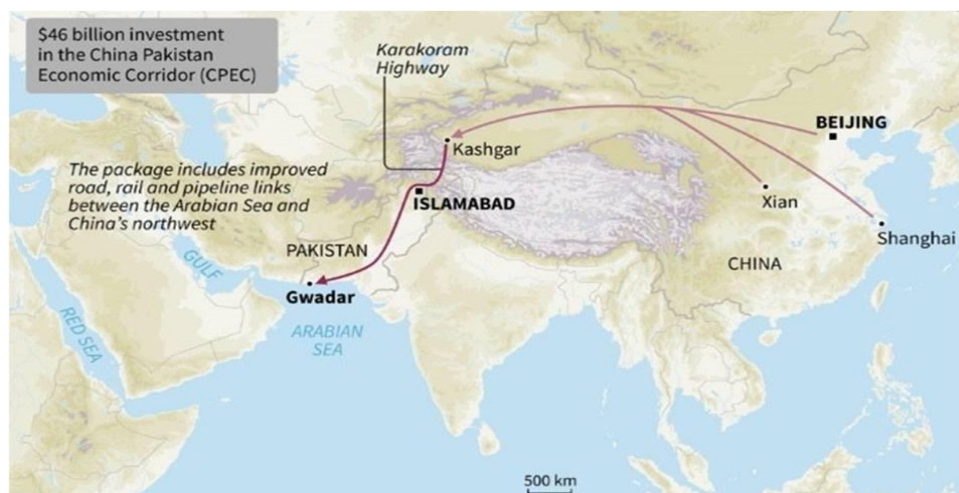
All projects of CPEC will be invested by China. In the next six years, China will invest \$45.6 billion in the energy and infrastructure projects. Among them, about \$10 billion will be provided in the form of commercial loans, the rest will be provided in the form of export credit, free aid and other forms by China development bank, export-import bank of China, industrial and commercial bank of China and other financial institutions. Chinese companies that have made investment in Pakistan's energy sector mainly include: China's three gorges corporation and China power international development co., LTD.

Main Projects of CPEC

Gwadar Project: Gwadar port is a deep water port which has partially been operational since 2007. As of now, CPEC ends in Gwadar, as it is the main center of this project. Under CPEC agreement, Gwadar Port will initially be expanded and upgraded to allow for docking of larger ships with deadweight tonnage of up to 70,000.¹¹ Improvement plans also include construction of a \$130 million breakwater around the port, as well as the construction of a floating liquefied natural gas facility that will have a capacity of 500 million cubic feet per day and will be connected to the Gwadar-Nawabshah segment of the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline. China will grant Pakistan \$230 million to construct a new international airport in Gwadar which is to be operational by December 2017. The city of Gwadar is further being developed by the construction of a 300MW coal power plant, a desalinization plant, and a new 300 bed hospital. Plans for Gwadar city also include construction of the

East Bay Expressway – a 19 kilometer controlled-access road that will connect Gwadar Port to the Makran Coastal Highway. These additional projects are estimated to cost \$800 million.

Figure 1: The Investment Operation Mechanism of CPEC



Road Projects: Pakistan's transport infrastructure will be developed by CPEC. Under the CPEC project, China has announced financing for \$10.63 billion worth of transportation infrastructure so far; \$6.1 billion have been allocated for construction of "Early Harvest" roadway projects. Three corridors have been identified for cargo transport: the Eastern Alignment through the heavily populated provinces of Sindh and Punjab where most industries are located, the Western Alignment through the less developed and more sparsely populated provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, and the future Central Alignment which will pass through Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, and Balochistan.¹²

Railway Projects: The CPEC project emphasizes major upgrades to Pakistan's ageing railway system, including rebuilding of the entire Main Line 1 railway between Karachi and Peshawar by 2020; this single railway currently handles 70% of Pakistan Railways traffic.¹³ In addition to the Main Line 1 railway, upgrades and expansions are stated for the Main Line 2 railway and Main Line 3 railway. The CPEC plan also calls for completion of a rail link over the 4,693-meter high Khunjerab Pass. The railway will provide direct access for Chinese and East Asian goods to Pakistani seaports at Karachi and Gwadar by 2030. Procurement of an initial 250 new passenger coaches and reconstruction of 21 train stations are also planned as part of the first phase of the project-bringing the total investment in Pakistan's railway system to approximately \$5 billion by the end of 2019.¹⁴

Energy Projects: One of the main components of CPEC is energy projects. Pakistan currently faces energy shortfalls of over 4500 MW on a regular basis with routine power cuts of up to 12 hours per day. It costs a considerable amount of GDP. Following are the country-wide projects intended to deal with this problem in Pakistan (See Table 1). This will be an investment by China.

CPEC Mining and Transmission Projects: Another important component of CPEC is to invest in mining sector to excavate rich mineral resources in Pakistan. This section also covers laying transmission lines for electricity. (see Table 2)

SWOT Analysis of the Current Scenario of CPEC

For a long time, good political relations between China and Pakistan, economic and trade cooperation and cultural exchanges have been pushed forward constantly, favorable to promote the development of both economies and deepening the friendship between the two countries. However, compared with both sides of the political relations, economic and trade cooperation is still in a relatively low level. One of the important reasons is not convenient transportation, low level of connectivity, lack of close economic exchanges and cooperation. Hence, the development of China-Pakistan economic corridor, is not only beneficial to strengthen economic cooperation, promote to form the flow of human resources, logistics, capital, information and technology, but also to strengthen industry cooperation and to promote regional economic integration.

Promoting Economic Growth of Pakistan: In the latest report of World Economic Outlook, the World Bank expected that South Asia will become the world's fastest-growing economic region in 2016, which is 5.5% in Pakistan, and adjusted the global economic growth forecast to 2.9% in 2016, this growth is less than 3.3% of the forecast in June last year, but higher than 2.4% in 2015.

Report shows that China's growth is expected to be 6.7% in 2016, according to the report, in addition to the risk of economic slowdown, will also face the global trade growth plunging, the United States raised interest rates brings the risk of the financial market volatility enhancement and a significant decline in capital inflows. The World Bank expects that global economic growth will be 3.1% in 2017, and it will be flat in 2018, and China will be at 6.5%.

Table 1: Energy Projects in CPEC

Project	MW	Estimated cost \$US m
Port Qasim Electric Company Coal Fired, Sindh	1320	1980
Sahiwal Coal fired Power Plant, Sahiwal Punjab	1320	1600
Engrothar coal fired, Thar, Sindh	1320	2000
Gwadar coal power project, Gwadar	300	600
HUBCO coal power plant, Balochistan	660	970
SSRL mine mouth power plant, Sindh	1320	2000
Quaid e Azam Solar Park, Bahawalpur, Punjab	1000	1350
Dawood Wind Farm, Bhambore, Sindh	50	125
UEP Wind Farm, Jampur, Sindh	100	225
Sachal wind farm, Sindh	50	134
SukiKinari Hydro power project, KPK	870	1802
Karot Hydro power station, AJK	720	1420
Rahimyar Khan coal power project	1320	1600

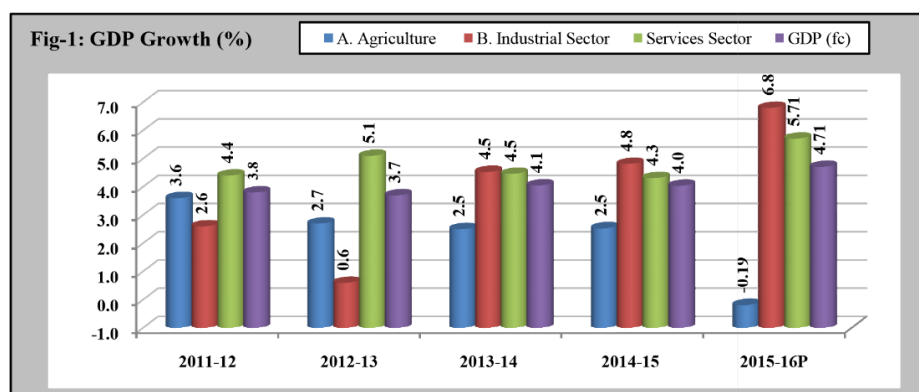
Source: Ministry of Planning and Development, Government of Pakistan

Table 2: Mining and Transmission Projects in CPEC

Project Name	Estimated Cost US\$
Surface mine in Block II of Thar Coal field, 6.5 metric ton per annum (mtpa), Thar Sindh	1470
SSRL Thar Coal Block 1 - 6.5 metric ton per annum(mtpa) Thar, Sindh	1300
Matiari to Lahore Transmission line	1500
Matiari to Lahore Transmission line	1500

Source: Ministry of Planning and Development, Government of Pakistan

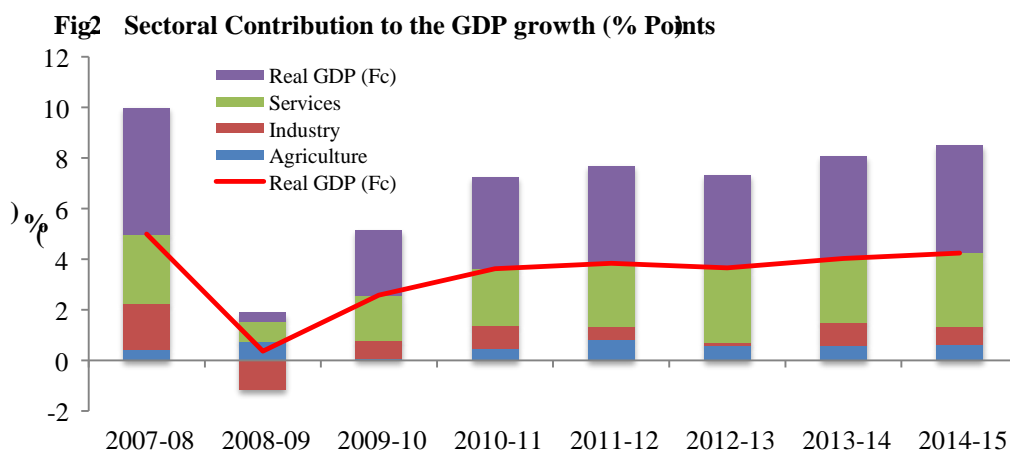
Figure 2: GDP Growth of Different Sectors in Pakistan



Source: Statistics Bureau of Pakistan, September 30, 2016.

These statistics data show how different sectors have contributed in a steady growth in GDP. The CPEC has caused this rise in the gross domestic product of Pakistan by promising practical solutions for the infrastructure construction and energy crisis in the country.

Figure 2: Sectoral Contribution to the GDP Growth (% Points)



Source: Statistics Bureau of Pakistan, September 30, 2016.

It is observable that from 2013 onwards, the agriculture sector has decreased its contribution to the GDP; whereas, the industrial sector has increased manifold. Also there is a steady increase in the services sector. This figure shows that from 2013, with the increasing of total consumption and total investment, GDP has a steady increase in Pakistan.

Increasing Investment in Pakistan: Investment from China will have a direct effect on growth of the GDP. Plans to invest in Pakistan will be most focused on energy, accounting for 74%; In addition, coal mining investment accounted for 20%, accounted for 13% of road network construction. Among them, the most benefit from Pakistan is get cheap energy by coal. As the economic corridor project will be completed in the next three years, these investments will have a significant positive effect on growth of the economy. According to Pakistan BMA capital management institutions, according to the expected China to Pakistan local investment of \$18 billion, assuming that at a higher proportion of investment in the water and electricity, roads, railways, mining and port of Darfur, 50%, 50%, and reduce the investment in the machine a cluster of coal-fired power plants to 20% (See Table 3), the only, can be directly bring the GDP from 2016 to 2016, the average annual growth rate of 2.1%, in this three years, the investment's contribution to GDP growth in Pakistan will be more than 6%.

Table 3: Estimate of China's Investment in the Proportion of Pakistan's Departments

Investment Sector	Investment (USD bn)	Investment Proportion
Energy	33.8	--
Coal Power 560MW	8.8	20 %
Wind Power 200MW	0.5	20 %
Water Power 1590MW	4.2	50 %
Solar Power 1000MW	1.7	0 %
Second Stage 6445MW	9.5	20 %
Miniing Industry	9.0	50 %
Lahore Public Transport	1.6	50 %
Gwadar Port	0.7	50 %
China-Pakistan Fiber	0.0	0 %
Highway	5.9	80 %
Railway	3.7	50 %

Source: BMA CAPITAL

Table 4: Direct Contribution of China Investment to Pak's Economic Growth (2016-2018)

GDP-2015	\$ 287.0 Billions
Investment of CPEC projects	\$ 18.1 Billions
Investment of CPEC projects/GDP	6.3 %
Investment Period	3years
Annual Investment/GDP	2.1 %

Source: BMA CAPITAL

China's investment has potential driving effect on Pakistan's medium-term economic growth. According to the historical data to measure that each additional 3.6 unit investment, will lead to a unit of output. According to this calculation, \$46 billion China investment CPEC project, investment will increase output ratio is 5.3% a year, in the medium term will bring the average annual GDP rising 1.5% of potential economic growth effect to Pakistan. The same period, assumes that the transfer of \$1.5 billion in investment in the private sector (a third of China's investment), which will result in potential GDP growth of 2.0%

Table 5: Medium-term Potential Effect of China's Investment on Pakistan's Economic Growth

GDP-2015	\$ 2870 Billions
Total Investment of CPEC Project	\$ 460 Billions
Investment /GDP	16 %
Investment Period	3 year
Annual Added Investment /GDP	5.3 %
Potential GDP Growth	1.5 %
Annual Added Private Investment /GDP	1.8%
Potential GDP Growth	2 %

Source: BMA CAPITAL

To End Plight of Energy Shortage: Pakistan has a shortage of energy; one of the biggest challenges is the power shortage. Severe power shortage in Pakistan has become a big obstacle to economic development. According to data of the Central Bank, as of March 2015, Pakistan's exports fell by nearly 6%, at the same time; foreign investment is not so good. In Pakistan, in the summer – peak season, the power supply hrotage reaches up to 5000 megawatts and most of the times power required for routine households do not meet. Most of China's investment capacity will be spent for building plants to generate power over 15000 MW, accounting for 74% of the existing power generation capacity. Even close Pakistan's existing inefficient power plants, all 15000 MW power plant put into use, will make the power generation capacity increased by 90%.

Malacca Dilemma and Cracking in China's Energy: Due to China's global economic growth the international trade route has become the core concern of the national economic security. In this connction the safety of sea lanes is very significant. The Strait of Malacca is one of them. With the increase in energy consumption, China has become the world's largest net importer of oil. According to the international energy agency, in 2025, China's crude oil external dependency will reach 82%. So far, most of China's imports of crude oil are from the Middle East and Africa. These traditional oil producing areas and transport way of imported crude oil from these areas. The Strait of Malacca is about 885 kilometers long. As a result, the Strait of Malacca is China's current energy transport "lifeline", which will give China its energy security. But there are some hidden dangers from the so-called "Malacca Dilemma".

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor provides a new way to solve the "Malacca Dilemma". China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has opened up a portal into the Middle East, as a hub to connect China and the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea by opening around the interior of the Strait of Malacca energy channels. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor will link South Asia, Central Asia, North Africa and the Gulf states through cooperation in the field of economy, energy closer to the economic renaissance. At the same time strengthen Pakistan as a bridge and link between Europe and Asia, and the strategic position of the African continent.

Promoting Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Pakistan: China-Pakistan Economic Corridor construction will promote bilateral economic and trade cooperation to a new level. Stronger

economic complementarities between China and Pakistan, and promote China's imports from the sustained growth. Five Chinese exports to the main commodities, namely, mechanical and electrical, chemical, textile, plastic and metal products, accounting for more than 80% of the total amount of exports. China imported from Pakistan has five major commodities, textile, mining, metal products, leather, and animal and plant products, account for more than 93% of imports from Pakistan. Among them, the textile and fastest growing, animal and plant import growth nearly 2 times and 4 times respectively. China's import growth increased from \$2008 in 1.01 billion to \$2014 in 2.76 billion, increased by 1.7 times.

The two sides' trade is expanding fast. Only \$5.25 billion, bilateral trade volume in 2006 increased to \$2014 in 16 billion, more than tripled. This not only higher than Pakistan's foreign trade growth levels at the same time, also higher than the same period the level of 1.4 times the total amount of China's foreign trade growth. China has become Pakistan's second largest trading partner after the United Arab Emirates.

Comprehensive development of economic and trade cooperation between China and Pakistan, By the end of 2013, China for project contracting and labor service contract of \$25.56 billion, \$20.82 billion has been completed. As of 2014, China's enterprises of direct investment of about \$3 billion, Chinese companies to invest in the economy increases, particularly to help Pakistan wind, nuclear power plant construction projects, power supply capacity will reach 13.35 million kilowatts, will greatly alleviate the problem of insufficient power supply capacity, promote economic development and improve people's livelihood.

Promoting the Cultural Exchange between China and Pakistan: Bilateral cultural exchanges between the two countries in promoting economic, political, military and diplomatic cooperation are playing an increasingly important role. At present, China has established a college of the Silk Road and four research center in Pakistan. The two countries' students, teachers, journalists, scholars and researchers have regular dealings and visits. Pakistan has also set up three Confucius institutes, a lot of Pakistani students and young adults are learning Chinese. In Pakistan, the younger generation in the proportion of total population accounts for more than 60%, however, they expect that China is a friendly neighbor of China's lack of comprehensive understanding. In recent years, because of the War on Terror, the international media and historical reasons, the Pakistani youth ideology has gradually leaned towards the West. China-Pakistan has close relations, but the language and culture is a barrier to understanding. At present, advance of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor construction, increasing the contact between the two countries. Bilateral mutual exchange of the younger generation is becoming more and more important.

Risks and Threats to CPEC Construction: Although the two governments promote the building of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and it has achieved fruitful results; however, they are still facing security problems. Most of China's investment in the project focused on the security situation in Pakistan aimed at regional security through safety measures. The risks of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor construction should undergo an objective evaluation.

Along parts of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor there are areas infested with separatist forces, sectarian violence, armed terrorist attacks and other security issues. Gwadar multi-generational ROM (Guadar-Ratodero) highway project (M-8 road) has been delayed for years, due to local insecurity. These security factors also affect the normal operation at the China-Pakistan border crossings.

In the two countries, potential safety hazards cannot be ruled out. First of all, Pakistan's macro security situation is gradually improving. In June 2014, Pakistan army started a military operation under the title of *Zarb-e-Azb*. Pakistan's domestic situation has also improved. Suicide attacks in Pakistan in 2014 decreased by 43%, compared to the terrorist attacks, down 32% year on year, the terrorist attacks on the number of casualties reduced by 31%. Second, most of the CPEC project involved in infrastructure, energy and industrial park construction, project site focused on Pakistan's security situation is relatively stable in northern Sindh and Punjab where security threat is quite small. Once again, our friendship is rooted in the hearts of both peoples, from the point of historical data. Moreover, in order to deal with the security risks to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, the government will set up a division of about ten thousand people for special protection of personnel employed in economic corridor construction and property safety. At present, the government has arranged a large number of veterans to liaise with the police force to protect the lives and property of the Chinese people.

Conclusions and Prospects

This paper is set in a pattern of SWOT analysis. The paper analyzes the current situation of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor construction by the statistical data, and it includes that promoting economic growth in Pakistan is possible by utilizing all the strengths and opportunities to get rid of the plight of energy shortage, cracking in China's energy "Malacca dilemma", pushing bilateral economic and trade cooperation and enhancing the cultural exchange between China and Pakistan. Furthermore the article analyzes the weaknesses and threats faced by China-Pakistan Economic Corridor construction. Thus this paper synthesizes the above two aspects to draw the related conclusion.

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor areas of cooperation are rapidly advancing making a new flow of capital, technology and labor, effectively stimulating domestic economic growth in China and at the same time also leading towards Pakistan's economic growth, improved infrastructure, employment and improved people's livelihood.

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor will expand cooperation between the two countries in economic, political, social, and legal fields and especially security field. At present, China's dependence on imported energy, energy security is a major problem facing China, economic corridor between China and Pakistan is not just about China's economic interests, more energy security and "all-weather" strategic partnership with Pakistan, reliable and trustworthy "iron" is far more important than economic profits, more is worth cherishing. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is not only economic corridor, but also benefit the bilateral energy corridor, safety corridor between the two countries.

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor that both countries reap the benefits at the same time, also face more risks and challenges. How to ensure that the interests of Pakistan in project implementation, how to ensure the safety of lives and property of Chinese personnel in Pakistan, is an important issue which the two countries should jointly cope with. However, these risks are obviously not enough to hinder the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor construction of determination and processes. China-Pakistan anti-terrorism cooperation between the two countries closer and extensive, due to the border with Afghanistan, Pakistan become a terrorist organization the important way to go, China with the "East Turkistan" terrorist group members also through Pakistan to Afghanistan, such as response to terrorism has the common interests of the two countries, prompted the military cooperation between China and Pakistan, anti-terrorism cooperation development the new situation.

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor of the building has been successfully deepen all-round cooperation, it is the flagship of the "area" construction and benchmarking, "area" is a magnificent wonderful ancient poem! China and Pakistan as brother's profound friendship and trust of the broad consultation mechanism is the guarantee of both sides to meet the challenge, pioneering the future and foundation, the friendship between China and Pakistan will pass on from generation to generation.

Acknowledgement: This research is supported by China University of Geosciences (Wuhan), High Education Management Research Youth Project (Development Research), The Project No: 2015FZA02.

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"THE GREAT GAME" VS "THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE" FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF GEOPOLITICS AND GEOECONOMIC

Tang Jun (Richer TJ)*

Abstract: *The present day world is facing many complex, profound changes and challenges. Many countries are encountering the underlying impact of the international financial crisis while the world economy is recovering slowly. Global development is uneven and international trade and rules for multilateral trade and investment are undergoing major adjustments. "The Great Game" is a term to describe the political and diplomatic confrontation that existed during most of the 19th Century between the British Empire and the Russian Empire centred on Afghanistan and its surrounding regions. "The Belt and Road Initiative" is a development strategy and framework in the 21st century to focus on connectivity and cooperation among China and countries from Central Asia to Europe. Both of the two have great influence on regional connectivity. This paper, by introducing the two concepts, analyses the influences as well as the challenges of The Belt and Road Initiative geopolitically and geo-economically. The Great Game has become history while The Belt and Road Initiative is the booming future awaiting countries in the regions to participate. From the framework of The Belt and Road Initiative, it is clear that a new international regional strategy that connects China and its surrounding countries will be crucial to the further international cooperation in areas like trade and monetary cooperation, traffic connectivity and people-to-people exchanges. The Belt and Road cooperation features mutual respect and trust, mutual benefits and a win-win cooperation, and mutual learning between civilizations.*

Keywords: The Great Game, The Belt and Road Initiative, Silk Road, Russia, China

Introduction of "The Great Game" and "The Belt and Road Initiative"

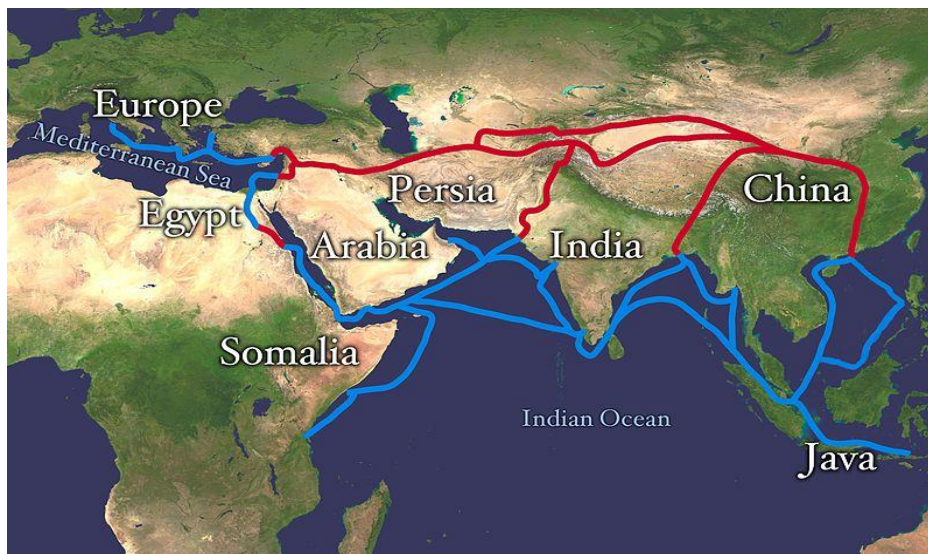
The Great Game is a term first used by Rudyard Kipling, a British novelist, in his novel *Kim* (1901)¹. After that, the term was frequently used in the academic field to describe the political and diplomatic confrontation between Britain and Russia in the 19th century over Afghanistan and neighbouring territories in Central and Southern Asia.

After Britain became an industrial empire in the 19th century, Britain was eager to expand its political and economic influence in Central Asia and Britain worried that other European powers would take advantage of Central Asia (Figure 1). Russia worried about Britain's commercial and military inroads into Central Asia and it attempted to move to Central Asia countries like Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey and India so that it would become the largest empire in Asia. Russia planned to make Central Asia a big market for its goods and expand its civilization to bring the Central Asian people under its control.²

After wars between Russia and British, the two countries set up an agreement in 1887 which established a buffer zone in Central Asia. Officially the Great Game came to an end with the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, which specified a border line between the two empires running from the eastern point of Persia to Afghanistan, and declared Afghanistan an official protectorate of Britain.³

The Belt and Road Initiative, also known as one belt, one road, is a development strategy and framework in the 21st century to focus on connectivity and cooperation among China and countries from Central Asia to Europe. The idea is from the ancient Silk Road, which started from Han Dynasty (206 B.C.–220 A.D.) with the establishment of trade routes stretched from the old capital city Xi'an as far as ancient Rome (Figure 2). The Silk Road played a significant role in the development of the civilizations of China, Central Asia, Europe, Africa and Arabia, opening long-distance technical, political and economic relations between cultures and civilizations. The Silk Road Spirit - "peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit" - has not only promoted the progress of different civilizations and cultures, it has also contributed greatly to the prosperity and development of the countries in Central Asia and Europe.⁴

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Figure 1: Map of the Ancient Silk Road

The name “The Belt and Road Initiative” was put forward officially by China International Publishing Group in 2015. It refers to the proposal to build a Silk Road Economic Belt and a 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. During his visits to Central and Southeast Asia in September and October 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping unveiled the initiatives of building the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road in cooperation with related countries, and laid out policy coordination, facilities connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration, and people-to-people bonds as the five major goals.”

Figure 2: Map of Silk Road Economic Belt and Maritime Silk Road

On March 28th 2015, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Development and Reform Commission, and Ministry of Commerce of China issued an official declaration of The Belt and Road Initiative: Vision and proposed actions outlined on jointly building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st -Century Maritime Silk Road, which interpreted China’s detailed vision on it from various perspectives. The Belt and Road Initiative, in the 21st century, runs through Asia, Europe and Africa, linking China with the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean Sea through Central Asia and West Asia; and connecting China with Southeast Asia, South Asia and the Indian Ocean.⁵

The New Great Game and the Belt and Road Initiative

In the late 1990s, some journalists used the expression "The New Great Game" to describe what they proposed was a renewed geopolitical interest in Central Asia based on the mineral wealth of the region which was becoming available to foreign interests after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. For example, in 1996 the New York Times published an opinion piece titled *The New Great Game in Asia* in which was written:

While few have noticed, Central Asia has again emerged as a murky battleground among big powers engaged in an old and rough geopolitical game. Western experts believe that the largely untapped oil and natural gas riches of the Caspian Sea countries could make that region the Persian Gulf of the next century. The object of the revived game is to befriend leaders of the former Soviet republics controlling the oil, while neutralizing Russian suspicions and devising secure alternative pipeline routes to world markets.⁶

Since then, many other journalists started to use the term "the new Great Game" to describe the geopolitical and geo-economical competition in Central Asia. Many of them agreed that the new Great Game was no longer a competition and conquest game between two great powers. Instead, many global powers as well as regional powers became active to participate in this increasingly complex game of 21st Century.

The new Great Game will be a new challenge and opportunity to various players, who are going to revolve around the Belt and Road Initiative. Russia, America and China have different approaches to the new Great Game. America wants the entire region to be developed. On July 20, 2011, Hilary Clinton, US Secretary of State, proposed in Chennai, India:

"Let's work together to create a new Silk Road. Not a single thoroughfare like its namesake, but an international web and network of economic and transit connections. That means building more rail lines, highways, energy infrastructure, like the proposed pipeline to run from Turkmenistan, through Afghanistan, through Pakistan into India...It means casting aside the outdated trade policies that we all still are living with and adopting new rules for the 21st century".⁷

It is obvious that American foreign policy aims to play an active role in Central and South Asian regional economic integration. For China, who wants to stimulate economy prosperity and increase its sphere of influence, the approach is to make the Belt and Road Initiative accepted in Asia and Europe. Since the Silk Road has been part of Chinese history, the Belt and Road Initiative, the updated version of the Silk Road, will be crucial to the Chinese government's prosperity and regional stability.

As for Russia, the great power in the old Great Game, has taken an approach to the region that seeks to build on previous glory. Building on the already extant customs union that Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia formed in 2009, President Putin proposed a Eurasian Union that would coordinate "economic and currency policy" while also being open to new members presumably drawn from the former Soviet space.

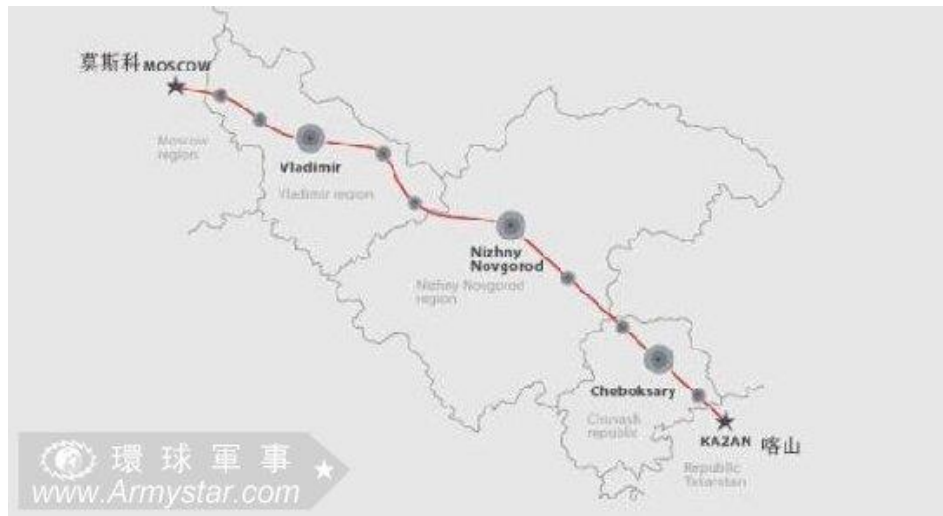
Goeconomic and Geopolitical Influence on the Belt and Road Initiative

The Belt and Road Initiative aims to promote the connectivity of Asian, European and African continents and related regions, to establish and strengthen partnerships among the countries along the Belt and Road, to set up all-dimensional, multitier and composite connectivity networks, and to realize diversified, and sustainable development in these countries and regions. The connectivity projects of the Initiative will help align and coordinate the development strategies of the countries along the Belt and Road, tap market potential in this region, promote investment and consumption, create demands and job opportunities, enhance people-to-people and cultural exchanges, and mutual learning among the peoples of the relevant countries, and enable them to understand, trust and respect each other and live in harmony, peace and prosperity.

The Chinese government, since the reform and opening up policy in 1970s, has been focusing on economic development at home and abroad. China is eager to integrate itself into the world economic system in all-round ways as much as any other countries do. The Initiative will enable China to further expand and deepen its opening-up, and to strengthen its mutually beneficial cooperation with countries in Asia, Europe, Africa and the rest of the world. Meanwhile, China is committed to take more responsibilities and obligations while growing into a great power.

The Belt and Road Initiative will make central Asia more connected to the world economically. Many Chinese projects are under construction in the region as follows. Moscow-Kazan high-speed railway, a project of 16.7 billion dollars that will cut the traveling time from 12 hours to 3.5 hours between Moscow and Kazan.

Figure 3: Moscow-Kazan High-Speed Railway



Khorgos-Aktau railway project, a railway from Khorgos on the Chinese border to the Caspian Sea port of Aktau.

Figure 4: Khorgos-Aktau Railway Projects



Central Asia-China gas pipeline project, a 3,666km gas pipeline runs from the Turkmenistan/Uzbekistan border to Jingbian in China and cost \$7.3bn.

Central Asia-China gas pipeline, line D project, signed among China, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan to raise Turkmenistan's gas export capacity to China from 55bn cu m per year to 85billion cum. China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway project is a railway construction project among three countries. China-Pakistan highway is an important part of CPEC of \$46 billion between China and Pakistan.

The abovementioned projects are constructed on roads, railways, bridges, tunnels, and power lines by Chinese companies, but China is not doing these projects alone. Many multilateral financial institutions are also investing in the region, such as the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the Asian Development Bank. It is estimated that the Maritime Silk Road needs an investment of \$8 trillion between 2010 and 2020 alone. Chinese government announced commitments to support the project and Silk Road Fund, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, China Development Bank and the Maritime Silk Road Bank

are prepared to support the projects financially. The related countries, including Turkey, the US, and the EU, are working actively in the region to improve Eurasian connectivity.

According to the statistics of International Monetary Fund (IMF), China's trade with the region rose from \$1.8 billion in 2000 to a high of \$50 billion in 2013. Chinese companies own close to a quarter of Kazakhstan's oil production and account for well over half of Turkmenistan's gas exports. China's state Eximbank is the largest single creditor to impoverished Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, respectively holding 49 and 36 per cent of their government debt.⁸

The Belt and Road Initiative requires the close cooperation among countries and regions. Multilateral cooperation mechanisms will push forward the economic integration, such as Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), China-Arab States Cooperation Forum (CASCF), Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), ASEAN Plus China (10+1), Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), China-Gulf Cooperation Council Strategic Dialogue, and Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC). Similarly, international forums will play a constructive role in the economic integration such as China-ASEAN Expo, Western China International Fair, Boao Forum for Asia, China-South Asia Expo, China-Russia Expo, China-Arab States Expo, China International Fair for Investment and Trade, China-Eurasia Expo, and Euro-Asia Economic Forum. The cooperation mechanisms will certainly promote not only economic links but also promote cultural and academic exchanges, people and media exchanges as well as information and technology exchanges.

In American's eyes, the Belt and Road Initiative also means the shift of wealth and power towards Asia. The rising of China is believed to expand its power to the fulcrum of global geopolitics, covering the entire Eurasian continent. By strengthening its ties with Central Asian countries through expanding trade and building oil and gas pipelines, China is in pursuit of land rights and sea power.

From a land-based perspective, the construction of the Belt and Road Initiative provides China with an opportunity to strengthen its economic and diplomatic ties with the countries of South Asia, Central Asia and Saudi Arabia, including the Gulf States. In the next stage, China will strengthen its economic and commercial ties with Afghanistan in the context of the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan, and will develop a much closer relationship with Pakistan in order to get a direct access to the Indian Ocean. The European Union will also become the focus of China's expanding common interests. From the sea perspective, the "Maritime Silk Road in the 21st Century" will extend China's influence to South Pacific in the south and Indian Ocean in the west so that China can compete with the United States, India, Japan and other maritime forces countries. This sea strategy, together with China's regional development strategy, will strengthen China's western border and the province's security.

The Belt and Road Initiative is fundamentally to implement the integration strategy in Central Asia, South Asia, the Middle East and other related regions where is lack of American's leadership and regional cooperation. On the one hand, China can avoid further intensifying competition and confrontation in East Asia with the United States. On the other hand, China will expand its influence and take economic cooperation as the leading force to gradually promote and integrate cooperation in the political and security fields.

Since 2013, the frequent exchange of visits between China and Russia showed a comprehensive strategic cooperation partnership of between the two countries. The increasing bilateral exchanges and agreements proved the two great powers are on the way to settle differences in a strategic cooperation partnership. The Snowden event, the Syrian crisis and the Ukrainian crisis all proved such a cooperation relationship between the two great powers, who aim to re-establish regional and global order against America and Europe. In the process, China and Russia, who have complementary advantages, will gain huge economic power and energy supply from each other.

Challenges of the Belt and Road Initiative

The Belt and Road Initiative will encounter many opportunities as well as challenges. Despite the financial advantages, terrorism will pose an unclear threat to the safety of the initiative. Whether China can handle the relationship with Russia well will also affect the prospects of the initiative. Meanwhile, China's growing stance on the South China Sea and other issues will also increase the instability of Southeast Asian countries.

Firstly, terrorism and extremism pose threats to threaten to the construction of The Belt and Road Initiative. Afghanistan and Pakistan are two countries that should be fully considered: on the one hand, with the withdrawal of the United States and NATO in Afghanistan and the collapse of the current government, the Taliban forces are likely to come back. Consequently, terrorism and extremism will threaten the stability of the regions. On the other hand, China must strengthen the coordination with Pakistan on anti-terrorism issues. Along the construction of CPEC, there are many terrorist forces, extremist forces and separatist forces which require the two governments to combat terrorist organizations effectively.

Secondly, Sino-Russian cooperation needs further development although it appears to be close in the political, economic and energy fields. The Sino-Russian trade surplus led to bilateral trade imbalances. China's imports Russian energy and exports consumer goods as well as other high-value products, causing dissatisfaction from Russia; Besides, Russia is committed to creating Customs Union among Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and expanding the Eurasian Union, which will be contradictory to the regional dominance against China. In addition, cultural exchanges and mutual trust between the two countries are not strong due to many historical conflicts.

Third, The Belt and Road Initiative involve a wide range of areas along the participating countries, whose development levels are different in terms of politics, economy, culture and society. The countries along the region will treat the initiative with different attitudes out of their own interests. At present China has territorial disputes with countries in Southeast Asia and South Asia and the disputes can't be solved in short term. Since 2013, China's declaration of an air defence zone in the East China Sea has prompted concern among some neighbours. China has an intense relationship with Japan over Diaoyu Islands confrontation and an intense relationship with Philippine over Second Thomas Shoal Issue, showing that China is accelerating the pace of expansion of maritime rights and interests. Together with American, Japanese or Indian interference, the contradictions might be more intensified and there will be potential local geopolitical conflicts in the region.

Finally, there are financial risks and political risks. The Belt and Road Initiative is under the framework of many infrastructure projects. The related countries will encounter huge investment risks and it will take a long time before the projects bring profits. Some countries don't have good sovereign credit rating and some are in serious sovereign debt crisis with massive financial deficit and high unemployment rate, which will cause potential financial crisis for the participating countries. Meanwhile, some countries are in the process of transition period with unstable political government who lack continuity of policy. The operations in these countries are also subject to corruption problems as well as low efficiency problems.

Conclusion

The Great Game has become history, while The Belt and Road Initiative is the booming future awaiting countries along the regions to participate. The 21st century is a new era in which governments of all countries pursue peace, development, cooperation and mutual benefit. The Belt and Road Initiative is not a competition or conquest in nature and it is more than a new great game among China, America and Russia. It will help and promote the economic prosperity of the countries along the regions and it will strengthen exchanges and cooperation in areas of trade and culture, traffic connectivity and people-to-people.

The Belt and Road Initiative will bring new impetus to the global economy. With a broader and more in-depth regional cooperation of high standards among countries, an open, inclusive and balanced regional economic cooperation future can be expected. It is a positive endeavour for all countries to seek new models of international cooperation and global governance, and it will inject new positive energy into world peace and development.

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PAKISTAN'S RELATIONS WITH CENTRAL ASIA: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

Mohammad Dawood Sofi*

Abstract: *The emergence of energy-rich but landlocked Central Asian Republics (CARs) has fascinated Pakistan's interest to develop closer socio-political, cultural, and commercial ties with the Central Asian region. Fundamentally, the nature of Pakistan's interest (past and present) with CARs continues to be dominated by economic pursuits. Keeping this in view, the present paper attempts to explore analytically, the historical significance of Pakistan's relations with Central Asia plus the opportunities that will facilitate its geo-economic and political development in the region. While evaluating some of the significant areas of cooperation between Pakistan and CARs, this paper explains the reasons that halt the establishment of solid relations. Finally, the paper makes an overview of some of the vital factors that could develop or diminish the prospects for mutual cooperation. The paper suggests that Pakistan's progress in Central Asia largely depends on cultivating cordial relations and bringing stability through positive engagement with all the elements present within and beyond the country.*

Keywords: Pakistan, Central Asia, landlocked, geoeconomic, political development

The Context

Pakistan has experienced various transitions and transformations at political, economic, and social levels. One such example is the separation of the western wing of Pakistan, hardly after a gap of 24 years which gave way to the emergence of a new country—Bangladesh. Similar types of transformations or developments were witnessed when Soviet Union disintegrated. The collapse or the breakup of the Soviet Union in December, 1991 and the subsequent emergence of, among others, five independent republics in Central Asia¹ namely Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan² are looked upon as unprecedented historical events that signalled the commencement of a massive shift in the nature of the modern global politics.³ This major transition in the global political thinking has happened, says Professor Belokrenitsky, “along the lines of attributing lesser weight to military-cum-ideological factors than to economic-cum-cultural or humanitarian aspects.”⁴

Central Asian Republics (CARs) are recognized as the biggest landlocked region in the world contiguous to six large regional powers—Russia, China, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. Geopolitically the region is highly significant. The 19th century Great Game⁵ played between Britain and Russia was mainly explained in the context of the location and strategic significance of the region. The geographical location of the region was seen as a gateway to the Indian subcontinent and the Persian Gulf. The British writer Sir Halford Mackinder also acknowledged the geo-political significance of the region by asserting that the major factor in global power depended on to establish the control and power over the heartland of the Eurasian continent that consists largely of the present Central Asia and some European part of Russia.⁶ In the contemporary times, focus by both regional and global powers is being placed on how to develop concrete relationship with Central Asia in order to derive economic and other benefits.

Pakistan, in this case is a very strong contender keeping in view its historical legacy and the close geographical proximity with the region. More important is the factor that Pakistan can provide mineral rich Central Asian republics easy and short outlet to the sea for international trade activities. On the other hand, in the context of developing relations with CARs, Pakistan's interests are twofold: first, to export its products, especially manufactured goods and secondly, to import oil and gas from the region with an aim to meet its tremendous energy demands. In the same vein, CARs because of being landlocked are also seriously interested in looking for sustainable and long-term relations with those states that could help them in economic exploitation of their resources that the region has to offer in abundance.

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Pakistan and CARs Historical Relations: Historical Significance

The relationship between South Asia and Central Asia are not new, rather historical. It is a centuries old rich legacy and a celebrated heritage that represents productive religious, political, cultural, ethnic, and commercial exchanges between the two regions. Dietrich Reetz, academic adviser of the World Economic Forum claims that although many pre-and non-Islamic civilisations participated in these exchanges such as the Buddhist empires of India, yet it was the advent of Islam and its extension into Central and South Asia that strengthened these links significantly.⁷ This is an indication of sharing various things such as religion (Islam), culture, and ethnicity common between many groups inhabiting the two regions. Mohammad Anwar Khan argues that “Central Asia holds signal significance for the land and people of Pakistan, [because the make-up of] its culture and the society are Central Asian.”⁸ Hafeez Malik is straightforward in his admission:

[T]he Ghaznavide Punjab, including the north-western frontier areas and the Islamized Sindh was the first Pakistan established by Moslems of diverse racial strains in the border provinces of India. ... Culturally, however, these areas reflect then and today the synthesis of Arab and Persian cultures both steeped in Islam.⁹

As far as the question of common ethnicity is concerned, Belokrenitsky, amid observing a peculiar ethnic and ethno-cultural link between the two regions, explores that the Gujars while leaving their native habitat in the valley of Amu-Darya (the Oxus) moved to and inhabited the Indus valley and western belt of deserts stretching from the valley up to the Malabar Coast. The imprint of these mass migrations according to him is quite evident from the modern geographical names such as the state of Gujrat in India and the cities of Gujranwala and Gujrat in Pakistan.¹⁰

Together with religious, political, cultural, and ethnic ties, however, the two regions also strengthened commercial ties or trading networks, particularly with the emergence of Silk Route. This Route boosted tremendously the economic activities between the two regions as the merchants from South Asia established their outposts and stations in various parts of Central Asia. “The ‘most vibrant of the trading stations’ were towns between inhabited and uninhabited sections of routes, where traders rest and refuel before continuing onward ... such locations included [inter alia] the towns of Yarkand, Khotan, Kashgar, [and] Gilgit”.¹¹ Besides, the people of both regions were actively involved in conducting bilateral trade and for this purpose Afghanistan was used as a connecting point. During that period, Pakistani city, Peshawar, was the main trading centre and the *hindko* language of Peshawar served the objective of trade dealings between Central Asia and South Asia. The trade especially flourished *via* Samarkand-Multan to Lahore route.¹²

In short, the story uncovers that the multiple relations between South Asia and Central Asia are deeply rooted as the two regions were once part of the same political authorities. Therefore, in the current times, the importance and implication of the past links between Pakistan and CARs are being felt the most, particularly keeping in view the socio-political and economic situation within and beyond these two regions.

Basic Areas of Cooperation: Energy and Commerce

Central Asia without any doubt is a storehouse of energy but unfortunately landlocked geographically and on the other hand Pakistan is an energy deficit country but fortunately well placed geo-strategically. Such a complex situation makes either regions deficit in one aspect but at the same time rich in the other. The geo-strategic and geo-political location of Pakistan is extremely significant for the reason that it can provide the energy rich but landlocked CARs the shortest energy corridor for global export of its oil and gas reserves through Gwadar and Karachi ports. Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema argues that, “Pakistan provides a natural link between [the] SCO [Shanghai Cooperation Organization] countries to connect the Eurasian heartland with the Arabian Sea and South Asia.”¹³

This entails that in order to serve a bridge between Central Asia and South Asia and also to provide the easiest and appropriate route to transfer energy resources of CARs to the outside world, Pakistan's first and foremost priority will be to complete the construction of the Gwadar port as early as possible. It is an undisputed fact that this port will have tremendous economic impact on Pakistan economy for several reasons. Christine Fair (Associate Professor at Georgetown University Washington, D.C.), mentions that in the context of instability in the Gulf region and the fact that the Gwadar port is merely 250 miles away from the Straits of Hormuz through which some 40 percent of the world's oil supplies move, there is every possibility that the port may function as a stable access point for the Gulf ports.¹⁴ She further asserts that “given the strategic location

of the port, it can serve as an important regional shipping hub, providing the landlocked Central Asian republics, Afghanistan, and the Chinese Xinjiang region with much-desired access to the Arabian Sea.”¹⁵

Keeping in view the location and significance of Gwadar port and to transform it into a shipping hub, the real prospects lie in building and expanding land routes, linking various regions from CARs and Iran through Afghanistan to Pakistan and beyond. This objective, as such, can be achieved by building different but strong communication routes. The best available options for the two regions, in this regard, are road and railroad systems, gas and oil pipelines, and electricity transmission lines. The basic need to construct these communication links is: first, CARs are endowed with enormous hydrocarbon reserves; second, South Asia, including Pakistan, is an energy deficit region; and third, there is an acute need to find lucrative channels for the proper utilization of these abundant energy resources. Moreover, these various types of communication lines will also, as opined by Ziad Haider, augment immensely Pakistan’s coffers with significant profits in transit fees.¹⁶

While assessing the relations between the two regions, historically, after the disintegration of USSR followed by the emergence of five CARs on the world map, Pakistan immediately got engaged in exploring and establishing various means of diplomatic and trade contacts with the region. Thus, exhibiting what the analyst Fazal-ur-Rahman called a sign of over-enthusiasm.¹⁷ According to Reetz, the policy makers of Pakistan initially envisioned of making a Muslim security belt stretching from Turkey to Pakistan with Central Asia as the ‘buckle’ meant for providing ‘strategic depth’.¹⁸ For Pakistan, the structure necessary to realize its bilateral or multilateral objectives particularly economic loaded ones was the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO).

Overall, Pakistan yearned for developing warm relations with CARs. In so doing, it in a flash, apart from grabbing the opportunity that somewhat represented the commencement of the courtship, sent a high-level delegation in November-December 1991 that was commanded by the then Minister of State for Economic Affairs, Sardar Asif Ahmed Ali. This delegation comprising of among others government officials, industrialists, journalists, and analysts was the first high-level contact of its kind between Pakistan and CARs.¹⁹ The then Secretary General of Foreign Affairs, Akram Zaki, in his historic statement stated that the “recognition of the Central Asian states would open new vistas of bilateral cooperation with these states with whom Pakistan had close ties of history, faith, and culture.”²⁰

The convention aspiring for cooperation in different domains exchanged several MoUs (memorandum of understanding) with all of the CARs. As a mark of affable gesture, Pakistan offered some \$10 million each in credit to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan endeavouring to ‘establish joint ventures in cotton, textiles, garments, pharmaceuticals engineering goods, surgical instruments, telecommunications and agro-industry’.²¹ In this posturing, Pakistan was especially attracted towards Uzbekistan. While extending its cooperation, Pakistan reached to an agreement with Uzbekistan ‘to establish satellite communications, build highways, produce telecommunications equipment jointly and manufacture some of the materials for the Central Asian Railways.’²² Pakistan’s scope of cooperation with all the five CARs in general and with Uzbekistan in particular included a wide range of fields ranging from joint trade ventures, education, scientific, and technological cooperation to socio-cultural exchanges. Moreover, Pakistan also facilitated the programs concerned particularly with English language instruction, banking, insurance, accounting, postal and telecommunication system, and diplomacy.²³

The two way high-level exchange visits seeking to escalate the cooperation in several sectors between the two regions continue. Furthermore, these visits are not as frequent as they used to be in the first few years (1991 to 1993) of exchanges, yet—withstanding the tumultuous environment that is persisting in the entire region including Afghanistan and others—the efforts to realize the common objectives and programs still persist.²⁴ However, for a number of reasons these ventures and plans failed to prove successful as Pakistan would have liked. As a matter of fact, during the first few years of interaction between the two entities, many politicians in Pakistan, what Reetz has highlighted, firmly believed that “the ten member ECO could grow into a common [economic] market and a political Islamic bloc.”²⁵ Despite such a strong belief, the revenue between Pakistan and the ECO CARs hardly exceeded 1 percent of their mutual trade.²⁶ The ambitious ECO, hitherto, failed to materialize its various programs. Reetz has got it completely right that in the current times, “the ECO represents little more than a forum for debate that lives more from intentions than accomplishments.”²⁷

Rahman and Fair have presented some of the valid reasons responsible for failing of these initiatives and the ECO itself. They, inter alia, include: yawning gap between Pakistan’s intent and its capability (this

aspect covers lack of political consensus and control, inadequate communication system, and fewer financial resources); regional instability mainly in Afghanistan and Tajikistan; and Pakistan's support to Pashtun groups in Afghanistan against the Uzbek and Tajik ethnic groups.²⁸

However, since 2001 with the help of high-level delegations Pakistan in an effort to revive its policies and programs has once again found an opportunity to expand its engagement with CARs.²⁹ In this connection, some of the examples may be cited to substantiate these facts.

Musharraf, the former President of Pakistan, during his March 2005 visit to Uzbekistan showed his keenness in fostering bilateral trade relations, and such a posturing was responded positively by the other party—Uzbekistan, as its officials have maintained a similar interest. Likewise, in the very next month of the same year, Pakistan, in a similar bid, held a 'Made in Pakistan' exhibition in Tajikistan as an overture signal to revive the business engagements with the country.³⁰ Another major initiative that further exacerbated the relations of Pakistan with the CARs was its sustained military operations in Waziristan and other parts, since 2004.³¹

Previously harmed by some of the immature decisions and policies, these new set of relations are a healthy sign, showing Pakistan's renewed interest in promoting warmer relations with CARs. As noted, these new but proactive diplomatic initiatives may have far reaching consequences that will help Pakistan to grow as a hub of economic activities. The aforementioned explorative description, thus, signifies that both Pakistan and CARs continue to emphasize on fortifying the commercial and economic ties coupled with fundamental political goodwill necessary for further consolidation of the relations.³² So, primarily, historically, and traditionally, the areas of bilateral cooperation, especially of Pakistan, continue to be dominated by the options of energy and commerce.

Challenges and Prospects

The region, Central Asia, presents to its neighbours both economic opportunities as well as strategic challenges. Provided the energy rich resources and prospective markets of the region, the fact is that it is not merely the three big powers—America, Russia and China—who are interested in expanding their control over the resources of the region but the neighbouring countries such as Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, and India are also looking to materialize their politico-strategic and economic interests in the region. Unfortunately, in case of Pakistan, the things do not seem all that rosy notwithstanding its significant geostrategic location.

The first hindrance in the way of fostering warm relations is a geographical one as none of the CARs share land borders with Pakistan. Thus, this geographical disadvantage brings Afghanistan into limelight because Afghanistan not only shares a common border with Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan but also provides direct route for all the major possible channels of communication between Pakistan and CARs. On the other hand, Afghanistan for a long period continues to remain unstable, so until and unless normalcy returns back in the country, none of the economic or other objectives could be realized.³³ Thus, the unstable Afghanistan fatally affects the development of a symbiotic relationship between the duo.

Balochistan is Pakistan's one of the significant regions and its strategic vitality has increased manifolds since Pakistan started to construct deep sea port in Gwadar with the assistance of China. Pakistan's economic development and its role as a suitable corridor for Arab and Central Asian oil and gas resources primarily subjects on how the turmoil and instability in Gwadar and elsewhere in Balochistan is contended and how the grievances of the people are solved prudently that would help in gaining their trust. Otherwise, the stalemate in the region will continue to obstruct Pakistan from reaping the advantages of Gwadar port.³⁴

Not least significant is the Pakistan's role in Afghanistan that has a tremendous bearing on either boosting or damaging the interests between Pakistan and CARs. As a matter of fact Pakistan's relations with CARs have been complicated by its historic role and rhetoric in Afghanistan. In this regard, Rahman has rightly observed, that the country's earlier policy of supporting a Pashtun-dominated Afghanistan has severely dented Pakistan's relations with CARs, especially with Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, who share borders with Afghanistan.³⁵ Therefore, Pakistan's image problem creates, somehow, a sense of suspicion among the CARs who, consequently, exhibit reluctance in solidifying relations with Pakistan.

Among other obstacles that Pakistan faces is the financial constraint due to which it failed to realize many of the earlier economic ventures started in CARs. Pakistan's limited financial sources and lack of

technological prowess obstruct it from envisioning those essential projects that otherwise could attract various foreign investors and thereof could turn the country into a prosperous region. Furthermore, India's growing influence not only in CARs but also in Afghanistan is a major concern and challenge for Pakistan. As a matter of fact both India and Pakistan continue to remain locked in a strategic rivalry for a long period over the supremacy in South Asia. In this context, Pakistan cannot afford in any case to abandon its effective strategic planning for the region that would help to ameliorate its ties both with CARs and Afghanistan and decrease the influence of India in the region. Besides, the ongoing domestic politico-security turmoil in Pakistan and the failure to develop a strong foreign policy—complicating the equation even more—are other significant internal impediments that severely dent the country's various objectives, particularly expansion of economic relations.

However, all that is not so shaky because the other side of the coin demonstrates that Pakistan's relations with CARs are full of prospects. Indeed, there are huge impediments hampering the relationship yet, from the realistic point of view, Pakistan has a clear strategic geographical advantage over other countries in the region like India and China. Being at the crossroads between Central and South Asia, it is encouraging for Pakistan to play a bridge state role, linking various regions and providing easy passage to the landlocked CARs. The Gwadar port could serve this purpose effectively. However, the most significant prospect for Pakistan is the recent decision taken in June this year by SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization) to admit India and Pakistan as full members.³⁶ Reetz, in a discussion with the author, perceives SCO's decision and subsequent signing of Memorandum of Obligations by Pakistan as a new beginning and a major step to amplify mutual relations.³⁷ Moreover, the longstanding, age-old, and multifaceted cultural, historical, and ethnic bonds coupled with the common Muslim identity are other favourable signs for establishing comprehensive and strong bilateral relations that encompass political, defence, and particularly economic aspirations.

Conclusion

From 1990s up to now, the strategic objectives of both Pakistan and CARs remain unchanged. However, despite common objectives and so much to offer yet, both the regions so far fail to realize their interests. The euphoria expressed by Pakistan at the very outset when CARs gained independence soon changed into apathy because the country failed at multiple fronts to successfully accomplish its interests and thereof the interests of their partner. Pakistan even failed to improve its economic relations through ECO as well whose main objective was to improve economic relationship. The emergence of SCO proved fatal for ECO as the former tremendously eclipsed the effectiveness of the latter and as a result it dented very badly Pakistan's strategic interests. However, in the post 9/11 period because of the change in the regional dynamics coupled with the effective policy adopted by Pakistan, the country was able to recuperate to a certain degree its image both at regional and international levels. Such an environment helped Pakistan to re-cultivate its relations with CARs. Still there is lot to be done at multiple fronts and if the country fails to do so, then certainly it will jeopardize all the goodwill garnered so far.

Currently, the policymakers of Pakistan are engaged in formulating such a comprehensive-cum-effective policy indispensable to expand trade, transport, and energy linkages with CARs. But all the multi-billion gas, oil, and electricity projects will remain in stalemate as long as security challenges in Afghanistan, financial constraints, and political instability in Pakistan *plus* the absence of India-Pakistan composite dialogue aimed to solve all the pending issues (especially Kashmir issue) persist. Until and unless these vital problems are solved, CARs would largely remain inaccessible to both Pakistan and India; so will be their energy requirements, as they are neighbours and neighbours cannot run away from each other. In order to cultivate cordial relations with all the neighbours, the situation, therefore, demands that Pakistan should find an effective solution to all these inter and intra-regional problems; otherwise it will plague all its efforts leading to success.

Furthermore, Pakistan, whose policy still represents confusion, ought to develop such a strategy through which country's *plus* points are maximized and *minus* points are minimized or in other words constraints are metamorphosed into opportunities. This can be, perhaps, envisioned if Pakistan succeeds to identify its inadequacies in various areas and accordingly discovers effective measures necessary to overcome these shortcomings. In this regard, the setting up of a national agenda, fixing the country's priorities and notwithstanding political and/or other affiliations, can serve the interests to a great extent. This will immensely assist Pakistan to decrease and/or address many of the challenges and therein meet its various needs, besides engaging positively with the regional and global powers alike.

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- ² Qazi Shakil Ahmad, "Thoughts on the Symbiotic Relationship between Pakistan and the Central Asian States," *Pakistan Horizon*, 60, no. 2 (April, 2007): 39.
- ³ Muhammad Owais, "Pakistan-Russia Relations: Economic and Political Dimensions," *Pakistan Horizon*, 60, no. 2 (April, 2007): 125.
- ⁴ Vyacheslav Ya. Belokrenitsky, "Central Asia in the New Eurasian Geopolitics: Implications for Pakistan and Russia," *Pakistan Horizon*, 48, no. 3 (July, 1995): 25.
- ⁵ The Central Asian region, including Afghanistan, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was a zone of major contest between the two powers namely British-Indian Empire and Russian Czars. These two powers were making serious efforts for establishing their control over the region and this struggle in the history came to be called as the Great Game. See for more details, Major. General Shaukat Iqbal, *The New Great Game and Security Challenges for Pakistan* (Karachi: Paramount Book (Pvt) Limited, 2014), 21.
- ⁶ Lloyd Jensen and Lynn H. Miller, *Global Challenge, Change and Continuity in World Politics* (Florida: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1997), 146
- ⁷ Dietrich Reetz, "Flashpoint South and Central Asia: Strategic Aspects of a Historical Relationship," in *The Impact of Asian Powers on Global Developments*, eds. Erich Reiter and Peter Hazdra (Berlin: Springer Science and Business Media, 2013), 17.
- ⁸ As cited in Umbreen Javaid and Naheeda Naseem, "Prospects of Pakistan-Central Asia Economic Relations," *Journal of Political Studies*, 21, no. 1 (2014): 31. Further, the authors have termed Pakistan as the "Gateway to Central Asia" since centuries.
- ⁹ Hafeez Malik, *Moslem Nationalism in India and Pakistan* (Washington, D. C.: Public Affairs Press, 1963), 13.
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- ¹¹ Ab. Hamid Sheikh, "Trade between Kashmir and Central Asia via Traditional Corridors of Ladakh," *International Journal of Culture and History*, 2, no. 2 (August, 2015): 8.
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- ¹⁴ C. Christine Fair, "'Pakistan's Relations with Central Asia: Is Past Prologue?," *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 31, no. 2 (April, 2008): 214.
- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ As cited in Ziad Haider, "Baluchis, Beijing, and Pakistan's Gwadar Port," *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* (Winter/Spring, 2005): 95–103. Vide Fair, 214.
- ¹⁷ Fazal-ur-Rahman, "Pakistan's Evolving Relations with China, Russia and Central Asia," in *Eager Eyes Fixed on Eurasia-Russia and its Neighbours in Crisis*, ed. Ewashita Akihiro (Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University, 2007), 226. Rahman has also highlighted a vital point that while Pakistan was quick to establish links with the region, it failed to fully realize the complexity and diversity of the region, where each republic has had differing perspectives and divergent national interests.
- ¹⁸ As cited in Dietrich Reetz, "Pakistan and the Central Asia Hinterland Option: The Race for Regional Security and Development," *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, 17, no. 1 (Fall, 1993): 36. Vide Dianne L. Smith, "Central Asia: A New Great Game?," *Asian Affairs*, 23, no. 3 (Fall, 1996): 154-155.
- ¹⁹ Rahman, 226; Fair, 211.
- ²⁰ As cited in *Dawn*, December 21, 1991. Vide Rahman, 226.
- ²¹ Cited by Fair, 221.
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ Rahman, 226-227; Wasi, 21-22.

²⁴ Fair, 221.

²⁵ Reetz, "Flashpoint South and Central Asia," 19.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Rahman, 226-227; Fair, 221-222.

²⁹ Fair, 222.

³⁰ Ibid. In a similar fashion, Pakistan is continuously attempting to solidify its relations in different areas with the other three CARs as well.

³¹ For more information on the major battles launched by Pakistan against Militants, see Ismail Sheikh, "Timeline: Major offensives launched by army against militants," *The Express Tribune*, June 15, 2014. Available at <http://tribune.com.pk/story/722391/timeline-major-offensives-launched-by-army-against-militants/>

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³⁶ "Pakistan becomes full member of SCO," *The Express Tribune*, June 25, 2016. Retrieved from <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1129845/pakistan-becomes-full-member-sco/>

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SRI LANKA - A HUB IN ASIA: DOES IT A WINNING GOAL?

Ajith Balasooriya*

Abstract: *The motto or later 'a policy', "Sri Lanka as a hub in Asia" was introduced by the Rajapaksa government's election manifesto - Mahinda Chintanaya: Vision for the Future- in 2010. The policy is basically fivefold: aviation, commercial, energy, knowledge and naval. However, based on the experience of the last five years, it seems that the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) moves slightly away from the original goal of being "a hub in Asia" due to "Regime Change" in January 2015. However, the critical issue is whether the GoSL and its major stakeholders recognize the strategic importance and political value of the task that is before them. The lack of strategic approach to achieve the goal of becoming the hub of Asia remains uncertain.*

Keywords: GoSL, Geopolitics, Strategic trends, Hub in Asia, South Asia

Introduction

The motto and later a 'policy' pivot, "Sri Lanka as a hub in Asia" was introduced by the Rajapaksa government's election manifesto – Mahinda Chintanaya: Vision for the Future in 2010. The policy was basically fivefold: aviation, commercial, energy, knowledge and naval. Due to its political and socio-economic validity, the policy initially attracted International development partners, policymakers, stakeholders (state and non-state actors) and ordinary people in the country.

However, based on the experience of the last five years, it became apparent that the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) in attempts to revamp the post-conflict economy and establish national cohesion and stability had lost the initial intent to make Sri Lanka a hub in Asia. This was climaxed by the "regime change" that saw the emergence of a new political leader; President Maithripala Sirisena in January 2015.

This paper posits that to get back on track, the GoSL needs to undertake constructive work in the context of potential opportunities and constraints to achieve this goal. Already, evidence emanates from the subsisting internal peace and security, peacetime security forces, highly educated young and skilled work force, rapid economic and infrastructure developments in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, Sri Lanka's geographical location and "positive support" from the western led international community is an added advantage.

Examined here also is the lack of strategic approach to achieve the goal of becoming the hub of Asia. Specific identified factors of conventional bureaucratic practices and inadequate technical expertise came to the fore in negative impact from local and International levels. Hence, this research paper relying on secondary documents, examines the potentials of the above set goal and existing challenges in the region as well as the external regions that the GoSL continues to face in the pursuit of becoming the "hub in Asia". This is within the context of growing external contestations for geopolitical and strategic dominance by China, India Japan and USA. Given the manifest limitations stemming from resources available, this study confined itself to secondary documents. Hence, the review of literature was adopted within narrative analysis of historical and contemporary global context.

The first section of the paper gives an introduction. The next section gives a brief theoretical discourse on the geo-politics. It further includes sea power theory in geo-politics and its links with non-traditional security issues. The third section gives Sri Lanka's potentials to be the hub in Asia in line with fivefold hubs. Fourth section analyses five main constraints that are negatively contributed to Sri Lanka to be the regional hub. The last section draws the conclusion based on the above discussed four main sections.

A Sea Power of Indian Ocean

In order to analysis of the Sri Lanka's ability to be a hub in Asia, theory of geo-politics or theory of sea power is appropriate. In addition to that contemporary non-traditional security matters (Human Security issues) are also a key issue to being a hub in Asia. Being in a center of the Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka gains a politically powerful position while facing multiple challenges from both regional and extra regional powers. In

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contemporary international strategic discourse geo-economy plays an important role in order to enhance the leverage of any county. The geopolitics theory, in this study postulated by Mahan¹ is known as sea power theory.

Mahan was convinced that beginning with the Age of Exploration, the nation-states that achieved great power status did so because they mastered sea power.² He further contended that the mastery of commercial activities that rely on seaborne transportation was critical not only in times of war but also in times of peace. In line with Mahan's argument, post-conflict reconstruction nature shows the proper use of Sri Lankan naval passage in order to gain its economic advantages. Mahan's fundamental assumption regarding the importance of sea power is well matching in the context of Sri Lankan geo-politics aftermath the conflict.³

Ullman⁴ argued that history has changed Mahan's assumptions. Economic competition no longer is leading to a scramble among the great powers for access to overseas markets. The competitions which characterized such relationships even through the nineteenth century no longer prevail. Furthermore, Ullman maintains that technology has erased any notion of geographic borders and control of access.

Commercial expansion through trade was also essential in Mahan's viewpoint.⁵ Unlike Turner, Mahan did not see the frontier as a fixed if slowly changing boundary that represented the farthest reaches of a country's influence or its presence. Mahan was conceived of sea power as necessary not merely to military success, but as instrumental in sharing economic success. Mahan's proposal that countries should use their resources when not at war to construct a maritime apparatus that was capable of promoting commercial activities as well as military ones was unique in the era.⁶

Believing that sea power was central rather than peripheral to the world history of the preceding two-and-a-half centuries, Mahan emphasized the highway aspect of the sea and argued that any country that was dependent on the world economy needed to be able to secure access to the world and could only do so if no enemy fleet dominated the seas.⁷ This gave credence to many of Mahan's theories and established him as something of a pundit in terms of geopolitical policymaking. This, therefore warrants Sri Lanka's further deliberate attempt to secure its sea passage not just with military means but with economic and diplomatic weight or protect from non-traditional security threats in the region. It is important to note here that at the last stage of the Sri Lankan conflict, the GoSL was able to protect its sea passage against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and its transformation of military hardware and other illegal affairs with Eritrea, India, and Southeast Asian countries. The GoSL's attempt was successful and could able to totally cut down the weapon supply lines from Europe across Southeast Asia. It further contributed to enhance national security of both India and Pakistan too. Even though India and Pakistan are historical foes in the region, no one was against the GoSL's military approach to eliminate year's long terrorist menace. However, at the end of the Sri Lankan conflict, India's domestic politics-Tamil Nadu state resistance- created a political threat to the Indian national government and forced India to leave from Sri Lankan military assistance. Following that India refused to make military assistant at the last stage of the conflict. In addition to that USA also made a passive approach with the GoSL and its authoritarian behavior at the last space of the conflict as well as post-conflict reconstruction.

As a result the GoSL moved to Pakistan and China. China has been playing a vital role in the Sri Lankan conflict and post-conflict reconstruction by being one of the main military and financial partners for years. Pakistan which is a close ally of both China and Sri Lanka maintains very close socio-economic and military ties with Sri Lanka. To this end, Pethiyagoda⁸ notes, Washington, Delhi and Beijing's interest in Sri Lanka is justified given its location at the heart of the Indian Ocean, which along with the Western Pacific will form the center of future world politics, strategy and economics.⁹ In addition to that "the growing energy concerns for both India and China have provided additional incentives to continue with naval modernization. Energy security and naval strategy are inextricably linked."¹⁰ In traditional and non-traditional security means, Sri Lanka is central to China in its massive import of energy and export of goods.¹¹

Apart from that this study argues that china's strategic involvement in Sri Lanka does not limit to its traditional security interests in Indian Ocean against India and USA but also includes non-tradition security threats that China has been experiencing in last two decades.¹² Food security including portable water is one of the major issues in contemporary China faces. Even though China gains its commercial and other investing grounds in Africa, the study observes that china has a close interests in Sri Lanka as its own hub to connect West and Far East without any interrupt from the regional and extra-regional powers. It further helps China to counter India's "Link-West" and "Look-East" economic and diplomatic policies.

Pethiyagoda¹³ again argues in terms of the drag to court Sri Lanka which points to the significance of the 'pearl' of the India Ocean thus USA policymakers should also note that Sri Lanka's maneuvering between China and the West may have been noted by Middle Eastern governments.¹⁴ It seems that since January 2015, Sri Lanka is being incorporated as a base of operations in the USA military strategy to curtail Chinese expansion across Asia and the world.¹⁵

Sri Lanka's Pluses

Sri Lanka passed the ADB's lower middle income threshold guideline of US \$2,000 per capita in 2008. It further predicts that Sri Lanka will be ready to reach upper-middle-income status at the end of its political transformation in 2015.¹⁶ In 2010, IMF promoted Sri Lanka from the list of Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust (PRGT) eligible countries to middle income emerging market status.¹⁷ Sri Lanka has been continuing its relatively fast paced economic growth as a result of the terminated conflict in 2009. The growing economy of the country made its position at the highest in the regions of South and the Central Asia.¹⁸

Policymakers have identified potentials of making Sri Lanka as the regional hub of Asia.¹⁹ Some of the key sectors the government is looking at driving its hub status are tourism, energy, commerce and transportation.²⁰ Rosen states that Sri Lanka adds novel experience in tourism since its decades-long civil war ended in 2009.²¹ As a tourism hub, Sri Lanka is an island with area of 65,610km², which has so much diversity for a small island in terms of pristine beaches, beautiful hill country, plenty of flora and fauna, heritage sites with a history spanning over 2,500 years and is a friendly nation known for its hospitality.²² The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index Ranking 2015 ranks Sri Lanka 63 out of 141 countries around the world.²³ These factors make Sri Lanka an ideal gateway for a holiday and global travel networks further recommended and promoted Sri Lanka as one of the best travel destinations in the globe. It further proves Sri Lanka Tourist Development Authority's annual reports. Sri Lanka Tourism attracted a record one million tourists to the country for the first time in history in 2012. Tourist arrivals surpassed its target of 950,000 to record 1,005,605 arrivals in 2012.²⁴

Energy is the one of important hubs that Sri Lanka is going to be. Being a topical country, Sri Lanka benefits a number of renewable energy sources. Hydraulic, wind and solar powers as well as deposits of fossil oils are made high potentials to meet local energy requirements which leads to maintain healthy economic growth. It is said that proper utilization of renewable energy sources could be an export income for the county.²⁵ On the other, Shehan²⁶ added, the Government has also realized the importance of diversification, especially as it has increasingly become dependent on fossil fuel-based energy sources, which generally has strong correlations with each other in prices. However, since its origin, Sri Lanka could not reach its national demands of energy consumption due to prevailing structural issues in the energy supply policies of the GoSL. The study highlights that as a main constrain to reach the goal of energy hub in Asia.

Aviation and naval are another potential areas to be developed in the context of regional as well as extra-regional. Being a focal point of the international air and sea communication lanes, Sri Lanka could be attracted by growing economies of the region. China, India and South Korea could utilize Sri Lankan air and naval ports for their international commercial activities which are leading to Africa, Europe and Middle East regions. China could enhance its logistics facilities in Sri Lanka to meet its local food demands as well as naval maintenance.²⁷ The GoSL's post-conflict rebuilding activities have focused to develop the country's national and domestic air and naval ports in order to increase their operation capacities to meet high demands of tourism and commercial activities. Development of roads and railways is also linked with air and naval ports of the county. Furthermore, Sri Lanka has initiated a state level discussion with New Delhi to expand its aviation and naval facilities into the region. However, due to Sri Lankan politics as well as Indian regional politics do not allow to reach a positive end of the discussion.

Having one of the highest literacy rates in the region, Sri Lanka aims to be a knowledge hub in Asia. It is evident that keeping a high literacy rate does not ensure to produce a potential skilled young employee to meet both local and international human resource demands. Therefore, Sri Lanka needs to produce skilled labour through its education system. In particular, Sri Lankan university education is closely linked with the hub of knowledge. Therefore, the state led higher education particularly in the university system is to be enhanced into the regional as well as international levels. As Jayasinghe²⁸ observes that one of the key needs of state universities of Sri Lanka would be to produce KSAM graduates (graduates with proper Knowledge, Skills, Attitude and Mind set) with high employability and communication skills in English. Student population, well-

established university system, trilingual (Sinhala, Tamil and English) instructions and university infrastructure developments have positively contributed to reach the goal of knowledge hub. However, politically motivated decisions have negatively affected to the high quality young labour force in the county.

Towards Hub in Asia

Sri Lanka has already completed five years since its policy document was launched. So far Sri Lanka does not reach the goal of hub in Asia in overall. This study identifies five main constraints to be a hub in Asia. Politically motivated conventional autocratic administration and its workforce have negatively contributed to the goal. The outdated administrative structure relatively failed to take decision at right time by evaluating both internal and international trends.²⁹ There could not be seen any constructive mechanism to link with the above mentioned fivefold hubs.³⁰

Second constraint is lack of technical knowhow among the stakeholders who are directly involved in the task. In particular, the social and economic policies should be designed by experts who have sound knowledge and experience on geo-political and geo-economic trends in the region. However, recent developments of Sri Lanka reveal that lack of experts in the relevant areas have negatively contributed. Those who have expertise on the international and local economics as well as political trends have been neglected in the mainstream discussion. Third constraint is wide spread corruptions and malpractices of the GoSL at all levels. It has been set Sri Lanka far beyond the original goal of the fivefold hub. Range of corruption and misuse of public money limit the scope of the original goal. Penetrating of rule of law and human rights is the fourth constraint. International community including European Union (EU), India and USA has negatively influenced the foreign policy of Sri Lanka. Till the end of Rajapaksa regime, the above mentioned members of the international community were against the Sri Lankan policy initiative of hub in Asia. Bias relations with selected countries in Asia and the rest of the world made high cost for Sri Lanka in its long-term economic developments such as export restriction on seafood was imposed by the EU and USA. USA brought and passed number of human rights resolutions against Sri Lanka at the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC). It also negatively contributed in to the above mentioned set goal. Last constraint is widespread environmental pollutions over the country has contributed to create unhealthy civil society in general. Virgin forests and beaches of the country have been polluted due to unhealthy mega economic activities. Deforestation is one of the main concern among citizen of the country.

Conclusion

The Sri Lankan policy to be the hub of Asia is initially attracted authorities, policy makers, stakeholders and ordinary people in the country. However, based on the experience of the last five years, it seems that the GoSL moves slightly away from the original goal of being “a hub in Asia” due to “Regime Change” under the newly elected government in January 2015. However, to get back on path, the GoSL needs to do constructive work in the context of potential opportunities and challenges to achieve this goal. The study reveals that Sri Lanka has potential opportunities such as the existing internal peace and security, peacetime security-forces, highly qualified youth force-led skilled labour, rapid economic and infrastructure developments, Sri Lanka’s strategic geographical location in order to achieve the goal. However, the critical issue is whether the GoSL and its major stakeholders recognize the strategic importance and political value of the task that is before them. The lack of strategic approach to tackle regional geo-political developments remains uncertain. Conventional bureaucratic practices and inadequate technical expertise negatively impact the task at both local and international levels. Therefore, this study concludes the potentials of the above set goal and existing internal and external constraints in the region as well as the external regions that the GoSL continues to face in the pursuit of becoming the regional “hub in Asia”.

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POTENTIAL OF CHAHBAHAR AND GWADAR PORT AS GATEWAY TO INTER-REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

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Abstract: *Gwadar and Chahbahar are upcoming neighboring ports that can be considered as sister ports. These ports if work in collaboration will be game changer for entire poverty and war stricken region. Chinese interests in Gwadar and Indian interest in Chahbahar coincide at Pak-Iran border. Due to Geo- strategic location of Pakistan, its neighboring states; India, China, Afghanistan and Iran are dependent on it for inter-regional trade and connectivity. It is projected that if these ports operationalize and start working at their full swing, it will change the destiny of Iranian and Pakistani Baluchistan, the region which is one of the most poverty stricken and war torn area of the region. Furthermore, China, India and Pakistan will get access to landlocked Central Asian markets. Central Asian products will get alternative market other than Russia. Most importantly, all these states will access global business sector through economic corridors and extended railways beginning from Gwadar and Chahbahar. Proper technical and technological assistance and imparting of technical knowledge to local people will have positive impact on socio-economic conditions of the area adjacent to these ports in particular and to region at large. Peaceful resolution of all disputes between India and Pakistan and Iran and Pakistan is highly recommended for realization of this dream, of changing lives of one third of the humanity that reside in this region.*

Keywords: Interregional Connectivity, Chahbahar port, Gwadar Port

Introduction

This article is an attempt to identify the potential of Chahbahar and Gwadar port for inter-regional connectivity. Analysis of hurdles and bottlenecks have been carried out in order to evaluate the role of these ports in strengthening ties between regional states. This is qualitative study. Comparative, analytical and historical methods have been employed to carry out this research. Secondary sources have been used for data collection.

Regional Connectivity

Regional connectivity can be achieved by spurring ports and airport infrastructure development. Construction of ports, airports, and the development of inter-regional transport lines reduce logistics costs and prices of goods, and spur the development of economic growth centers throughout the region.

Transport connectivity has recently been considered in studies of inter-regional trade. It increases trade flows between trading partners. Improving ports and port access has the greatest potential to improve connectivity between South Asia and Central Asia. Sea trade makes up the bulk of international trade in the two regions in value terms, and the share in volume terms is even higher, since items with lower value-added tend to move by sea.¹

Wignall has pointed that “Transport corridors are normally anchored by ports at each end, and it is likely that the greatest benefits of increased connectivity will increase to the catchment areas of those ports. To be sure, such improvements will benefit all trade in and out of a given port, and cannot easily be associated with growth of trade between these two regions. In general, one can only assume that port improvements will result in a proportionate increase in trade with all regions. Still, reducing transport costs and increasing regional welfare should be the key economic objective”.

“Sea trade, especially container trade, is closely associated with manufacturing supply chain networks, a key driver of growth in the region. In comparison, the benefits from increased land connectivity via remote border crossings are likely to be much smaller. Asian Development Bank argues that, in relation to the concept of corridor development and international trade, it is desirable to focus on ports as gateways to such corridors.

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For example, many GMS corridors have a port at one end and, more importantly, the amount of trade moving along those corridors invariably increases on those sections closest to such gateway ports”.²

Role of Ports in Inter-regional Connectivity

This study focuses mainly on Chahbahar and Gwadar ports. These ports are most directly connected with South Asian–Central Asian trade, but they suffer from numerous bottlenecks, including shallow depth, antiquated facilities, inadequate road and/or rail access, and low operational efficiency.

“The geographically contiguous regions of South and Central Asia comprise a number of landlocked and least developed countries, natural resource rich countries and some of the fastest growing economies with highly complementary economic structures. Yet intraregional trade within which the European Union, owing largely to poorly developed transport links that do not allow them to benefit from geographical proximity”.³

Potential of Gwadar and Chahbahar Ports

Both Gwadar and Chahbahar ports have an extraordinary geostrategic and geopolitical importance. Economically and strategically both are fundamental ports which give unhindered access to the Indian Ocean where around 100,000 boats and around 70 percent of the world's petroleum trade passes every year. The vital essentialness of these ports is obviously clear from the way that these ports are situated at the junction of worldwide ocean dispatching and oil exchange courses while connecting three regions that are: South Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East.

“The word “Gwadar” is the combination of two Baloch words “Guad” and “Dur” which means “Gate of Wind” or “Gate of Air.” Gwadar port of Pakistan is positioned on Arabian Sea coast in Baluchistan province. It is a fishing village 267 west of Karachi at the mouth of gulf of Oman. It is 672 km from the Iranian border. Before the emergence of Pakistan as an independent and sovereign state, Gwadar was gifted to Sultanate of Oman by its controller Khan of Kalat as gift to his daughter on her marriage with prince of Muscat”⁴.

Pakistan's government purchased Gwadar back from Oman government for \$3 million in 1958. At that time, it was a small underdeveloped fishing village with the population of a few thousand. On July 1, 1977 Government declared Gwadar as part of Baluchistan and as it officially became part of Pakistan. In 1993 it developed into a major port city and connected it with Pakistan's highways and railways network. Former president of Pakistan General Pervez Musharraf inaugurated the port in March, 2007.

“Gwadar is considered as the winter capital of Baluchistan in 2011. It along with Faisalabad and Islamabad has been developed under urban master plan. Except Gwadar port Pakistan has only two commercial ports Karachi port and Bin Qasim port. Need for another substitute port was considered due to the destruction of Karachi port in 1971 war. So this Gwadar port has potential to serve as an alternative to Karachi in future. Therefore this port is visualized to convert into a regional hub serving income and outgoing commercial traffic to Middle East and Gulf countries. Gwadar port is also the direct route to landlocked Central Asian States, Afghanistan and gateway to Central China. Similar ambitions and goals are fulfilling by Chahbahar port for Iran, as it seeks to build up a substitute channel to Bandar Abbas port”⁵.

Gwadar port has ability to generate 2.5 million jobs and billions of dollars in profits. It is also estimated by the Gwadar development authority that within the span of 30 years about 1.7 million people will move to Gwadar. Therefore Pakistan has declared it a “duty free port and free economic zone”. Gwadar has completed its first phase of construction. A separate allocation of one billion rupees was made in the budget of 2004 – 05 for construction of export zone and Gwadar industrial city. This port has greatly benefited the hundred percent development, tax holidays for 10 years, ownership prize, flexible labor regulations, subsidy on utilities, and freedom of taxes on imported goods and availability of jobs.

By making Gwadar a center of regional trade and through different investments like banks, hotels, store houses and factories Pakistan will emerge as an attractive place for outsiders. Through this Gwadar port plan Pakistan will also catch the attention of foreign invest mentors and use their significant investments into its most underdeveloped provinces for the construction of roads and railways which link Pakistan with the region. Gwadar will not only help in socio economic boost but will also transform Pakistan's navy into a force that can compete regional navies. It is Gwadar's strategic geographical location, which will help Pakistan Navy not to

be get blocked in case of any major war in future. Like Karachi port Gwadar port is about 450 kilometers away from Indian Border.

Gwadar port has completed its first phase of construction in 2002-2006. Now second phase is under construction. After the completion of first phase Gwadar port began its cargo handling and first ship carrying 60,000 tons wheat safely from this port. This port project is improving the living standards of locals, offering jobs and opening windows of opportunities to the Baluchistan province. It will also provide significant revenues for national economy to meet the challenges facing by the country. A bill was introduced in National Assembly of Pakistan regarding Gwadar port which is called as Gwadar port authority act 2010.

The construction of Gwadar port is just one element of the Greater Gwadar plan. Network of roads which connect the Gwadar port with Karachi, Pasni, Ormara and Turbat are also part of this plan. Highways linking Karachi with Gwadar, Pasni to Gwadar, and Ormara to Gwadar and Turbat to Gwadar will be built in phase two of this greater Gwadar plan. This network of roads will finally connect with China through Indus Highway.

Baluchistan which is rich in natural resources but poor in economic development is the largest province of Pakistan. Gwadar is the first major international project of Baluchistan province which gains the attention of world and in future will play important role in the development of Baluchistan. It is the first mega project and hub of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Baluchistan

In short the two states and their partners have very diverse aims regarding their ports. As China plans to use land links to Gwadar port for the transportation of Middle Eastern oil and goods through Pakistan to its far western provinces. On the other side India, wants to use Chahbahar as a route to trade with Central Asian States and Afghanistan through Iran and to counter its emerging rival China. But neither country is short-sighted as they know that geopolitical importance of their ports guarantees that whichever port gains prominence will be a lucrative venture and game changer in the region.

The Iranian port of Chahbahar is situated in the south of Sistan and Baluchistan of Iran's province. It is situated in the north-east of Oman Sea and north-west of Indian Ocean. Location of Chahbahar port at the mouth of the Gulf of Oman gives it with enormous strategic importance. In addition, it is located 300 kilometers east of the Strait of Hormuz, offering Iran direct entrance to the Indian Ocean. Its location outside the Hormuz Strait means that even if this premeditated waterway were to be closed by rivals of Iran, Chahbahar would continue to function. It lessens Iran's accessibility to global pressure immensely. Owing to its geo-strategic position Chahbahar port is projected to be a port of regional and global significance.

Port of Chahbahar is nearer to Karachi and Mumbai than Bandar Abbas port, the other key port of Iran. The erection of port of Chahbahar would lessen some of the pressure on Bandar Abbas port of Iran as well as potentially the cost of shipments to the Central Asia, eastern parts of Iran and landlocked Afghanistan. Because of its establishment and entrance to Indian Ocean as well as Persian Gulf and Oman Sea, it would become the center of trade, business, and navigation. The Chahbahar port was also a relatively small town prior to chosen for infrastructural enlargement. The Chahbahar port's master plan was brought up in 1973 but due to some causes this plan was delayed after the Islamic Revolution of 1979 due to the lack of financial resources. But it was revived and re-energized during the Iran-Iraq war, when transportation through the Hormuz Strait was haphazardly paralyzed. During that war the government of Iran observed the importance of Chahbahar in Iran's imports and exports. For revival of its economy, Iran created the Chahbahar Free-Trade Industrial Zone (FTIZ) in 1992. When expansion of Chahbahar port as a trade and transshipment hub was first discussed a decade ago, three regional players— Iran, Afghanistan and India— were involved in the plan. India and Iran are functioning side by side on this port project as India is the second leading consumer of Iranian oil and for long remains Iran's trusted collaborator in the region. In 2014, the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, reached at ultimate point to support Chahbahar port project on the shores of the Arabian Sea. It remains a historic development in the viewpoint of Asian security, and demonstrates a confident novel direction in Indian foreign policy. It also offers the West a trustworthy partner to help negotiations with Iran.⁶

The other glowing aspect of Chahbahar port is that it promises a widening of opportunities for landlocked Afghanistan. Because the route to the Chahbahar port is not only secure and more cost-effective but will also noticeably moderate Afghanistan's dependence and reliance on its neighbor Pakistan. This port also offers India a chance to penetrate Iran and to identify its economic and strategic aspiration in landlocked Afghanistan

and the Central Asian Republics (CARs). India is also viewing trade with Europe through this port and the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) as this route is expected to be 40 percent shorter and 30 percent less expensive than its existing trade through the Red Sea-Suez Canal-Mediterranean Sea routes.⁷

Recognizing the Chahbahar's full potential India and Iran have built a web of roads and railways to link Chahbahar port with Afghanistan. Therefore both partners have constructed a road going from Chahbahar through Iranshahr and Zahidan to Milak on its border with Afghanistan. There is eight hundred kilometers distance from Chahbahar to Afghan border city Zaranj, which gives access to the country. India has completed its work on the Zaranj-Delaram road in 2009 that connects with the Garland Highway that further links the main cities of Afghanistan⁸.

Chaudhry elucidated, 'Emphasizing the dedication of India to the Chahbahar port project, the Indian government announces a strategic investment plan to transform berths into a container and multi-purpose cargo terminal. On the other hand Iran recommended making the province a free-trade zone and offers India special tariffs for its exports to Afghanistan and Central Asia. By escalating the port, and the transport communications that connects it, Iran expects to curb the instability in Sistan and Baluchistan, and especially, offer a supplementary trade route to access Afghanistan and Central Asian region. The goal of being a vital transit point is attached with Iran's desire to be seen as a major regional player'⁹.

Hameed explained that, 'for the realization of this goal Iran not only already taken the proposal to develop infrastructure but has also busy with other states to boost its own transit potential. In order to achieve this goal Iran has signed a Memorandum of understanding (MoU) with landlocked Afghanistan and Tajikistan for the construction of railway lines, along with water pipeline and energy transmission lines. Iran is also keen to extend the Khvaf-Herat rail line to be connected with the railways of Central Asia. Iran views Chahbahar construction as an essential step to maintain the overall security of the region and its interests there. India used Chahbahar port for the first time in 2012 to transport 100,000 metric tons of wheat to Afghanistan as part of its humanitarian assistance. India has been uplifting the enlargement of the Chahbahar port and therefore promised to allocate US\$ 100 million in 2013 towards the up gradation of the port'¹⁰.

India received its first batch of commodities containers of dry fruits through the Chahbahar Port from Afghanistan in 2013. Iran has invested close to US\$ 340 million in up warding and escalating the capability of the Chahbahar Port as part of its general policy to guarantee the economic development of its backward south-eastern region. At presently Chahbahar Port has a capacity to hold 2.5 million tons per annum, which Iran would like to boost up to 12.5 million tones. The achievement of this dream is sought to be achieved in five phases. Currently about 49 percent of this Free Zone is allocated for industry, 26 percent for trade and service activities, and 25 percent for tourism and for residential purposes. Some of the incentives presented at the port including tax immunity for 15 years on investments made in the area, importation of machinery and raw materials free of cost and free repatriation of capital and profits.¹¹

The government of Iran recently pronounced that Iran will spend \$25 billion in the Chahbahar project in order to convert it into one of the magnificent energy hub of the world. That is why Chahbahar is swiftly becoming one of the most essential ports in Asia. In addition, the port would offer Iran a chance to become imperative player in commercial shipping, offering access to the Iranian market to global and multinational companies that would otherwise be not possible¹².

Taneja noted that "Chahbahar is nowadays scheduled to turn into a tourist destination and a center of higher education. The International University of Chahbahar, established in 2002, offering degrees in business, computer science and engineering in collaboration with the London School of Economics and University of London. Enlargement of Iran's Chahbahar port will heighten its emergence as a most significant transshipment hub and its strategic location is expected to change the region's geopolitics. A recent step towards the development of Chahbahar port was taken place when Indian transport minister Nitin Gadkari signed Memorandum of Understanding with Iranian government on May 6, 2015".¹³

Chinese Interest in Gwadar port

China is following Strings of Pearl policy by controlling ports in different states, China is increasing its geopolitical power and existence in this South Asian region. Chinese growing naval power along the Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) that link China to Africa and Middle East is the leading hazard that became a challenge for maritime power of US. Because the strategy of "string of pearls" consists of a number of naval

facilities and sea ports which will assist Chinese navy to answer and counter US interferences in this region. This policy will also make sure to guard the trade means between Middle East, China and or surely Europe. To build a deep port and navy base in Gwadar is the “pearl” of “Chinese Strings of Pearl Strategy”. Gwadar port is more result oriented than Shanghai port due to fewer distance as Gwadar is only 2500 km and Shanghai port is 16000 km from Chinese industrial zones. Gwadar port also facilitates China to scrutinize India and US naval collaboration. It also permits China to counter US and Indian interference, hegemony and dominance in Indian Ocean.

The port can also enlarge Chinese strategic weight among Persian Gulf and South Asia region. By following its strategy named as “Chain of pearls” other than Gwadar port Chinese has other “pearls” in Myanmar, Cambodia, Bangladesh, South China Sea and Thailand¹⁴. For China, Gwadar with an impressive head begin once again Chahbahar, could be a completing point for pipelines in its oil and gas store network from the Middle East and the Africa, permitting it to discover a route around the swarmed nip point that is the entry of Hormuz. Gwadar additionally opens up the projection for a pipeline passageway conveying oil and gas to China from the Middle East as a trade course to transport oil around the Indian Subcontinent and through the continuously more questioned regional waters of the South China Sea. The way will be conservative, less hazardous and give Beijing more noteworthy flexibility of activity to pursue its control over the South China Sea.

Indian Interest in Chahbahar Port

India is an emerging super power of the world. Indian economy is also depends upon the crude oil and petroleum products from Persian Gulf. India has showed its apprehension and concerns regarding the Pakistan’s Gwadar port project by saying that China desires to build its supremacy in the South-Asian region by entrance in the warm waters through Pakistan. Therefore India is making mutual ties with Iran by helping to construct the Chahbahar Port and also establishing friendly dealings with Afghanistan to encircle Pakistan and also to counteract the dominance of China in the region. Hence there are following objectives of Indian foreign policy:

- ✓ Counter Pakistan’s extension into West Asia.
- ✓ To use landlocked Afghanistan as an entrance to Central Asia
- ✓ To lessen the reliance of Central Asia on Pakistani Gwadar port
- ✓ To contend and counterbalance the mounting Chinese control in Gwadar

The government of Iran has officially declared the Chahbahar as a “Free Trade” and “Industrial Zone”. Therefore Indian government is making preparation to construct a “900- km long railway track” in order to link Chahbahar port to the resources-rich Hagigah area of landlocked Afghanistan. Iran and India are jointly cooperating with each other for the up gradation of Milak-Zaranj-Dilaram route from Iran to Nimroz province of Afghanistan and to link it with “North-South” corridor. The port can work as doorway to India in Afghanistan, Central Asian region and beyond.¹⁵.

Iranian Interests in Chahbahar Port

Zeeshan analysed that “Global economic pressure and stress on Iran due to its nuclear programme will be lessening due to the construction of Iran’s first deep sea port with the help of India. This port not only increase the Iran’s geo-strategic position but also converting Iran into the core transit link for the most cost-effective transportation corridor for European-Indian Ocean trade. That is the reason that Chahbahar port is the core point of Iran for the development and extension of transit routes among states situated in the northern areas of the Indian Ocean and Central Asia. Iran’s response to Pakistani Gwadar Port can be seen in the construction of his own port so that it would counter Pakistan with controlling access points and trade from Afghanistan and Central Asia. In this case Iran has a better position over Pakistan due to its close relations with the Central Asia, chiefly with Afghanistan. Iran allows landlocked Afghanistan to use its Chahbahar with low taxes and Port fees. It has been observed by Pakistan that Chahbahar Port would pose a giant financial hinder for Pakistan. As a result of North-South contract, India determined to offer massive support and assistance for the advance development of Chahbahar Port”¹⁶.

“In this context, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Iran, India and Afghanistan for the expansion of the transportation and transit infrastructure. The ultimate end of the plan is to link Chahbahar to Central Asia, Afghanistan and Russia; and, finally, reach St. Petersburg. India and Iran are

also discussing about a prospect of laying natural gas pipeline along the seabed of the Arabian Sea by-passing Pakistan. Neighboring Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan, Iran has an established geographical advantage by giving access to Sea for the Central Asian States".¹⁷

Afghanistan's Interest in Gwadar Port

Afghanistan is a hub of resource in South Asian region. However it has few exports i.e. agriculture, steel, textiles etc. and is still reliant upon Pakistan and foreign assistance and aid. As Afghanistan is landlocked state and have no direct access to sea that's why Pakistan provides a secure trade route through its port of Gwadar to Afghanistan. Why Gwadar port holds importance for Afghanistan can be understood by the following points:

- ✓ Gwadar provides a shortest route to Indian Ocean and is cost effective.
- ✓ The local Pashtun's have economic and religious associations with Pakistan.
- ✓ Pakistan provides Afghanistan a direct and easy access to warm waters as Afghanistan is a landlocked country.
- ✓ Due to US-Iran tensions, Afghanistan is convinced to trade through Pakistan.
- ✓ Afghanistan will get facilities and opportunities through this route.
- ✓ Gwadar provides a shortest route to Indian Ocean and is cost effective

India is also standing at higher position among the leading bilateral contributors to Afghanistan and has provided aid of about US\$ 2.5 billion towards the re-establishment of the country since 2001. India is enthusiastic to advance its existence in Afghanistan in future and to increase mutual trade, which at current stands at approximately US\$ 700 million. For the achievement of this objective Chahbahar is compatible to realize this goal. Port of Chahbahar, in that perspective, minimizes some of Afghanistan's dependence on its neighboring Pakistan as it provides an alternate entrance to sea.¹⁸

Discussion and Analysis

Troika of India, Iran and Afghanistan signed strategic agreements on Chahbahar Port located in Southern Iran. These pacts are for the development of Port as well as to provide transit and transport by laying a railway line connecting Afghanistan to India. Once this project is realized Chahbahar Port will connect India to the land-locked Afghanistan, giving Kabul an alternate route to the Indian Ocean. Moreover, India will gain full-fledged cargo handling facilities on a large scale on the Gulf of Oman. Three of these newly strategic partners will acquire not only territorial but also marine routes for the improvement of trade, sharing resources and to have secure access to the Arab states. Also one should not forget how the resource full, advantageously located central Asian states having direct route from Afghanistan, will be available to India after the development and functioning of Chahbahar. This tripartite definitely challenges the existing regional set up by upsetting China and Pakistan in their joint venture of Gwadar Port. This strategic development is undoubtedly a geopolitical game changer in regional politics. However, despite all the claims by the Indian and Iranian authorities that Chahbahar is no threat or rival to Gwadar Port, still it brings various queries and challenges to the region. One cannot ignore that the development of Chahbahar Port will allow India to bypass Pakistan (India will not rely on Pakistan for opening of trade routes reaching Afghanistan and then Central Asian states anymore). Through Chahbahar India is also motivated to counter Chinese expanding influence in Indian Ocean.

The port is located at the securest and closest route to Central Asia and Afghanistan market. Its proximity to the largest energy resources in the world makes it the apple of Indian eyes.

Nevertheless, the port is well-connected to other cities of the country as well with a wide network of roads as well as air links. Through the activation of the port Iran, India and Russia would establish a multi-model transport link connecting Mumbai with Saint Petersburg, providing Europe and the former Soviet Union Republics of Central Asia access to Asia and vice versa. Iran and Afghanistan have signed an agreement to give Indian goods, leading for Central Asia and Afghanistan, preferential treatment and tariff reduction at Chahbahar Port.

On the other hand, the very same region is eyeing movements of Pakistan and China as both are working fervently on plan to develop Gwadar to accommodate foreign trade of the Central Asian Republics and the Xingjian, Sichuan provinces and the Tibetan region of China. The construction of a rail and road network

between Gwadar and Xingjian also seems imminent given the growing Sino-Pak economic ties. Gwadar port besides opening the large avenues for the people of Mekran engaged in fishing and agriculture will also facilitate easier and time efficient transportation. Gwadar Port has all the capacity to generate massive revenues for Baluchistan. It is poised to be a trade hub, once road and rail links are established to other parts of Pakistan as well as Afghanistan and Central Asia.

The detainment of Indian maritime officer Kulbushan Yadav, alongside a colossal spy organize doing insubordinate exercises in Baluchistan and Karachi, indicated some Indo-Iranian nexus. Later, capture of some Afghan spies in Baluchistan promote revealed Indo-Afghan organization together. Additionally, rambling of Mullah Mansur assist brought such truths into the consideration, which reinforced supposition with respect to Indo-Afghan-Iran nexus. Indeed, this vital rivalry speaks to the force of Indian frenzy on account of Pakistan China financial hall. Absolutely, Chahbahar can influence the courses of events of CPEC, forbidding profiting from the normal distinct advantage.

Road connecting Afghanistan and Iran are under control of Taliban. Peace and resolution of all conflict is required to achieve full benefit of these ports. Insurgency in Baluchistan is another hurdle is achieving inter-regional connectivity.

Conclusion

In the contemporary era states design different strategies to peruse their personal interests and advance their relations with other states. Same is the case with South Asia that is a rich region with historical rivalries and become the playground where not only regional powers but global powers are also fighting for their own influence, pressure and control. Pakistan and Iran are offering different incentives for the investors, companies and the governments who are working and investing in these ports. A New Great Game is appears to be taking place in Indian Ocean and naturally resources rich Central Asia. Every player of New Great Game is following the policy of realism and trying to secure its own interest, maintain its hegemony and curtailing the influence of other states. In this New Great Game China Pakistan economic corridor (CPEC) and Iran's International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) at Chahbahar will not only prove as "game changer" but also resulted in real development with multifaceted dimensions, with many players who are viewing the "economic corridor" as a direct threat to their interests. In short though, serious economic, logistical and political, problems remain but for Central Asia one of these two ports, or indeed both, will likely become central links to world markets. With the full operation of Gwadar Port, there are bright prospects for Baluchistan to be in par with the rest of Pakistan.

Pakistan is striving for peace in the region and does not want that militants spoil its economy. It aspires to establish best relations with Afghanistan and Central Asian states. In the wake of such developments, both Chahbahar and Gwadar can equally benefit from Central Asian business. As Iranian president have declared both ports as sister ports. Pakistan will have to deal with its internal security dilemma to become an effective trade corridor for regional connectivity as recently, Iran has shown interest in joining CPEC.

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EURASIAN INTEGRATION THROUGH NEW SILK ROADS: OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSIDERATIONS

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Abstract: *In the past few years, a number of initiatives have been initiated by major powers of the world in the name of 'revival of the silk road.' These include: the US sponsored New Silk Road Initiative (NSRI); Russia's North-South International Transport Corridor (coupled now with Eurasian Economic Union); and more recently, China's Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB). All the three initiatives have their own connotations, designs and objectives. As is well understood, the present-day central Asia becomes the main passage/recipient, in all of these three schemes launched by three major powers. This paper seeks to analyze the contours of these initiatives – and attempts to underline the political, economic and socio-economic implications they bring for the countries and people of five Central Asian nations. What are, and what could be the ideal responses from Central Asian Republics – governments and the civil society – would be presented as recommendations of the paper.*

Keywords: Eurasian Integration, great powers' competition, New Silk Road Initiative, North-South International Transport Corridor, Silk Road Economic Belt

Introduction

International and regional moves for enhanced regional activity started taking shape towards the end of 20th century, in the name of revival of Silk Road, with varying degrees of interests shown by regional and global players. The ancient Silk Road draws its global fame primarily for its overland connectivity of China and west Asia (onwards to Europe) through this landmass. During the medieval times, in particular, were period of bustling economic, commercial and cultural activity for this part of the world, mainly so for the region starting from Xi'an in China to the eastern shores of Caspian Sea. However, this overland connectivity was disrupted during the Tsarist conquests of Central Asia, and later has remained stand-still during the seven decades of Soviet Union, of which the five present day Central Asian Republics were a part. Nowadays, the idea of a Silk Road connecting from the Eastern Central Asia to the Western Eurasia has gained new attention, due to the increasing aggressive policies of regional and great powers in the Eurasian region, United States, Russia, China, India and Iran. In this context, this paper address these initiatives to understand the political, economic and socio-economic for the five Central Asian Republics.

Geopolitical Competition and the Revival of Silk Road

To have an idea as to how the security, economic integration and development is shaping in Central Asia, first we have to look at the prevailing situation and emerging developments.

As the five countries making present day Central Asia move near to celebrating 25th anniversaries of their 'independence' from the former Soviet Union; several critical developments and transformations with wide-ranging implications are either taking place, or about to take place in and around the region which will impact the security and development landscape of the region in more ways than one. Firstly, after more than thirteen years of an unending campaign with vague objectives, the US and NATO forces are set to complete a drawdown from Afghanistan by the end of 2014. This drastic cut down in the security forces will certainly have a number of bearings not only on the security of Afghanistan itself; but to a considerable extent, it will be affecting upon the security of the wider regions of South and Central Asia as well.

Secondly, there are a host of moves aimed at revival of the famous 'Silk Road' that has been at the center of commercial and socio-cultural activity and interaction in this region, and provided links between the

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The authors couldn't appear in the conference but very kindly sent the research paper.

East and the West in several ways, through several routes. These include the New Silk Road Initiative (NSRI) backed by the US/West (and undertaken by their regional allies); the Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB) and other overland connectivity/cooperation moves by China; and finally, the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) as well as North-South Corridor being pushed by Russia.

It would not be wrong to say that all the three major powers backing such initiatives have primarily their own economic and political interests to serve through these initiatives. The West, led by the US, is encouraging its regional allies primarily India and also Japan and South Korea to some extent, to take major roles – thus trying to ensure that China does not have a free ride. China, on its part, rich in cash, seeks to boost its investments, diversify and ensure unhindered supply of energy to meet its skyrocketing demand, and also to carve enlarged markets for its never-slow manufacturing sector. Russia in this situation does not seem to be holding back and is trying to achieve multiple objectives including keeping its close politico-military cooperation (except for in case of Uzbekistan); further boost its economic interaction with the region once considered as Moscow's backyard, not only to continue its influence over the region's energy exports but also linking the same with its own energy exports.

Now we come to the question that how these initiatives mentioned above are seen in Central Asia – by the governments as well as by intellectuals. So far, by and large, the leadership of CARs has welcomed all these renewed initiatives by the three leading powers of the world and regional allies in case of the US. CARs, on their part, quite naturally look for multidimensional approaches to move ahead economically and no country would like to put all its eggs in one basket. However, the caution is there and intelligentsia is also raising the point that while generally all these initiatives look good and seem to be beneficial, but it may also be destabilizing for the region if a new kind of struggle between the global powers ensues in any way, which cannot be ensued to avoid in the prevailing and emerging circumstances.

Last but not the least, the continuing instability in some of the countries threatens the whole region. While the two large member countries, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, may seem to be relatively stable, internally and externally, the situation of the two other neighbors Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan has been worrisome both on external and internal account. Border tension runs high between these two countries especially in past few months. The region, as a whole, except for the exception of Kazakhstan stands at a very low level of economic and human development.

It would also be pertinent to note for the emerging scenario in this region that sooner or later, all but surely at least three countries of the region – Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan would be passing through a political transition. It may be few years from now; yet, it will indeed not be something to ignore completely *vis a vis* the region's years ahead. Lastly, it is a sad fact that extremist and violent tendencies have been on the rise in the countries of the region – due both to internal and external factors – in the past few years.

The above mentioned initiatives are not all what is happening with the region. There are several other international, regional and bilateral initiatives involving more than one countries of the region in terms of economic cooperation, connectivity and development. However, this paper keeps its focus limited to some of the major initiatives only – particularly the happenings in the name of 'Silk Road.'

As to the US drawdown from Afghanistan – it also involves leaving some of the excess military equipment used in Afghanistan in hands of Central Asian regimes, some of whom have a brutal track record of using the military might against their own unarmed people and to suppress any visible signs of political dissent. The second dimension to the drawdown is the while leaving prior scaling down its own role in Afghanistan; the US is planning to transfer major responsibilities *vis a vis* Afghanistan towards India. This factor, considering the hostile relationship between Pakistan and India, is bound to raise several concerns in Islamabad.

Now, as we look rather closely at the region and possibly emerging scenarios in the wake of several parallel initiatives being taken by the [declining and emerging] global powers – in the name of revival of the ancient Silk Road and at time ostensibly promoting the interest of regional integration.

The following critical questions are emerging for the decisions makers and scholars interested in the region: Whether these initiatives are reflective of the needs and aspirations of the people of the region? Why in case of the US backed NSRI, important neighbors of Central Asia like Iran and China are being excluded, bypassed? Are the CARs ready – politically, economically and militarily – to face the situation that will emerge as a result of these multiple moves? Will these apparently competing 'Silk Roads' usher the region in a new

era of economic cooperation, development, integration or will these moves results in yet another great game for control and influence over the region.

An American Project: New Silk Road Initiative (NSRI)

The New Silk Road Initiative (NSRI), backed by the U.S. /West and undertaken by their regional allies, took some momentum years ago. In 2011, in parallel with the civilian and military efforts in Afghanistan, then U.S. Secretary of State Hillary invites Central Asian leaders to “work together to create a new Silk Road. Not a single thoroughfare like its namesake, but an international web and network of economic and transit connections. That means building more rail lines, highways, energy infrastructure”¹. By trying to put Afghanistan at the center of its regional efforts, U.S. proposes a new network of roads, railways lines, and pipelines connecting the South and Central Asia. Next to the stabilization of Afghanistan, U.S. tries to promote the “Northern Distribution Network” (NDN) through infrastructure and trade development – namely connectivity – towards Afghanistan and the wider region².

In this context, given the key status of India as major U.S. regional ally in South Asia, India is committed to play a leading role in this initiative while, Afghanistan and Pakistan assume a fundamental role of providing the land linkage to the landlocked CARs, towards the warm waters as well as to south Asia and South East Asia. According to the Department of State, the New Silk Road initiative links Central and South Asia in four key areas: regional energy markets, trade and transport, customs and border operations and business. However, these project generates more criticism than real expectations. Experts analyze that this initiative was more an exit strategy of the Obama administration in relation to Afghanistan, that the New Silk Road unnecessarily “geopoliticizes” standard trade policies, that includes Afghanistan as a Central Asian actor – heavily rejected by CARs or that the project will primarily benefit central elites, and not the overall Central Asian societies³. The slowly retreatment of U.S. from Afghanistan is bringing several consequences, in which the American force in the region is becoming less powerful, and their security interests in the region are being delegated to regional partners. In this context, NSRI is an attempt to maintain regional influence by other, less coercive tools.

Russian’s Ambitions: Coupling the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) with the North-South International Transport Corridor (ITC)

In the case of Russia, the regional ambitions to maintain its place as the leading regional power has attached the newborn Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) with the North-South International Transport Corridor (ITC). While many had argued that Russia is losing its influence, both economic and political over this region with the enhanced role of first the West and now China, things have changed for better once again, and quite fast, for Moscow in this context.

After the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union (May 2014), the EEU was established since January 2015 as a regional governmental organization that promotes economic integration. Even if today the membership does not cover all the CARs – only Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic and Russia, next to Armenia and Belarus –, this regional organization attempts to cover all the Post-Soviet space in the next years, or at least those closer to the Russian regional leadership.

Similar to other “Silk Roads” Initiatives, through the North-South International Transportation Corridor have more history. Established by Iran, Russia and India at the St. Petersburg Summit (2000), ITC is a multi-modal transportation project with the purpose of promoting transregional transportation cooperation by connecting from the Indian Ocean to St. Petersburg via the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea. This initiative also involves Iran and India as major partners while initially bypass part of all CARs – unless Kazakhstan –, posing an alternative route from the U.S. and Chinese projects. Lately, the incorporation of Tajikistan and Kirgizstan in addition to Kazakhstan, bring the CARs into the project unless they have a more peripheral role than the Caucasian and South Asian countries.

Chinese Emergence in Central Asia: Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB)

At the start of 21st century, China has started to be taken as a major economic power with soon to assume a pivotal political role at global stage. Decades ago, China’s opening up to the outside world and policy of liberal economic reforms started in 1979 by Deng Xiaopeng, was soon followed by the turmoil in (1980s) and disintegration of Soviet Union in 1991. China’s eastern regions by then had already started enjoying the fruits of opening up of their markets. However, China’s central and western region remained under-developed

as compared to eastern and southern coastal regions', until late 1990s. However, during the last years started a grand strategy and development program aimed at uplift of its under-developed southern, central and western regions – with focus on Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR). It may be pointed out here that the situation in China's own part of Central Asia – the Uyghur Autonomous Region of Xinjiang – is becoming quite worrisome with Chinese authorities pressing upon the local ethnic population and several violent incidents taking place over past few years particularly since 2009 riots in Urumqi.

Center of economic (and subsequently political also) power had started shifting to Asia again, primarily because of China's miraculous rise. In this context, China perceives that Central Asian Republics (CARs) had an important position on the regional map, owing primarily to their vast energy resources. China was quick to move towards and offer an embrace to newly independent CARs, but the initial progress remained slow. CARs energy resources, expanding consumer markets, vast virgin territories and unmatched Chinese wealth provided an excellent match for enhanced economic and commercial cooperation. By the beginning of second decade of 21st century, China and CARs were closely interwoven economically.

The main tool of the Chinese Grand Strategy toward the CARs is the Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB) and other overland connectivity/cooperation has increased her role in the region. Chinese idea of Silk Road was first mooted in the then Chinese premier Li Peng's visit to the region in mid 1990s. The New Chinese leadership embarks upon the 'One Road One Belt (OBOR)' strategy. The fifth leader's generation took power in Beijing, with Xi Jinping as president and Li Keqiang as prime minister, in March 2013.

The 'One Road One Belt (OBOR)' strategy involves two great initiatives: the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road (announced by Xi in his visit to Indonesia in October 2013) and the Silk Road Economic Belt (announced by Xi while speaking at Nazerbayev University in Astana during his visit to CARs in September 2013.) The 'One Road One Belt' strategy was unfolded by Beijing amid slowing Chinese economy – termed as 'New Normal' for Chinese economy – ostensibly seeking new markets, expanding the production bases, and also to ensure energy security. It is not only a road, but a complex network of oil pipelines, road and rail connectivity, warehousing and display facilities of large scale, joint ventures, special economic zone – passing through CARs onwards to Russia, West Asia and Eastern Europe. CARs are not the only partners in SREB, but it encompasses countries and regions as near to China as Nepal, and as far as Eastern Europe (though not ending at Eastern Europe as some of Chinese are also linking it as far as London.) CARs, however, are on the immediate radar of Chinese policy makers and a prime focus for them as the primary goal – unstated though – of SREB is to expand the market and connectivity of Western China further west. The Belt also would provide Beijing access to Eastern Europe and the Middle East through CARs, Afghanistan and Iran, primarily.

From a CARs perspective, the Chinese Grand Strategy and the SREB project presents a series of benefits such as increasing funds to finance infrastructure through bilateral and multilateral arrangements (Silk Road Fund, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, SCO Development Fund/Bank etc.); transforming CAR into a trade and transit hub for and from China in terms of investment, renewed infrastructure and enhanced connectivity; potential financing for further development of energy and other natural resources; motivation for investments from other global investors and cumulative opportunities in terms of employment and quality of life.

Challenging the Big Players: India and Iran in the Energy Great Game

Behind the regional great projects, the energy's great game, specially related with the pipelines competition, play a central role in the determination of the "routes" and allies. For example, China has been investing in oil and gas pipelines from CA, Iran and Russia to connect the Xinjiang, especially in the Urumqi, Kashghar and Daqing. From these hubs, pipelines could diverge in two broad directions, to China itself or to India: first, to the main markets of Northern India, via Kunming to Northeast India, or via Leh, Srinagar or Manali to Indian markets. Thus, Eurasian energy via China can give India the diversified sources of hydrocarbons and even provide a much-needed catalytic boost to economic ties thus paving a way for amicable settlement of Sino-Indian dispute. At the same time, India increases her dependence and vulnerability in relation to China. For this reason, India have always looked for energy diversification.

Central Asia is rightly perceived as India's extended neighborhood. It borders Xinjiang (a region contiguous to Aksichin and Tibet) and Northern Areas of Azad Kashmir or "Pakistan-occupied Kashmir", separated by narrow Wakhan corridor in Northern Afghanistan. The region acquires a buffer and bridge

dimension *vis a vis* India's strategic security interests. As a buffer, the purpose of India in Central Asia is: first, to prevent the creation of a 'Jihadi radical belt' allied to Pakistan running from the Middle East to Eastern China. The rise of Pakistani sponsored terrorist training in Afghanistan has exacerbated concerns of an inverted Jihadi crescent, stretching from Kashmir to Afghanistan. Second, China and India share a 'common geo-political space' in Central Asia. Beijing's close military relationship with Pakistan, growing influence in Central Asia and Iran provide traction to China's strategy of restraining India. Presences of Chinese companies and troops in Northern Areas of Pakistan that border Jammu and Kashmir, Xinjiang and Central Asia, have added a new dimension to Indian security concerns.

The region provides an alternate axis to Afghanistan. As a bridge, Central Asia provides a 'near abroad' market for India's emerging export industries and overland routes to the rich resources of Russia and Middle East. The region possesses significant energy supplies at relatively short distance from Indian markets from Central Asian Republics via Afghanistan and Pakistan. There has been some headway on the \$7.6 billion TAPI gas pipeline. This 1,680 km pipeline would run from Dauletabad gas field in Turkmenistan to Afghanistan, from where it would run alongside the highway from Herat to Kandahar, and then via Quetta to Multan in Pakistan and into Fazilka in Punjab. India is a full member of the project since February 2006. ADB has already proposed various structures of the project for attracting investors, contractors and financial institutions. Turkmenistan has committed to provide sovereign guarantees for long-term uninterrupted supplies to Pakistan and India. Afghanistan, India and Pakistan had signed a framework agreement to buy gas from Turkmenistan in April 2008. However, future of this project is predicated on conducive security scenarios in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Another actor, unless still a secondary one, is Iran. Accessing Kazakh Oil through Iranian Route, a likely pipeline will pass from Kazakhstan via Turkmenistan to Iranian port of Bander Abbas, from where it can be shipped to India's Western shores. The Reliance refinery on India's West coast is versatile enough to process a range of crudes. India's ONGC already has equity stakes in the Farsi exploration block in Iran. Extending this relationship to acquire transit facilities for Kazakh oil should be explored. However, the intentions of Iran has not materialize yet, even if Iranian leadership has invested strong efforts to increase their regional leverage in all their regional neighborhood from Central Asia to Middle East.

Conclusion

For sustainable peace and development of the region, the present and future leadership of the Central Asian Republics (CARs) and global powers – particularly the two powerful neighbors China and Russia and U.S. as a major extra-regional power – will have to take holistic approach to deal with the wide-ranging issues the Central Asia is confronted with – not just sticking to moves which ensure interests of the individuals countries, or are focus only on certain areas ignoring the wider implications. Neither can the region and its countries afford to become a new battle-ground for the declining and emerging powers of the planet.

It has to be avoided that all the above mentioned moves being made in the name of revival of the ancient combining to result in "one mega road to Central Asia's instability" It should not become a "new Silk Road of illegal trade in arms, drug trafficking" and other unlawful activities such as spread of extremist and violent tendencies. It should also be safeguarded that the new Silk Road does not become a new highway of 'transporting' inter-state conflict in the wider region.

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Academic Session: 5

Peace and Security-Centric Cooperation-I

Session Chair: Dr. Sinderpal Singh

SOUTH ASIA-CENTRAL ASIA CONNECTIVITY: PROSPECTS OF COOPERATION IN THE SECURITY AREA

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Abstract: Search for security has been among the principal drivers of efforts for regional integration in Central Asia in post-Cold War and post-Soviet Union period. For example, Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), established in 1991 under the leadership of Russia, and comprising the former republics of the erstwhile Soviet Union, including five of the six Central Asian Republics had the promotion of defense ties as one of its main objectives. The objectives of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), formed in 2001, also include the “promotion of cooperation in political affairs” among the member states, and “to safeguard regional peace”. In fact, during early years, security was the prime concern of the founding members of SCO. The extension of SCO area of operation to South Asia by according full membership to Pakistan and India has created a new regional security imperative. The formation of Quadrilateral Cooperation and Coordination Mechanism (QCCM) by Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and China in a recent meeting of High Military Leadership at Urumqi (Xinjiang) indicates the urgency felt by regional states for an appropriate response to this imperative. Considering that the regions of South Asia and Central Asia are faced with multiple security threats, this paper aims to identify and discuss the challenges to the internal and external security of the South Asian and Central Asian states and assess the prospects of cooperation among these states to meet the challenges.

Keywords: Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), security threat

Introduction

South Asia and Central Asia are two major sub-regions of Asia. In political terms, the two regions are well marked but present some difficulty, including the problem of overlapping when an attempt is made to define them geographically. For example, as a geographical region, Central Asia extends to Mongolia, Xinjiang and Afghanistan. But as a political region, it encompasses a far smaller territory – namely the five former Soviet republics that achieved independence in 1991. Similarly, Iran, China and Myanmar are not the regular members of SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) but in geographical terms, all three of them qualify to be part of South Asia which extends from the Straits of Hormuz in the south west to Malacca Straits in the east.¹ Afghanistan is a member of SAARC as well as part of Central Asia as a geographical region. For the purpose of this study, however, we will focus on the two as political regions – South Asia constituting the eight member countries of SAARC, and Central Asia comprising the five republics of former Soviet Union.

Ancient Links

There existed close historical, cultural, ethnic, commercial and religious links between these two regions. One of the routes of ancient Silk Route that connected China with Europe through Mesopotamia, Iran and Central Asia passed through the territories now constituting Pakistan. From times immemorial, trade along with the movement of people, ideas, knowledge, innovations, and arts across the then known world had been going on through this network of roads, called the Silk Road. However, the arrival of Vasco De Gama, a Portuguese sailor at Calicut on the western coast of India in 1498, heralded a new era – an era of colonialism in South Asia – which changed the course of history of the region. The advent of colonialism in South Asia culminating in the establishment of British imperial rule in India, led to a complete reorientation of political, economic, and cultural relations of South Asia towards Europe through sea route. Such profound has been the economic impact of five hundred years of colonial domination over the South Asian countries, that despite being grouped into over 30 years old regional cooperation organization of their own-SAARC, intra-regional trade has not advanced beyond 06 percent. But, as the world enters the 21st century, new imperatives for the establishment of linkages between Central Asia and South Asia in the fields of energy, trade, and culture are emerging. The response of regional actors to these imperatives is encouraging and a number of bilateral and multi-lateral

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mechanisms have come into being to promote physical, commercial, and cultural connectivity between the two regions.

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) formed in 2001 with Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan is one such mechanism. Its recent decision (taken in its 15th Summit Conference in Tashkent in July, 2016) to accord regular membership to Pakistan and India reflects its resolve to expand its operation beyond Central Asia to other regions. The extension of its membership to Pakistan and India has brought SCO to the shores of the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. The gas pipeline project TAPI (Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India) is another example of establishing energy link between Central Asia and South Asia.²

In November 2015, energy ministers of Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan signed a final agreement to lay transmission lines for the import into Pakistan and Afghanistan of 1300 Mega Watt of electricity under Central Asia-South Asia (CASA)-1000 Project. The project is estimated to cost \$953 million and is expected to be completed in 2018. The World Bank has consented to finance the project. Out of 13000MW electricity, Afghanistan will get 3000 MW, and the remaining 1000 MW would be transmitted to Pakistan. In order to ensure the completion of project on schedule, the four countries, namely Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan have set up an Inter-Governmental Council.³

Although China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is bilateral project between Pakistan and Peoples Republic of China, it has important regional and global dimensions too. The project billed as the biggest investment venture undertaken by China outside its national frontiers, envisages investment of \$46 billion on the setting up of energy projects and building of infrastructure (railway lines and roads) between Pakistan's Arabian Sea port – Gwader and Kashghar – capital of western Chinese autonomous region Xinjiang. Apart from China and Pakistan, countries such as Iran, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Central Asian Republics, and Belarus have expressed their desire to get associated with CPEC.

These initiatives aiming to promote intra-regional and inter-regional connectivity between South Asia and Central Asia have created new imperatives for regional security. This paper will identify and discuss various frameworks agreed to by the countries of South Asia and Central Asia to forge cooperation in order to jointly confront regional security threats. While doing so the paper would also identify those common security threats and the problems and prospects of cooperation against the common threats to their national security.

Theoretical Framework

While discussing the security dilemma faced by the countries South Asia and Central Asia, a wider definition of security would be used, incorporating both traditional and non-traditional security threats. For a considerably long time, the field of security thinking had been dominated by neo-realist thinking, but the end of Cold War changed security landscape. The neo-realist perspective is considered to be “too narrow to be relevant for explaining wide ranging security challenges of the post-Cold War era.”⁴

The end of the Cold War and disintegration of the Soviet Union led to the emergence of new security challenges. Some of these challenges can be identified as proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, international terrorism, regional conflicts and ethnic nationalism. In an article, *Challenges to Global Security*, V R Raghavan categorizes these challenges into (1) military challenges, (2) Economic challenges, and (3) Environmental challenges.⁵

Military Challenges

The end of Cold War and replacement of post-Second World War world order based on bi-polarity with a multi-polar world has not led to a safe or secure world. On the contrary, regional conflicts, insurgencies, ethnic nationalism, the rise of extremism, and international terrorism and intra-state and inter-state conflicts pose new threats to national security. Since security and peace of a state cannot be separated from the security and peace in rest of the world, therefore, turmoil, insurgency, and conflict in one state is bound to affect the secure and peaceful environment in other states. “With the growing inter-dependence in the present globalized world, the actions of one state have the capacity to influence and alter the actions and policies of other states and not surprisingly, a threat in one part of the world is now capable of challenging the peace and stability of the far flung areas.”⁶ There is no doubt that the end of Cold War has brought an end to East-West confrontation, regional conflict, regional tensions have continued unabated in the form of serious threats to national security, especially

for the neighbouring states. The response to these threats is re-arming and arms build-up, lot of which is observable in South Asia and Central Asia.

Economic Challenges

The post-Cold War world is dominated by globalization, which has expanded the role of private capital. As explained by Raghavan, "Globalization is mostly equated with technological advancement, integration of global financial markets, growth in international trade, and rapid modernization. But this so called economic growth heavily weighs down on countries that lack adequate resources and are struggling to survive either an ethnic conflict or poverty or disease."⁷ The growing disparity between nations resulting from globalization is responsible for illegal migration, human smuggling and terrorism. Since these problems assume the form of trans-national challenges, therefore, there is a dire need for cooperation among the nations to jointly confront them.

Environmental Challenges

No state alone can control the quality of environment; a successful effort to stem the degradation of environment, therefore, requires cooperation among nations. The countries of South Asia and Central Asia face serious environmental challenges in the form of climate change, scarcity of water, floods, deforestation, emission of carbon gases, over population, and earthquakes. Damage to environment, whether by human activity or by nature, poses a serious threat to global security. This is why international community is focusing on means to confront the threats to environment posed by global warming, ozone depletion, 'deforestation and acid rain. It is estimated, according to Raghavan, that deforestation, primarily the conversion of forests to agricultural land, continues at alarmingly high rate-about 13 million hectares per year' and most environmentalists believe that exploding populations will put unsustainable stresses on regional ecosystems, thus bringing about the collapse of security systems."⁸

Political Challenges

Law and order, security and safety of the individuals, respect for human life, protection of fundamental human rights, good governance, responsive and responsible state, rule of law, participatory democracy, and transparency have become vital ingredients of stable societies, and thus essential requirements for national and global security. As it is said that foreign policy of a country is a reflection of its domestic politics. Domestic governance involving the issues of greater transparency, elimination of corruption, decentralization, inclusive citizenship, use of violence for political ends, whether by state or non-state actors have gained greater relevance for national as well as global security. Use of violence for political purposes either at domestic or trans-national levels has become principal threat to global security. Over centralization, curbing genuine political activities by placing restrictions on political parties and allowing rampant corruption give rise to extremism and separatism. These forces pose serious threats to national and global security.

The countries of South Asia and Central Asia are faced with all or some of these military, economic, environmental, and political challenges. As they move towards greater regional cooperation, it would be worthwhile to see how they plan to cope with these challenges. There are both multi-lateral and bilateral frameworks/mechanisms within which intra-regional and inter-regional cooperation for regional security is taking place among the countries of South Asia and Central Asia.

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) arose out of the initiative taken by Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan in 1996 to meet the challenges created by the disintegration of the Soviet Union. In 2001, it was renamed as Shanghai Cooperation Organization with the accession of Uzbekistan as a new member. SCO is not a military organization, but security is one of the areas of its main concern along with the objective of promoting regional cooperation for economic development among its member states.

The main objectives of the SCO are to (i) strengthen relations among member states; (ii) promote cooperation in political affairs, economics and trade, scientific-technical, cultural, and educational spheres as well as in energy, transportation, tourism, and environmental protection; (iv) safeguard regional peace, security, and stability; and (v) create a democratic, equitable international political and economic order.⁹

The SCO operates through two permanent headquarters, the Secretariat in Beijing, and the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATA) in Tashkent. Promoting cooperation among members on security related issues is included in the top functions of organization. These issues are identified as terrorism, separatism and extremism. In 2014, China hosted the bloc's Peace Mission, its largest military exercise in terms of the number of troops involved, more than seven thousand and advanced weaponry deployed.¹⁰

Afghanistan and SCO

The SCO as a group does not have a large influence in Afghanistan, though the organization considers religious extremism, terrorism and drug trafficking as potential serious threats to the security and stability of the region. SCO members share the fear that continued conflict in Afghanistan will have a spill-over effect. As a preventive measure Afghanistan was included in SCO counterterrorism initiative and elevated from an SCO contact group to full observer status at the 2012 summit in Beijing. Some of SCO members, especially China have intensified bilateral engagement with the country. China is the largest investor in Afghanistan, with projects including the \$3 billion contract to develop the Aynak copper mine. The Chinese believe that a stable Afghanistan would have positive effect on their own western autonomous region, Xinjiang afflicted with a separatist movement. Although, compared to the Chinese, the Russian engagement with Afghanistan is small; but they have a variety of engagements with Afghanistan, including the provision of weapons to Afghan army, counter-narcotics initiatives. Russia has its own investment projects in Afghanistan. Although from 1979 to 1989, Russia and Afghanistan were at war with each other, today Russia has a vested interest in Afghanistan's security. For Russia, the Central Asian members of SCO form an important buffer zone between itself and Afghanistan, and, therefore, are keen to strengthen broader regional security to prevent instability in Afghanistan from spreading to Russian borders.

Apart from China and Russia, Central Asian states such as Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have also important bilateral engagements with Afghanistan, making significant investments in the country.¹¹

Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) on Peace and Reconciliation in Afghanistan

China's keen interest in the peace and stability in Afghanistan is reflected in its membership of a 4-power group, Quadrilateral Coordination Group to facilitate the process of peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan through talks between the Government of Afghanistan and Afghan Taliban. The other members of group which was formed on the occasion of Heart of Asia Conference in Islamabad in early December, 2015, are Pakistan, Afghanistan and the United States. The QCG is credited with helping the holding of first ever talks between Taliban and the Government of Afghanistan in Pakistan in July, 2015. However, the subsequent rounds of talks could not be held due to the acrimony between the Taliban and Afghan Government generated by the disclosure of the death of Mullah Omar-the founder of Taliban movement in Afghanistan. But the members of the group continued to hold discussions on the prospects of revival of the talks through meetings held alternately in Islamabad and Kabul. On the conclusion of its fifth meeting held in Islamabad on May 18, 2016, the members of the group, in a Joint Statement, reiterated that violence "serves no purpose and negotiations remain the only option." They also expressed their continued determination with shared commitment to advance the goal of Afghan-led, Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process.¹²

The joining of China in the efforts for bringing about peace and reconciliation is a significant development, and may prove to be a turning point in the search for stability in the country. Not only Kabul and Islamabad favour a Chinese role in the peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan; it has also been welcomed by the Taliban. The QCG is at present dormant as its fifth meeting in May, 2016 ended without fixing the date for the next meeting; but the presence of China in the group is very likely to improve the prospects of an agreement among the stake holders to revive the stalled talks.

Quadrilateral Cooperation and Coordination Mechanism (QCCM)

China, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Tajikistan formed Quadrilateral Cooperation and Coordination Mechanism (QCCM) in a High Level Military meeting held in Urumqi on August 3, 2016. The meeting was attended by General Qadam Shah Shahin, Chief of General Staff of Afghan National Army, General Fang Fenghu, Chief of Joint Staff Department under China's Central Military Commission (CMC), General Raheel Sharif, Chief of Staff, Pakistan Army and Major-General E A Cobidzoda, Chief of the General Staff of Tajikistan Army. A Joint Statement to explain the objectives of the mechanism was issued at the end of meeting. In the Joint Statement, the parties agreed that terrorism and extremism pose serious threat to regional stability,

and reiterated their willingness and readiness to make joint efforts to deal with those forces in order to maintain peace and stability of all member states. They also agreed to establish quadrilateral mechanism to coordinate and support each other in a range of areas, including study and judgment of counter-terrorism situation, confirmation of clues, intelligence sharing, anti-terrorism capability building, joint anti-terrorist training and personnel training. The Joint Statement made it clear that coordination and cooperation will be exclusive to the four states.¹³ QCCM represents an advance focused and exclusive inter-regional initiative by Pakistan, China, Afghanistan and Tajikistan to promote cooperation and coordination to safeguard regional security.

Conclusion

The moves for the promotion of inter-regional connectivity between South Asia and Central Asia have created a strong imperative for cooperation and coordination between the countries of the two regions. Both regions face serious threats to peace and regional stability. These threats emanate from a host of military, political, economic and environmental challenges of post-Cold War and Post-Soviet era. However, extremism, terrorism, separatism, drug trafficking and continued conflict in Afghanistan are main concerns of the South Asian and Central Asian countries. Not only the neighboring countries but Russia and China share the fear that an unstable Afghanistan will have a spill-over effect on their adjoining territories. A major part of their cooperative efforts is, therefore, linked with search for peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan. Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) with China, the US, Pakistan and Afghanistan as members represents efforts to end conflict in Afghanistan. Extremism, terrorism and separatism have long been recognized as serious threats to regional peace and security in Central Asia. The countries of the region together with Russia and China formed Shanghai Cooperation Organization to cooperate and coordinate their efforts to eliminate these menaces. Quadrilateral cooperation and Coordination Mechanism (QCCM) formed by China, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Tajikistan in August, 2016 extends these efforts from Central Asia to South Asia. The mechanism symbolizes the growing cooperation between South Asia and Central Asia in the area of regional security. A prominent feature of these mechanisms is the close association of China. This is justified for two reasons: Such mechanisms formed in Central Asia before the establishment of SCO, as CIS proved ineffective without China; and China is fast emerging as a big stake holder in the two regions through its One Belt, One Road and CEPEC projects.

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ANALYSING REGIONAL COOPERATION IN TERMS OF STRATEGIC SECURITY INTERESTS

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Abstract: *The proverb “a rolling stone gathers no moss” stands true to regional cooperation in the south and central Asia resulting from the ever-changing approach of the concerned states vis-à-vis security. The war on terror in the post 9/11 period has drastically transformed these two regions in such a way that the whole of security dynamics seem to be overshadowed by the elements of terrorism, militancy, and religious extremism. The security perceptions prevailing among the regional and extra regional actors are highly contested. It goes without saying that security and cooperation are inextricably linked with each other; and in the given scenario, security as a dominating theme takes precedence. Divergent security interests of regional and extra regional actors restrict the space for peace which is more likely to cause hindrance to the process of cooperation in terms of regional integration. However, convergence of interests in terms of security is more likely to assure a conducive environment for peace and cooperation. The paper attempts to analyze how strategic security interests of states influence regional cooperation in the two regions?*

Keywords: South Asia, Central Asia, regional cooperation, strategic security interests, regional integration

Introduction

After the October revolution the path chosen by USSR to integrate the Muslims in Central Asia was of ethnicisation and playing religious communitarian card that was similar to the twin policies employed under Tsarist Russia. “An identical three-fold approach to Islam was pursued under both the Tsars and the Soviets: repression, the attempt to instrumentalise ‘progressive’ mullahs, and finally a ‘middle road’ which organized the world of Islam by means of a clergy that was conservative and functionarised.”¹ However, what actually laid the foundation of the five countries that today constitute Central Asia was the 1924 division. In the same year, the cessation of all the previous administrative entities took place and the map of Central Asia was rewritten on the basis of ‘one ethnic group, one territory.’ The empire was transformed into a union of the Soviet Socialist Federation of Russia and the Soviet Socialist Republics. These divisions were further consolidated by the constitution. The room was made for further incorporation of autonomous republics, autonomous regions, and national territories; and in 1936, these choices became conclusive.

South Asia has always been an attractive region for the world – the very reason the region witnessed many dynasties and colonial powers. India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh – constituting major chunk of South Asia today – once constituted British India and the countries still reflect certain British values. However, Afghanistan has always possessed its own unique character and has hardly been contaminated by any foreign presence. Political dynamics of South Asia completely changed after the partition of 1947. Afghanistan and British India had certain shared interests before 1947, while the post-partition countries have different approaches when it comes to relationship with Afghanistan. Pakistan and India have a checkered relationship that makes politics of South Asia meandering in its very nature.

Both the regions – Central Asia and the South Asia – are not only geographically connected with each other but also share a history that has witnessed the interaction of two regions in the times of invasions and trade. There is a long history of invasions and almost all of them were from north to south (i.e., from Central Asia to South Asia). In fact many invaders from Central Asia not only conquered lands of South Asia rather they led the foundation of many great dynasties and some of them ruled for centuries.

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As far as opportunities of integration between Central Asia and South Asia are concerned, there exists a bond that can integrate both regions in an inextricable way. Central Asia is rich in natural resources and South Asia, with its brimming population, has cumulative demand for energy. Increased energy consumption of South Asian countries has increased manifold owing to mushrooming population and intensive growth of industry, and Central Asian energy supply is highly compatible with South Asia in many ways. Firstly, the geographic connectedness among the regions makes this demand-supply equation much accessible. Secondly, the supply will be safer as compared to other options that South Asia is currently availing. Finally, this energy-centric cooperation is a win-win situation for countries of both regions as it will satisfy the economic requirements of both regions.

Where we see substantial opportunities for integration, there are certain impediments to such integration. Firstly, the internal political and strategic dynamics of South Asia are fashioned in such a manner that they are hard to alter. India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan share a security dilemma and are seized in a triangle which none of them seems to pull out of. Secondly, India and Pakistan have bilateral conflicts on a number of issues including Kashmir and both share decades-long rivalry. Both the countries, since their inception, are indulged in a massive arms race and the military development in both countries has reached a 'point of relative-resonance'. The mutual relations have worsened in the recent weeks due to frequent incidents of cross-border firing, and these tensions have also affected this year's SAARC summit. Dr Maleeha Lodhi write:

At the regional level, the pursuit of domination by one state over its neighbours is a recipe for insecurity and instability. The prevailing asymmetry – with regard to both strategic objectives and the relationship between military forces—between the largest country in South Asia, India, and its smaller neighbours is a built-in factor for instability and has been exacerbated by India's desire to dominate. Certainly attempts at domination cannot but be destabilizing and thus highly dangerous. The pursuit of domination underscores the second asymmetry in South Asia, that between the military force level of India, which maintains the fourth largest military in the world, and its neighbours.²

Meanwhile in Central Asia there exists a considerable level of mistrust among the five states, which as a result makes their ability to work together for a singular security objective even laborious. This mistrust has made the region's states to engage in clumsy approaches and pursue connections to various proxy groups. There has been efforts from international community to advance regional cooperation through the Istanbul process and the Heart of Asia summits but the efforts seem too little considering the current circumstances.³ Much of Central Asia faces demographic shifts – growing youth populations lacking the Soviet-era education and values of their elders – coupled with shortages of water and other resources that could contribute to civil strife or cross border conflicts. A particular concern is the spread of Islamism among the youth population, much of it connected to transnational groups such as Hizb-ut-Tahrir and South Asia based Tablighi Jamaat about whose activities Central Asian governments have limited information. These internal dynamics contribute to instability within Central Asia. Governments in the region are likely to place a greater emphasis on preventing the spread of extremism, drugs, crime, and other problems from South Asia rather than intensifying Central Asia-South Asia cooperation.⁴ Moreover, the internal problems of Central Asia, like the continuous weak governance with a potential for state failure in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, entrenched criminality, spread of extremist ideologies, and the low level of interdependence among these states will have a great influence while establishing energy-centric relations with South Asian region.

Afghanistan possesses a great importance when it comes to regional integration among both regions. The security situation in Afghanistan is a matter of great concern for both regions. Central Asian governments strive for establishing and restructuring alliances with the non-Pashtun groups in northern Afghanistan, which will help them create a buffer against the increasing violence and extremism in Afghanistan. Chaos in Afghanistan would not only create a favorable environment for IMU and other Central Asian militant groups to carry out their activities but it would also diminish the promise for political reform in Central Asia. On the other hand the chaotic Afghanistan would not only deteriorate peace and stability in India and Pakistan but would further contract the odds for any such integration among the two regions which in any way is associated with Afghanistan. It is crucial that the Afghanistan shares the similar strategic and security perceptions that both regions have in order to pursue a profitable economic integration – failing to develop such perceptions would escalate impediments for a long-term and secured cooperation.

The two regions not only face internal security hindrances in order to establish a substantial economic integration but deep vested interests of United States, Russia, and China in these regions would also play their role to shape the dynamics of any future integration among two regions. United States' interests in Central Asia are connected with the war in Afghanistan as the Central Asian states are assisting the US with logistical support, infrastructure, and security cooperation. Moreover, the need to maintain a pluralistic geopolitical environment in Central Asia and hampering the Russian or Chinese dominance in the region is what has drawn the most of US attention towards Central Asia and the same interest is shared by the Central Asian Republics themselves. But these interests are more likely to conflict if the US demands democratization of the region or abandons the region after withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Russian interests in Central Asia generally revolve around two essential but often self-contradictory policy objectives. Firstly, Russia wants to increase her own security, as a spread of militancy in Central Asia would pose a possible threat to Russia's security; and secondly, Russia's desire to ensure a leading role in Central Asia. Central Asia has great significance for Russia, as a leading role in Central Asia can counter the balance in case of any possible decrease in Russia's power on the global level. Russia has control over transit routes and Central Asian states have tilt towards Russia for protection in case of any potential change in US policy toward region. Russia has notably extended its influence and power in Central Asia by using commercial sphere. Initially, Russia has made its way in Kazakh banking system through state owned banks both by means of direct and indirect acquisition of shares.⁵ In theory, this policy will allow Moscow to exert influence on the Kazakh economy by controlling access to loans and decisions on commercial debt.⁶ In addition to this, a \$3.5 billion loan has been given to Astana from Vnesheconombank that is to be used solely to purchase Russian products. Moreover, there are chances that a restructuring path will be followed by Kazakh BTA bank involving a possible sale to Russia's Sber bank.

China has extended its Africa Strategy in Central Asia. China is playing its part in Central Asia since the 1990s and the Chinese interests in the region are multifaceted. China has been successful in increasing its regional influence steadily by means of acquisition of stakes in energy market and in infrastructure assets. Loans with 'no-strings attached' have also helped China in pursuing its interests. For instance, to expand its energy links in the region, Beijing has recently agreed to provide Astana with a 10 billion USD loan, which will be exclusively used for the purpose of development of oil and gas industry. Through its carefully targeted investment strategy, China has gained perhaps its strongest foothold in the region that has helped China in maintaining a balanced position with Russia in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. China has also finalized a number of bilateral agreements with Tashkent, Almaty, Dushanbe, and Bishkek. The participation of China in aluminum industry in Tajikistan and by signing important commercial agreements with KazMunaiGaz and Kazatomprom in Kazakhstan the Chinese investment in the Central Asian Region, in the form of foreign direct investment and long term loans, has reached an amount of \$13 billion. The revival of ancient silk route and the Chinese 'One-Belt, One-Road' policy has further enhanced the Chinese interests in the Central Asian Region.

Post 9/11 Scenario

There has not been a single event that has had a more fervent impact on the analytical foundations of Central Asian and South Asian security than the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. It not only changed the internal security designs in both regions but also reshaped the external security dynamics of the two regions. Internally both regions faced new security challenges and countered dilemmas that were previously unknown. Countries with Muslim population faced challenges on ideological, cultural, and military fronts. Central Asia faced and is still facing deepening crisis of legitimacy. The concentrations of power in the Central Asia and the five regimes with politically bankrupt presidents pose a challenge to the security of the region in the post-9/11 scenario. Both regions faced ethnic conflicts which further deteriorated the security situation in the region. The rise in Uzbek domination in the Central Asia, although confronted by the elites in the other republics who did not want to abdicate control; the growing political splitting between north and south Kyrgyzstan, which is embedded in clan and kinship patterns that dominate Kyrgyz politics; and the Baloch insurgency in Pakistan are a few to name.

With the growth of militancy in Central Asia, there emerged a Trafficking-Terrorism Nexus, which has become a 21st century challenge for Central Asia and has now grown so strong that it necessitates strenuous national and international efforts. The gravity of the nexus was recognized and was discussed in detail in the two-day June 2016 Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit among a range of traditional issues. Central

Asia is the point of intersection of terrorism and trafficking and it is the place where these intersections have taken various forms. The armed attacks carried out by drug trafficking groups on state agencies and representatives and the resort of terrorist groups to drug trafficking and illicit trade for the very purpose of financing their operations in order to pursue their political aims are the two forms which need immediate attention.

In post-9/11 South Asia, Pakistan witnessed perhaps the most difficult decade of terrorism and militancy. The country was highly vulnerable in the following years. War in Afghanistan and a shared porous border with it brought an unprecedented wave of terrorism into the country. A large number of terrorist organizations, small and large, domestic and regional, emerged. Some were already active in Afghanistan and the post-9/11 war reactivated the rest. The porous border and a strong push from NATO forces compelled them to find a safe haven in the tribal areas of Pakistan, which later resulted in number of military operations by Pakistan Army in respected areas. India also felt the heat as the terrorists carried out certain attacks in India as well, not to forget the 2008 Mumbai attacks.

The two regions have a phenomenal capacity and compatibility when it comes to economic cooperation; but as long as there exists divergence in the strategic and security perceptions and interests resulting from those perceptions, there would be no long-term and substantial cooperation among these two regions. The countries of both regions would find it hard to establish any such integration even within their respected region unless their security interests resonate with each other.

Following are the few recommendations to converge the strategic and security interests of both regions in order to establish a tangible integration.

- ✓ The US, Russia, and China must ensure a sustained and pragmatic commitment in both regions to attain peace. As the US withdraws out of Afghanistan it must provide Afghanistan with a security and governance structure.
- ✓ The US and Russia must work together in order to enhance governance in Central Asia. This engagement should focus on enhancing governance, ranging from tax collection, social services, and judicial and security sector reform to hampering state failure and enhancing trade among Central Asian states.
- ✓ In South Asia a strong initiative must be taken to stop the arms race between India and Pakistan.
- ✓ Both regions must establish a common security institution in order to deal with shared threat to any desired economic cooperation.
- ✓ Each region should establish the same kind of security institution on intraregional level.
- ✓ The decision making in these structures should follow consensus and there should be an environment of cooperation in such structures rather than enforcing principles.
- ✓ The regular exchange of information among regional countries must take place. Furthermore, research, surveys, and regular seminars on important security issues of regions must be regularly organized.
- ✓ A mechanism for refugees must be developed and any such record must be exchanged and regulated by the concerned countries.
- ✓ The global powers must ensure a stronger role of United Nations over these regional structures in order to achieve peace and security.
- ✓ Uniform standards of human rights protection and non-aggression based on respect for the inviolability of international frontiers must be adopted.

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THREATS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTER-REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN SOUTH ASIA AND CENTRAL ASIA

Maira Qaddos*

Abstract: *The geographical proximity of South Asia and Central Asia has made them share cultural similarities, historical ties, trade and commerce. Central Asian Republics (CARs) are landlocked and in need of water route for facilitation of their trade whereas South Asian states are facing energy crisis and may get benefit from rich energy reserves of CARs. The paper is exploring possible threats and opportunities in inter-regional connectivity by doing systematic literature review. It is found that both the regions have to face many threats like growing terrorism, ethnicity, extremism, secessionism, internal political conflicts, unstable democracies and governmental set-ups, drug trafficking and disturbances in law and order situation by trans-border exchange of people and goods. If they overcome these threats, this will bring many promising opportunities for both the regions in form of enhanced people-to-people interaction, cultural exchange, economic uplifting, increased trade and commerce activities and peaceful neighborhood.*

Keywords: Inter-regional connectivity, geographical proximity, secessionism, extremism, cultural exchange.

Introduction

South Asia is sharing a history of cooperation and coordination with Central Asia since 1500 BC. Their relationship is multifaceted and centuries old as both the regions share cultural similarities and rich civilizations. Central Asian states are landlocked but rich in mineral, oil and petroleum resources whereas South Asian States are having water routes for transportation to offer to CARs and may get energy from them to overcome their energy crisis.¹

Not only Islamic countries feel cultural affinities and homogeneity with Central Asian states but non-Islamic states of South Asia like Sri Lanka and India also have a history of political and social relations with Central Asia. Buddhism and Sufism have entered in Central Asian states from India and strengthened spiritual connectivity of both the regions. India is not forming border with Central Asian States but because of being a part of this geographical region, it is having closer relations with CARs.²

This cooperation among states of both the regions has become the need of hour because both the regions are facing various challenges that may be resolved with mutual coordination only. If these two regions develop an air of trust and decide to counter all the challenges, they may avail many opportunities resulting in economic boom and improved law in order situation. Good relations between neighboring regions demand peace and stability in both the regions so that a healthy environment for all the nation states may be ensured for prosperity and progress.³

Threats to Inter-Regional Connectivity between South Asia and Central Asia

Afghanistan is the border state between South Asia and Central Asia and is in highly advantageous position because it may cash its position by facilitating trade and economic activities between both the regions but the problem is with its law in order situation. Stability and terrorism is the major challenge in the way of promoting bilateral relations between states of both the regions. It is a member of Islamic fraternity and on the basis of that shares a rich tradition with CARs but because of being a subject to Islamic extremism in form of Talibanisation and civil wars for so long, it is unable to become a bridge both the regions in an effective manner.⁴

Afghanistan has to ensure peace and stability not only in political but social terms too. It is one of the major producers and suppliers of drugs. This Narco-terrorism is affecting interregional connectivity between both the regions because it disturbs societies in social, cultural and economic respects. Efforts are being made to control narco terrorism but illegal production and selling of drugs is increasing at international level.⁵ At international levels, big powers use narco-terrorism strategically for economic purposes but poor countries like Afghanistan involve in it to support their dying economies.⁶ Money derived from opium production and its

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trafficking is contributing a huge amount in the total GDP of Afghanistan. As Afghanistan is a safe haven for many terrorist organizations like Al-Qaeda, revenue generated by drug trafficking is utilized in many terrorist activities like bomb blasting, killings and kidnappings etc.⁷

This type of drug trafficking which is carried out by various terrorist organizations is termed as green and these organizations are working on the name of Islam. Islamic extremism and militancy fulfils its monetary requirements by cultivating and selling drugs. There are other types of drug trafficking too in Central Asia which are red and black. Red one refers to largest organized crimes in which government officials are also involved whereas black refers to small criminal groups that smuggle drugs and supply them to local markets. It is argued that Central Asian states are notorious for green and black drug trafficking but huge amount of red drug trafficking is ignored not only by their governments but also by international institutions that are making attempts to overcome this problem.⁸

There is a need to take proper measures by the governments of Central Asian States and South Asian States especially Afghanistan to counter this problem of drug trafficking that is a serious threat to the process of regional peace and harmony. These steps may involve improvement in border security and for that states of both the regions must equip their border forces with state of the art technology and provide them proper trainings. These states should do it even if they have to get foreign aid and assistance. This step will ensure respect of borders of nation states and will also keep a check on trans-border exchange of people and goods.⁹

But only barbed wires and trained guards is not enough for sealing borders there is a need to ensure impermeability of border lines by overcoming menace of corruption by Central Asian States. Drugs may be smuggled in any country by bribing border security guards or availing fake passport etc. Most of the smaller level traffickers cross borders not through check posts but through mountains or rivers. They only pass through checkpoints, if they have some settlements with concerned government officials.¹⁰

Among Central Asian States, Russia is keen to fight opium production and smuggling from Afghanistan but it doesn't want to become a part of western efforts to counter it because of ideological differences. It doesn't want US influence to increase in the region although it is highly affected by heroin trafficking through its borders. Afghanistan will not be able to eradicate opium production completely because a large number of poor farmers cultivate it and ban on it will affect their livelihood. If Russia takes some serious attempts to counter it, it has to face the problem of involvement of border guards in drug trade.¹¹

Central Asian States do face problem of drug trafficking but that doesn't mean it is not a problem of South Asia. Although Golden Crescent route for smuggling of heroin is less in use but still Pakistan is second most cited country, after Iran's successful efforts of controlling its borders, through which heroin is trafficked to Europe through the borders of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran. Balkan route is the main route for drug trafficking in Russian and European markets but still South Asian states especially Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Sri Lank are also facing problem of narco terrorism and this is a major hurdle in developing inter-regional connectivity among states of both the regions.¹²

Along with drug trafficking, worsening law in order situation and growing extremism and terrorism is another hurdle in the course of promoting relations among states of both the regions. Most of the countries in both the regions are subjected to terrorism in form of ethnicity, separatist movements and extremist forces and are in need of making serious attempts to get rid of them. Afghanistan and Pakistan has been a target of many terrorist activities like bombings, killings, blasts, kidnappings and slaughtering of innocent people but their efforts in countering terrorism are seriously degraded at international level.¹³

Probably the reason for disregard of Pakistan's efforts is its leniency while dealing with those terrorist groups that are externally focused like Jaish-e-Muhammad and Lashkar-e-Tayyabah. These groups are continuously operating, working, fund raising, training and organizing various terrorist activities in the region. Moreover, Afghan and Pakistan governments have also failed to take necessary action against Haqqani network and Tehrik-e-Taliban Afghanistan but they are successful in convincing both of these groups to be a part of peace process led by Afghan government.¹⁴ Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant Khorasan's (ISIL-K) is also established in 2015 and is operational in both of these countries adding further to the problems of these two countries which are highly important in terms of interregional connectivity between both the regions because of their geo-strategic significance.¹⁵

Terrorism is not only the issue of these two countries but unfortunately both the regions are having issues and are fighting against it. India and Bangladesh have also observed an increase in attacks and other terrorist activities by various transnational groups. Possible reason for terrorism in India and Pakistan is their long history of rivalry. Both of them keep blaming each other for spreading anarchy in their territories. Because of this rivalry, region is experiencing tension as rivalry between them may elevate anytime and sabotage peace process.

Central Asian states, on the other hand, are also facing the threat of terrorist activities although less than South Asian States. Kazakh government is really concerned about Islamic State of Iraq and Levant activities in the region and while extending its cooperation with South Asian States, one of its major concerns is insecurity in Afghanistan. It is interested in combating violent extremism by comprehensive legal frameworks including penal and criminal codes. Its efforts are not covered by media but it is playing a pivotal role in countering religious extremism spread by hardcore Muslim fighters.¹⁶ Here it is important to note that ISIL is not only a problem for Kazakhstan but other Central Asian States including Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan are also facing the same problem of dealing with it.

While talking about terrorism, it is important to mention that terrorist attempts are not only made by organizations working on the name of Islam but there are certain separatist movements in various states that are involved in terrorist activities at local level. Insurgency in Balochistan has posed serious threat to sovereignty and integrity of Pakistan¹⁷ whereas Khalsitan movement and in India is also causing serious problems for Indian government in order to maintain its integrity.¹⁸ Moreover, even after decades, India is still facing agitation in Jammu & Kashmir and is trying to suppress it.¹⁹ Situation is not different in Iran and Afghanistan where secessionism is also an issue. Many ethnic communities are fighting for getting separated from them. In Iran, Baloch, Kurd, Turkmen, Azerbaijani and Arab groups are running their secessionist movements²⁰ and in Afghanistan, Pamiri community is striving to make United Badakhshan Peoples Republic by getting liberation from it.²¹

This Pamiri group has a long history of civil war in Tajikistan and in Azerbaijan; Armenian community is also striving for Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. Some argue that it is a war between Christianity and Islam but mostly believes there are political motives behind this conflict as compared to religious ones. It is argued that conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia is in interest of Russia as it will weaken both of them and they will remain under the influence of Russia. If this community gets separated, this will set an example for many other ethnic communities who want secession from Russia. Moreover, Azerbaijan is rich in oil resources and western powers especially UK and U.S. also have vested interests in it.²²

Uzbek government denies all the reports about secession in Karakalpakstan and always argues that it is working for improvement of living conditions of this area. But in reality poor performance of Uzbek authorities have forced thousands of inhabitants of this area to move to Russia and Kazakhstan. This shows dissatisfaction among people of Karakalpakstan leading to spreading of pamphlets demanding referendum for its independence. Uzbek authorities detained many separatist leaders but couldn't overcome the tension arising in the community of Karakalpakstan.²³

These separatist movements lead to destabilization of country by evoking uprising and insurgency. They usually go for unlawful activities for achieving their goals. Problem is internal political conflicts and weak governments which are unable to handle them because they are involved in dealing with opposition parties for the security of their governments. These movements usually arise in those areas that are deprived and people of these areas when disappointed by their governments opt for violent means. There is a need to overcome internal issues and develop a consensus among all political parties that national integrity is more important than party level goals. If these movements are controlled, a peaceful and healthy environment will develop for interregional connectivity between South Asia and Central Asia.

Opportunities for Inter-Regional Connectivity between South Asia and Central Asia

In spite of all the above mentioned threats, challenges and issues there are many opportunities for collaboration as both the regions have not explored the potential for cooperation with each other to the extent they could. But now the importance of interregional connectivity in this era of competition and war for survival is recognized by both the regions and they are investing in various projects which will connect both the regions in terms of addressing their common interests. Revival of old silk routes under the Chinese project of CPEC

(Pak-China Economic Corridor) is an important step towards that. This trans-regional project includes cooperation in energy sector, mineral resources, countering terrorism & extremism, and communication networks like roads & railways networks.²⁴

Integration between both the regions may result in Great Central Asia. According to this opinion both of these regions may merge to become a single unit dedicated to economic prosperity.²⁵ Another opinion regarding connectivity between both the regions is derived from Condoleezza Rice's announcement of making a US-Greater Central Asia plan. For doing so, US State Department's South Asia Bureau was in needs of reformation and reorganization.²⁶ The basic purpose of this plan was to counter the increasing influence of China and Russia in the region and pave way for permanent stay of US in the region.²⁷

It was noted earlier in 1901 by Rudyard Kipling that Central Asian States may only be conquered by that country which will develop a transportation network including roads and railways. This mega project of CPEC seems to have envisioned the same and this network of transportation infrastructures and energy pipelines have proved their strategic significance in terms of improving interregional connectivity.²⁸ Central Asian states are rich in oil and gas resources and because of that many South Asian states are attracted towards it. South Asian states are facing shortage of these resources and may overcome their energy crisis by developing an infrastructure of pipelines from Central Asia to them. Geographical proximity of both the regions may help them to avail this benefit which far off countries may not have.²⁹

There are many security concerns while developing an infrastructure of pipelines (as discussed in upper section) but still states of both the regions have agreed to strengthen their economic relations with each other by using the route of Afghanistan.³⁰ Afghanistan is already having power lines to import electricity from Uzbekistan and also a railway track connecting Mazar-e-Sharif to Uzbek border. TAPI gas pipeline is another hallmark project which, if executed properly, will connect both the regions from Turkmenistan to India and Pakistan via Afghanistan. This pipeline will give a boom to South Asian markets but for that all the doubts about security and funding must be dealt. This pipeline is viewed as not only a mean of transportation of gas from one region to other but a mean of connectivity between a highly disconnected region with a region full of tensions, rivalries and disputes.³¹

The region of South Asia is notorious for the rivalry between India and Pakistan and unfortunately this rivalry continued even in developmental projects as India opposed CPEC and showed its concerns over route of CPEC by considering it disputed as it passes through Kashmir on which India claims its rule.³² But despite of its opposition, most of the states of South Asia and Central Asia have shown their willingness to become a part of this project. Reason for appreciation of this Chinese project is that it will address demands and needs of both the regions. Central Asian states are rich in oil and gas resources but don't have enough resources to export it. South Asian states are hungry for oil and their Indian Ocean centric location make them attractive for Central Asian states that will utilize sea route for export of their products.

Pakistan's Gwadar deep sea port is unique in its geostrategic location and significance. If the project of CPEC is executed, as desired, it will prove itself a significant chokepoint for transportation across three regions i.e., South Asia, Central Asia and Middle East. This makes it lucrative for CARs that will obviously like to avail a less risky, economical and less time consuming route for accessing and exploring other regions.³³ China is investing \$46 dollars for development of this port and will defend it at any cost because it may foresee its political, economic, commercial and military worth in the near future.³⁴

If this port becomes functional, it will enhance people to people interaction of both the regions that will ultimately result in increased trade and commerce activities at lower level. Governments are showing interest in extending cooperation and if it transcends to level of common man, it will result in an economic boom. This will improve free interaction among masses and clear many misconceptions in the minds of people about each other. Easy transportation will facilitate communication and catalyze trade and commerce activities.³⁵

Conclusion

Finally summing up the discussion, it may be argued that both the regions are in need of mutual cooperation because of their geographical proximity. Moreover, their demands and supply needs also make them vulnerable to each other's collaboration in various fields. From pharmaceuticals to textile and from defense to commercial aspects, they may cooperate with each other. Poverty is one of the major issues faced by both the regions and it may only be settled by taking necessary measures for improving law in order situation, ensuring

peace and stability and promoting healthy environment for trade and commerce activities. Interregional connectivity between both the regions is expected to bring prosperity and progress for both of them.

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VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN CENTRAL AND SOUTH ASIA: CHALLENGES FOR INTER-REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

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Abstract: *Historically, the regions of Central and South Asia have been marred with turmoil and civil war, followed by the United State's War on Terror further turning them into a hub of militant groups and organizations. Both the regions are fertile in providing recruitments to global jihadi organizations. They are also home to many terrorist organizations like Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM), Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Jamat-ul-Ahrar, the Islamic State Khorasan Chapter and Al-Qaeda. Besides, they also have geostrategic and geo-economic significance within Asia and the world at large. Central Asia, a landlocked region, is full of mineral, oil and gas resources while South Asian region provides an outlet to Central Asian region to access outer world through its sea routes. However, the militant groups and organizations that are perpetrators of violence are significantly present in the area. They pose a direct threat to the regional security, peace and inter-regional connectivity. The purpose of this research paper is to explore the potential of the threat of violent extremism to regional connectivity and assess possible counter measures.*

Keywords: Violent Extremism, Regional Connectivity, Central Asia, South Asia, Proxy War, Terrorism

Introduction

Regional connectivity among states depends mainly on two factors: flexible economic policies, economic opportunities or prospects, and a conducive security environment. Economically, Central Asia has abundant natural and mineral resources, with one-third of the world's oil and gas reserves. Apart from being a potentially big consumer of the Central Asian resources, South Asia is also located at a strategically significant geographical place and provides shortest route to Central Asia to connect with the outer world through the warm oceanic waters. Unfortunately, both regions have been facing an internal turmoil, political instability, and mistrust among the countries due to lingering issues and an evident presence of the violent extremist organizations (VEO) for decades. The incident of 9/11 and the global War on Terror (WoT) has further fuelled extremism and militancy in the two regions. Violent extremism and militancy have disrupted the economic bustle, strained the social fabric of the societies, and created an environment of insecurity in the region.

Violent Extremism

Before going ahead it is imperative to discuss the basic concept and ideological dimensions of violent extremism, and how it is different from terrorism. An extremist is a person "who has taken an extreme position towards an orientation to something which is taken as a centrist or normative in a place".¹ Sometimes this term also intermingles with the views of the political left and the political right of any state but since they cannot be categorized as extremist, this approach becomes debatable. A violent extremist, however, is a person who "expresses his or her extremist view through violence".² The US State Department defines violent extremists as "Individuals who support or commit ideologically-motivated violence to further their political goals—have promoted messages of divisiveness and justified the killing of innocents"³. There is not a single universally accepted definition of a terrorist or terrorism. Nevertheless, a terrorist is a person who commits violence and creates terror in the society for achieving political ends [provide reference]. Comparatively, the definition of a violent extremist is broader than that of a terrorist. Violent extremists perpetrate violence ranging from a small scale to a broad spectrum while the nature of violence could be of both criminal and political types. Generally, a terrorist commits or tries to commit violence, which has strategic consequences. By definition, a terrorist always falls in the category of a violent extremist while it is not necessary that a violent extremist fulfill the criteria of being a terrorist.

On the basis of ideology, violent extremism can be divided into four categories: religious extremism, religious nationalistic extremism, ethno nationalistic extremism and political extremism.

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- ✓ Religious extremists enforce their religious beliefs in a society, within a state or at the global level through coercive measures. Da'esh (the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) and Al-Qaeda are its prime examples.
- ✓ Religious nationalistic extremists believe in a violent struggle for achieving an independent state, which represents only their religious majority. East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) is its best example.
- ✓ Ethno-nationalist extremists also believe in violence to gain their rights or an independent state. Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) in Pakistan and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka fall under this category.
- ✓ The political activists and parties that express their extreme political views through violence are called political violent extremists. Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) in Pakistan, Jobbik in Hungary and National Democratic Party of Germany are examples of such political violent extremism.

This paper will focus on religious violent extremist organizations and religious nationalist violent extremist organizations of Central and South Asia.

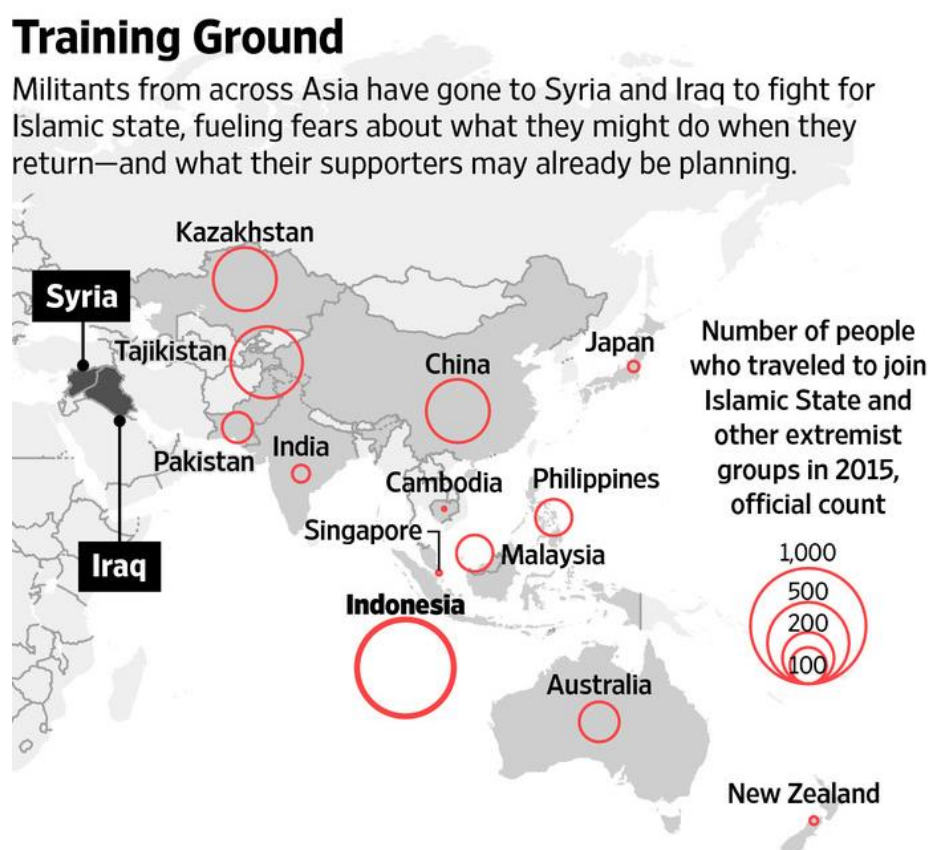
Violent Extremism in Central Asia

The Afghan war against the Soviets and the post 9/11 global War on Terror (WoT) has left many drastic impacts on the social fabric of the region. The region has been providing manpower to different national and international *jehadi* organizations, which have been actively fighting for Al-Qaeda, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM), Afghan *jehadi* organizations, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Daish. After the 'Afghan Jihad' against the Soviets, many Central Asian fighters chose to live in Afghanistan. However, after the U.S attack on Afghanistan they scattered into different parts of the region. They established strongholds especially in the tribal areas of Pakistan. Violent non-state actors (VNSAs) often travel to different parts of other regions like Iraq, Libya, Syria, Afghanistan and Pakistan for the sake of waging *jihad* and have their influence in these areas. Moreover, they have also been providing training, military assistance and safe havens to other militant organizations. In this context, IMU trained the ETIM fighters to go back and attack the Chinese interests on their return. According to the United Nations Security Council September 2015 report, there are between 500 to 1500 Central Asian fighters who have been fighting in the Middle East, Afghanistan, Pakistan and adjacent regions along with different VEOs.⁴ Ironically, a US trained Tajik military commander Colonel Gulmurod Halimov joined the ISIS in Syria in 2015⁵.

Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) is one of the most potent violent organizations in Central Asia. Its members have sanctuaries in different parts of Afghanistan and Pakistan. They along with their families have been living in Afghanistan and the tribal areas of Pakistan after the Cold War era when the so-called Afghan Jihad was on its peak. The organization has been involved in a number of deadly terrorist attacks in Pakistan, including an attack on Karachi airport in 2014. In Pakistan; they carry out their violent activities through coordination with the local militants like Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)⁶. Their agenda is to impose *Shariah* in the regional Muslim countries through violent acts. Their main targets are government installations, the armed forces, and the public in general. Mainly, its members conduct high potency terror acts through suicide attacks, commando actions on military installations, and guerilla tactics. In spring 2015, IMU pledged its allegiance with the ISIS militant group.

ETIM is a religious-nationalist violent organization that comprises of Uighur Muslims, based in the western province of Xinjiang in China. They accuse the Chinese government of suppressing their ethnic and religious rights. To oppose this, they began an armed struggle and have been committing violent acts mainly against Chinese officials and places. Their main agenda is to establish a secessionist state on the basis of their ethnicity in Muslim majority area of Xinjiang. ETIM fighters have been getting training from Al-Qaeda, IMU and the Taliban in their hideouts located in Afghanistan, Central Asian Republics and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan.⁷ After the U.S attack on Afghanistan, many ethnic Uighurs were arrested from Afghanistan, while 22 Uighurs were detained in Guantanamo Bay jail, Cuba. The main tactics of ETIM are stabbing and bomb blasts. The majority of ETIM fighters were comprised of Chinese Uighur Muslims but they get any training or assistance from different regional and global violent extremist organizations.

Figure 1: Numbers of Militants from Across Asia have gone to Syria and Iraq to join the ISIS



Source: Soufan Group, The Wall Street Journal.

Violent Extremist Organizations in South Asia

South Asia is packed with many religious, religious nationalist, ethnic nationalist and political violent extremist organizations that are not only distressing the social fabric of the states but also creating tension and mistrust among the regional countries. In South Asia, the VEOs have severely damaged the economies of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Both countries are a hub of VEOs in this region, and both have been fighting against extremism and terrorism for decades.

Afghanistan has been facing violence predominantly due to its internal political instability and interference by major powers in shape of their proxy wars. After downfall of the Afghan Taliban, writ of the state was restored. Fifteen years later, the Afghan government has not been able to uproot militancy from the country. The Afghan Taliban, a union of different militant factions is striving to decrease space for the government; their main agenda is to force the 'foreign occupiers' to withdraw from Afghanistan so that they can enforce *sharia* laws in the country. Currently, the Afghan Taliban hold their control on many areas of Afghanistan territory in which the social and administrative structure works according to their *sharia* laws and Pashtun code of conduct. It is also believed that the Afghan Taliban have provided sanctuaries to different regional and global militant organizations, in which Al Qaeda, IMU and ETIM are prominent. They usually target the Afghan government and groups that support the government's claim. Militants attack the 'Coalition Forces' through guerilla warfare and suicide bombings. They recruit their fighters from local *madrassas* most of whom are ethnic Pashtuns. Many a times, the Afghan Taliban have expressed their interest in dialogue with the government and other stakeholders – China, Pakistan, and USA. The recent quadrilateral talks were cancelled while under process following death of the Afghan Taliban leader Mullah Akhtar Mansoor in an American drone strike that disrupted the peace talks. A significant number of the Afghan Taliban and their influence in Afghanistan is a potential threat for any regional connectivity program.

TTP is another deadly terrorist organization in South Asia, which is mainly active in the tribal areas of Pakistan. Lately, its leadership moved to Afghanistan after the operation Zarb-e-Azb was started by Pakistan's

army however the organization has its sleeper cells across the country. Its agenda is to enforce *sharia* law in the country. Its main targets are the government, military installations, and innocent people of Pakistan through brutal tactics like IEDs, suicide bombings and guerilla operations. TTP is divided into many sub-factions, which are active in different pockets of the tribal region.

The ISIS militant group's Khorasan chapter is also an emerging threat to the region and also a changing dimension to violent extremism and terrorism. The local militant factions who had their affiliation with the Taliban created ISIS in 2014. Later they swore allegiance to Syrian and Iraq based ISIS with the self-proclaimed caliph Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi. According to one estimate currently there are 7000-8500 and 2000-3000 ISIS members are active in Afghanistan and Pakistan respectively⁹. The organization's main agenda is to establish and consolidate the global agenda of the caliphate of ISIS in the area of Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. In the South Asian region, ISIS comprises of local militants. Though, there is no sign of presence of the Arab fighters in the region, but due to the changing situation in the Middle East, this threat cannot be ruled out. Many people of the region, especially from Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh, have been influenced by the ISIS and participated in the Syrian war while fighting for ISIS. The strength of their fighters is approximately 1500 people in the region and its main stronghold is Nangarhar and Nuristan provinces of Afghanistan. In Bangladesh, the local religious organization Jamat-ul-Mujahidin Bangladesh (JMB) swore allegiance to ISIS and conducted deadly attacks on the leftists and government installations. The Bangladesh security forces killed one of the retired majors of Bangladesh army after he joined the militant group ISIS. The organization recruits people from upper class of the society and professionals like doctors, engineers, professors and militants of other factions.

Al-Qaeda in Subcontinent (AQIS) is an offshoot of Al-Qaeda based in the Middle East. It has sleeper cells in Pakistan, India, Afghanistan and Bangladesh. Its agenda is to enforce *Shariah* Law in the Indian subcontinent, revive the Islamic Caliphate in Muslim countries and defend Afghanistan and the Afghan Taliban against foreign forces. There are many local militant factions who support AQIS in the region. In Bangladesh, Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT), a local militant faction, has been affiliated with AQIS and conducted many violent activities in Bangladesh in which some progressive writers and government officials were killed by ABT¹⁰. Unlike JMB they recruit fighters from the middle and lower class of the society especially from *madrassas*.

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is an Indian Hindu religious violent extremist organization and famous for its saffron terrorism in India. RSS works on the agenda of enforcing the Hindu religious law and Hindu cultural values in India and convert the minorities to Hinduism. It is active across the country with 4.5 million active members. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the current ruling party in India, is a political wing of the RSS and many political leaders in BJP are active members of RSS, including the Prime Minister of India - Narendra Modi. Modi was a culprit of massacre of Muslims in the Indian state of Gujrat, 2002. In November 2015, on the occasion of Modi's visit to the United Kingdom, *The Guardian* newspaper published a story on Modi and called him "Hindu Taliban" for his atrocities committed against minorities in India. Currently, RSS is running more than 20,000 religious schools across the country and approximately 2.5 million students are enrolled to get religious education¹¹.

Mob tactics is the basic tool of RSS to create violence in the society against non-Hindus. RSS is also considering to threat with bomb explosions but they are in the initial stage. Congress views RSS and its umbrella organizations as terrorists while BJP is in a state of denial and uses such religious VEOs against other non-Hindus for achieving their political ends.

The VEOs are active from Central Asian Republics to the South Asian region. Violent extremism exists in different types and dimensions in every strategically and economically significant country. Now, the emerging threat and changing dimensions of violent extremism in the form of the ISIS militants, is a potential threat for regional stability and peace. The presence of numerous VEOs and their lethal ideologies is making this region more volatile.

Fueling Factors of Violent Extremism

Indeed, there is no single factor responsible for creating and fueling violent extremism in people. Many factors are the cause of violent extremism. Central and South Asia have also been bearing the consequences of many wars and turmoil that have not only been provoking but also changing mentality of people who then

incline towards extremism. Bad governance, political instability, economic deprivation, violation of basic human rights, sense of religious superiority, sectarian and ethnic clashes, geo-political developments, major powers' atrocities in wars and exploitation of the third world countries and their people, are the major causes that have been fueling violent extremism and terrorism in this area. Ironically, regional and other mutually rival states took advantage of the situation and began using these violent extremists against each other for damaging each other's interests. The states that take benefit from VNSAs, use different tactics to provoke them and use them against rival states and groups¹².

Projects for Regional Connectivity in the Region

The landlocked Central Asian region has abundant natural resources while South Asia has the capacity to use these resources and also provide access through sea to export these resources to other regions and continents in the world. China is one of the spearheading players who want to be included and take benefit of this connectivity. The main projects that are underway in this region are Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline, Central Asia and South Asia (CASA-1000) electricity transmission line, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline, etc. Ironically, the area through which all these routes and transmission and transit lines would pass is already facing the challenge of violent extremism and terrorism since many local and global VEOs have their presence there. These VEOs have their presence in almost every strategic and economic location of both the regions and have potential to not only create obstacles against a conducive environment for inter-regional connectivity but also disrupt any project and halt the passing routes or transmission and transit lines from their areas.

Challenges of Violent Extremism to Regional Connectivity

The presence of VEOs and their activities pose a potential threat to connectivity projects among countries of the two regions. These VEOs, specifically the religious VEOs, are transnational and their sleeper cells exist almost in every area of the regions. Since borders between the states are porous, during any military operations against non-state actors and militants, these VNSAs easily move across borders for safety. The underlying expansion of violent extremism is due to its use in proxy wars by different power-mongering states – a trend which is still prevalent. The Middle East is its prominent example where the USA and Russia are fighting a proxy war against each other at global level while Saudi Arabia and Iran are counter-balancing each other at regional level, maintaining and expanding their spheres of influence. Many experts and scholars believe that the USA and Saudis have been funding the ISIS militants in Syria and the Middle East at large, against the Assad regime and Iran's interests. On the other hand, not only Iran's Revolutionary Guards are participating in the Syrian war but Iran has also been recruiting and training many non-Iranian Shias to fight against ISIS in Syria¹³ and other parts of the region against the interests of the Saudis.

South Asia has also been facing such kind of dilemma in its region where Pakistan, India and Afghanistan are openly using violent extremist groups against each other to maintain their influence and disrupt each other's national interests. Now the situation is more worrisome and complicated because the regional countries have overtly started favoring proxy wars. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi openly admitted of supporting Balochistan insurgency and Pakistan Foreign Secretary Sartaj Aziz also acknowledged that Pakistan has its influence on the Afghan Taliban. Recently, the parliament of Iran has passed a bill for the non-state actors who were killed in Syria while fighting against ISIS on behalf of Iran that their families would get allowances and shelter and, moreover, their children would get free education in Iran. On one side, this kind of bill would incite other regional countries to support VEOs and use them against each other, while, on the other, it would create more mistrust among them and jeopardize the possibility of regional connectivity.

Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Initiatives

The regional countries have initiated the CVE programs domestically, bilaterally and multilaterally because of the threats posed by violent extremism. Domestically, the CVE measures are coherent and cover soft and hard measures. In the domain of soft measures, states have started different programs like reforms and de-radicalization centers especially in the affected areas. As hard measures, the states have legislated their laws to take strict actions against violent extremist and terrorist activities and also launched military operations on militant hideouts. In this context, Pakistan began "Operation Zarb-e-Azb" against militants across the country in 2014. Unlike domestic CVE programs, the bilateral and multilateral CVE programs do not have vast scope because of mistrust and blame game against each other. Regional countries cooperate with each other on

intelligence sharing but at a limited level. They have conducted joint military exercises against terrorism. On August 3, 2016, Afghanistan-China-Pakistan-Tajikistan armed forces formed a Quadrilateral Cooperation and Coordination Mechanism (QCCM) to counter terrorism. In September and October 2016, the Russian military came in Pakistan to conduct joint military exercises against terrorism for the first time ever. Although these bilateral or multilateral initiatives are admirable however a lot still need to be done for more cooperation between regional states.

The Way Forward

Despite these exercises there is still need of more cooperation among the regional countries to counter militancy and extremism in the region. In this context, Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is one of the potent regional organizations to concurrent the regional countries. SCO has agenda against terrorism, extremism and separatism; therefore, the SCO forum could be used to tackle these issues according to international laws, treaties and norms.

It is high time for the regional countries to turn their back supporting VEOs and conducting proxy wars against each other. All the lingering issues should be resolved on table through pragmatic dialogues. Although regional countries have complex issues with each other, but the complex interdependency theory of Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane is the best tool to engage all these countries for mutual economic cooperation. It would reduce the probability of war and support for violent extremism against each other. Alongside, the economic prosperity of an individual and a state should be the primary objective of regional states. Moreover, proper border management, intelligence sharing about VEOs activities, joint CVE mechanisms, and strong counter-narratives should be formed among the countries.

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CHINA-AFGHANISTAN RELATIONS AFTER 9/11 AND ITS PROSPECTS FOR PEACE BUILDING IN AFGHANISTAN

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Abstract: *The main objective of this paper is to analyse the post 9/11 phase of Sino-Afghan relations and its prospects for peace building. Both Afghanistan and China formally established diplomatic relations in 1957. China suspended diplomatic relations with Afghanistan during Taliban regime but restored it in February 2002 when a new interim government was established. China had little interests in Afghanistan before the rise of freedom movement in China's province, Xinjiang, because ETIM (A militant organization working for Uyghur liberation from China) operates from Afghanistan. China wants to ensure that Afghanistan should not become safe-haven for the Uyghur rebellions. Now it has also vital economic and strategic interests as Afghanistan has approximately \$ 1 trillion mineral resources, 1.6 billion barrels crude oil and 16 trillion cubic feet natural gas. To secure these interests, peace in Afghanistan is the prerequisite. Economic development can probably resolve the issue of terrorism in Afghanistan. The notable feature of China's foreign policy toward Afghanistan after 9/11 is; to provide economic aid and limited security assistance and investment. China's economic aid and investment are also playing significant role in the peace building process in Afghanistan. Peace in Afghanistan is not only connected with China's security and investment in Afghanistan but it will bring peace and prosperity in both South and Central Asia. Afghanistan connects South and Central Asia which is correlated with peace in the country.*

Keywords: China, Afghanistan, Peace, South Asia, Central Asia.

Introduction

China and Afghanistan share 76 km long border. Both the states have good friendly relations. An important feature of their relations is that China never had any ideological or political clashes with Afghanistan.¹ Similarly Afghanistan has no bitter memory about China because the latter never interfered in its domestic affairs. So, none of the social or political faction in Afghanistan considers her as an antagonist. Since 2001 China has been taking active part in Afghanistan's economic rehabilitation and development by giving aid and assistance in different fields.²

In Afghanistan, Beijing supports the U.S and NATO efforts, but is not ready to take direct military action. China has refused to deploy army in Afghanistan. Both the states assist each other in fighting against terrorists, drug trafficking and organized crimes. Both the countries agreed to make stronger economic relationship, with focus on exploring and utilizing natural resources, generating electricity, constructing roads, rehabilitating agricultural sector and pursuing communications projects.³

Hamid Karzai visited China five times during his tenure as the president of Afghanistan. He paid first official visit to China after taking oath as president which describes the growing realization of significance of bilateral relationship in both states. Indeed, Afghanistan looks towards Beijing for assistance in economic development as well as in the stabilizing peace and security.⁴

China Afghanistan Relations in Retrospect

The history of China-Afghan relations goes back to seven Century as Monks people from China travelled to Afghan Province Bamyan through Silk Road for visiting statues of Buddha.⁵ However, formal diplomatic relation between the two states were established in 1957 during the regime of the then China's Prime Minister Zhu Enlai's visit. In the same year, Afghan Prime Minister Sardar Daud Khan also visited China. In August 1960 Sino-Afghan Treaty of Friendship and Non-Aggression was signed. After that in 1963 Beijing treaty of formal demarcation of border between both the states was signed which settled the border issue and demarcated 76 Kilometres border between China and Afghanistan⁶.

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China did not like USSR's attack on Afghanistan in 1979.⁷ Beijing supported anti USSR groups by offering arms and training facilities in collaboration with United States and Pakistan. She also refused to recognize the new government established by the USSR in Afghanistan and did not normalize relations with Afghanistan until 1992. Moreover, when the civil war erupted between various combatant factions for acquiring authority, China closed her embassy in Kabul in February, 1993 and did not reopen it until February, 2002. When a new government established under interim authority on December 22, 2001, China restored diplomatic relations with Afghanistan.⁸

China's Interests in Afghanistan

Historically, China has shown relatively little interest in Afghanistan.⁹ But in 1990s the rise of Taliban alarmed Chinese government primarily because they had connections with the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) fighters struggling for the liberation of Xinjiang. China deemed it as a serious threat for its national integration.¹⁰ Chinese government had the perception that Taliban and Al-Qaeda are helping Uyghur separatists based in Afghanistan.

Secondly, China's interest in Afghanistan is economic. Afghanistan has rich natural reservoirs that draw the attention of China toward investment in Afghanistan. United States geological survey estimated that Afghanistan has round about \$1 trillion dollar natural resources including 1.6 billion barrels crude oil and 16 trillion cubic feet natural gas, 240 million tons Copper, Iron and Lithium. These huge natural resources attract China's attention to get benefit from it.¹¹

Thirdly, China does not want long term presence of U.S.A in her neighbourhood. Ironically it is also not in favour of United States' quick withdrawal because it would possibly undermine the security situation in Afghanistan and would endanger China's economic interests and security. China believes that U.S should stabilize Afghanistan before withdrawal.¹² In case of regaining power by Taliban, East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) fighter will get the possible assistance and facilitation.

Fourthly, the flow of narcotics from Afghanistan is also one of the main concerns of China's policy makers. They want to control it.

China-Afghanistan Relation after 9/11

In 2001, China supported the U.S-led coalition's operation against Taliban in Afghanistan. It followed with a four (4) points approach: First, defending stability and security; second, developing the financial system; third, improving governance, respecting the right of the people of Afghanistan to decide the form of govt; and fourth, acquiring international support.¹³

Soon after the downfall of Taliban government, China restored her diplomatic relations with the new Afghan government that was suspended after withdrawal of USSR. Since then, Sino-Afghan relations have improved. They enjoy positive relations. Political leadership of both the states regularly visit each other's countries. Both the states have signed many agreements. The treaty of good neighborhood and cooperation was signed in 2006. It is an important agreement that laid the fundamental principles of bilateral relations.¹⁴

Afghanistan has been lacking professionals in various fields, which is causing weakness of state institutions. Since 2001 to 2013, Peoples Republic of China trained more than 1000 Afghan officials. In addition, at the time of Ashraf Ghani's visit to Beijing in October 2014, China agreed to train further 3,000 official and offer 500 scholarships in the next 5 years from 2015 to 2019.¹⁵ Moreover, China and Afghanistan also signed defense agreement in 2012. According to this agreement Chinese troops were not deployed in Afghanistan, but it is providing limited training facility to Afghan forces at the training colleges and universities of People's Liberation Army.¹⁶ Furthermore, full observer status was also granted to Afghanistan in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), a security organization that includes China, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan.¹⁷ Apart from this, China has also provided weapons to Afghanistan army worth \$2 million.¹⁸

China's Aid to Afghanistan Since 9/11

Immediately after the fall of Taliban regime, China announced \$150 million aid for the reconstruction of Afghanistan.¹⁹ From 2002 to 2014, Beijing has granted \$255 million aid to Kabul.²⁰ On the occasion of Afghan president Ashraf Ghani's visit to China in 2014, China promised to provide \$330 million additional aid

in the upcoming three years.²¹ China also constructed Parwan irrigation scheme and a dam in that area. Apart from this, it has also provided weapons to Afghanistan army worth \$2 million.

China's Investment in Afghanistan

At present Beijing's investment in foreign countries is \$ 310.10 billion from which it has invested \$4.4 billion in Afghanistan.²² In 2007 the governments of China and Afghanistan signed Aynak Copper deposit deal worth \$3.5 billion. It is a thirty years lease to explore copper in Logar province. This contract was gained by Chinese state owned "Metallurgical Company of China" (MCC).²³ According to the UK Geological Survey, the Aynak copper field has 240 million tons copper. It is the biggest Foreign Direct Investment in the history of Afghanistan. It has created 10,000 jobs directly and indirectly. The terms of the agreement indicate that it will employ only Afghans citizens after seven years except some executives. It is estimated that after it becomes operational, the project will provide \$400 million to Kabul which is more than half of current annual budget of Afghanistan.²⁴ Technical education in mining and other training programs have also been started at Kabul University. For the security of Aynak project 1,500 personnel of Afghan Police are deployed who are being paid by the Metallurgical Company.²⁵

Another most important Chinese investment is the project of exploration of oil and gas reservoirs. In 2011 China National Petroleum Corporation and its Afghanistan collaborator Waten Oil & Gas gained the contract of three oil fields in Sari Pul and Faryab provinces. This is the first deal in the history of Afghanistan to allow foreign companies to explore natural oil and gas. Under this agreement China and Afghan companies are exploring crude oil from Amu Darya River Basin oil fields. It has approximately 87 million barrels of crude oil reservoirs. Moreover, Northern region of Afghanistan contains more than 1.6 billion barrels crude oil and 16 trillion cubic feet natural gas. In the beginning, Beijing has invested \$400 million in this project. It is estimated that it will earn \$7 billion over coming twenty five (25) years.²⁶ This project will probably end Afghanistan's total dependency on imported gas and oil.²⁷ The Amu Darya oil fields started production of 5,000 barrels oil per-day in 2013. Its long term potential is daily 145,000 barrels.²⁸ It has also created 7,000 jobs and a refinery in Afghanistan.²⁹

China is also building a 400 megawatt coal power plant to generate electricity for their mining projects and a cargo rail link from Xinjiang through Tajikistan to Afghanistan to supply mineral resources to China. Moreover the Chinese companies, Huawei and ZTE, are investing in telecommunication sector of Afghanistan.³⁰

Despite well-known schemes Chinese firms completed 40 reconstruction projects in different regions of Afghanistan, worth of five hundred (500) million dollar.³¹ Beijing's investment in Afghanistan has two aspects; one is political and the other is economic. Political aspect is, to gain influence in Kabul and economic aspect is, to meet its need of raw materials.

Trade Relations

After 9/11 trade relations between China and Afghanistan strengthened significantly. In 2006, the govt of China declared import of 278 commodities as tariff free from Afghanistan to encourage Afghan exports. The main goods People Republic of China exports to Afghanistan are electronic equipment, machinery, light industrial goods, building materials, domestic appliances and green tea. On the other hand, People Republic of China imports sheep leather, cotton, and carpets etc from Afghanistan. In 2010 Beijing decided to exempt ninety-five (95) percent imported goods of Afghanistan from taxes. China's imports ratio increased from \$.08 million in 2002,³² to \$21.3 million in 2015,³³ and exports to Afghanistan increased from 19.99 million in 2002,³⁴ to \$709 million in 2015.³⁵ It is a constructive development having positive impacts on Afghanistan economy.

China's Efforts for Peace in Afghanistan

Afghanistan suffers from poor governance, terrorism, militancy and weak law enforcement agencies. Above all, weakness in state system is the main dilemma in restoring peace. Like many other countries, China is also working to bring peace in Afghanistan. "China wishes a stable and peaceful Afghanistan to make sure its own security and stability. China fears that if Taliban regime is restored it will have massive impact on the separatist movement in Xinjiang. China is facilitating peace negotiations between Taliban and Afghan government".³⁶ On Afghanistan's initiative, an Afghanistan-Pakistan-China Trilateral Dialogue was started in February 2012. Its first meeting held in Beijing endorsed an "Afghan-led, Afghan-owned" reconciliation process and it holds up UN's major role and called on SCO and other international and regional organizations to play

more active role in establishing peace in Afghanistan.³⁷ China also appointed Sun Yuxi as special envoy for Afghanistan in July 2014 to communicate for peace keeping in Afghanistan with all stakeholders.³⁸

According to Chinese Foreign Minister Wang; his country's major policy towards Kabul is to support political reconciliation in Afghanistan. Accordingly in the presence of China and US officials' first formal peace negotiation took place in Muree between the representatives of Afghan govt and the Taliban. China is in good position to facilitate such mediation because it has comparatively good image in Kabul and also has non-confrontational relationship with the Taliban.³⁹ The series of negotiations are hosted in Pakistani City Muree and Chinese city Urumqi; the capital of Xinjiang province. Unfortunately these talks could not proceed further after the death of Mullah Umer. Later on, China, Pakistan, U.S and Afghanistan formed a working group to restart the talks.⁴⁰ China is playing positive role in peace building process and takes side with Afghan government. The government of Afghanistan also appreciates Beijing's role in peace building process.⁴¹

Another forum from where China is trying to bring peace in Afghanistan is the SCO. It supported the "Six plus two" model. "six" refers to the Afghanistan neighbours, i.e. China, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Pakistan and Iran and "2" refer to America and Russia.

China is also helping Afghanistan in anti-drug efforts. The dilemma of drugs and opium cultivation in Afghanistan are also contributing to terrorism in the country.⁴² Former foreign secretary of Pakistan, Riaz Khan says that drugs mafia contributes to the conflict in Afghanistan by funding militants. China provides anti-narcotics training to Afghan forces.⁴³ She is also contributing to enhance the capabilities of Afghan security agencies. The PLA's Nanjing University offers training in mine clearing to Afghan Army.⁴⁴

Prospects of Peace in Afghanistan and the Region

Afghanistan is also the channel for electricity transmission lines like CASA-1000 and oil and gas pipelines from Central Asia to South Asia. But such projects can be materialized only when peace and stability in Afghanistan is restored. Otherwise land access between both regions is not possible. Terrorism, militancy and the worst law and order situation not only destabilise Afghanistan but these are also spreading to the neighbouring countries. "After the USSR withdrawal, the country became a hub of arms and drug trafficking and smuggling of goods to South Asia and Central Asia which affected the whole region. It weakens ties among South Asian states and Central Asian states. The law and order situation is a major hurdle in the way of proposed pipelines for importing gas and oil from Central Asian Republics to South Asian countries. Moreover competing interests of global and regional powers present in Afghanistan are also a critical hurdle in inter-regional connectivity".⁴⁵

Recommendations

- ✓ Defense agencies in Afghanistan are so much weak. China should provide training facilities, weapons and communication related equipment to Afghan Army and Police.
- ✓ Weak state institutions of Afghanistan are the main hurdle in restoring peace and stability. It will be most important contribution of China to help Afghan government in making institutions stronger through expert opinion on technical issues, training and programs implementations.
- ✓ Afghanistan is facing economic problems and after NATO withdrawal this problem will become more serious. China should also increase its aid to Afghanistan.
- ✓ Being a regional power China can facilitate peace talks comparatively better between Afghan government and Taliban. Thus she can win the hearts and minds of Afghan people. This is essential to resolve Afghan issue.

Conclusion

China has no connections with any particular group in Afghanistan while all other neighbors of Afghanistan have links with certain political groups. Thus China has good image in Afghanistan. Her constructive relations with Afghanistan are serving not only Beijing's strategic, political and economic interests but also have positive impacts on establishing peace and stability in Afghanistan. Its foreign policy in Afghanistan is mostly revolving around economic development and political reconciliation which is pre-requisite for peace in Afghanistan and whole region. China considers that without economic development peace and stability is not possible. Her huge direct investment in mining and natural resources exploration contributes to bring peace and stability. United States and NATO want that China should contribute to the on-going combat

operations to bring peace in Afghanistan but China refuses mainly because of two reasons. First; the fear of attracting attention of international Jihadi organizations and second; the U.S and NATO's bad experience in Afghanistan since 2001.

Peaceful and stable Afghanistan is most important in order to maximize inter-regional connectivity between Central Asia and South Asia and a pre-requisite to strengthen economic and political relations among the countries of both regions. Terrorism in Afghanistan is a main hurdle in the way of proposed oil and gas pipelines and electricity transmission lines between the two regions because Afghanistan is situated at the cross road of Central and South Asia.

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Academic Session: 6

Peace and Security-Centric Cooperation-II

Session Chair: Prof. Dr. Hassan Askari Rizvi

AN APPLE OF DISCORD BETWEEN TWO EMPIRES: THE ISSUE OF IDENTITIES AND CULTURAL HERITAGE IN TAJIK PAMIRS/BADAKHSHAN

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Abstract: *This paper provides broader picture of the history and social-economic development of Central Asian region and Tajikistan, what is already done in Tajikistan, the closest neighbor of Pakistan in order to reconnect South and Central Asia. One of the opportunity for making Tajikistan as a hub of economic and trade of Central Asia and Central Asia as crossroad of old Silk Road initiatives. The first condition for doing so is recreation of Wakhan Corridor in Pamirs/Badakhshan (Afghanistan-Tajikistan). The purpose of this paper is how to avoid the existing historical barriers and how to transform and make them opportunity, the bridge for better cultural and economic cooperation.*

Keywords: Pamirs, Badakhshan, Tajikistan, Pakistan, India, South Asia, Central Asia

Introduction

People of Central Asia and South Asia had permanent economic and cultural interconnection during the centuries. First Arian tribes, according to the sources, were divided in modern Central Asia before partly moving to India and part of them – to Iran and further to Europe. Till the beginning of XX c. and the partition of India both parts of Asia were sharing similar historical destiny, culture, arts and etc., the official language of both was Persian. Only the geo-political competitions between two empires, the Great Britain and Tsarist Russia in XIX c., during the Great Games made here historic, first political then cultural division.

Tajik Badakhshan, or Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Province (GBAO) Republic of Tajikistan or Pamirs located in the heart of Central Asia, in the different branches of crossroad of ancient Silk Road, bordering with Rasht valley in the north, with Kyrgyzstan in the north east, with Xingjian province of China in the east, with Afghan province of Badakhshan in the west and south and it is not far from north part of Pakistan and India, the area populated with the same Iranian origin people in Kashmir (Gilgit, Khunza etc.).

Since Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Province (GBAO) of Republic of Tajikistan or Pamirs is geographically very close to Kashmir, historically they were share rich, diverse, manifold cultural heritages. This region and its neighborhoods were and still are populated by different ethnic groups, mainly Iranian origin from the ancient time, and in Islamic era they were generally and mostly called as a Tajiks and for the last centuries (XVII-XVIII c.) till present and also minor population of nomad Kyrgyz in the East part of province with whom they have economic and cultural exchange during the years. For the current discussion we would like to present the issues of negotiating political, cultural, religious identities of the people in Badakhshan/Pamirs, now called as Pamiri Tajiks, language policy and educational systems: traditional and new. It seems valuable and has to be necessary to show the destiny of culture and people through the prism of geography and history, to see how culture tries to survive even passing across severe environmental and historic processes. In doing so we would like to show the difficult changes through which went and are going to pass the people and the societies of Pamirs/ Gorno-Badakhshan during the most dramatic times and importantly the following historical processes: 1) Fragmentation of Badakhshan during the Big Games; 2) Sovietization (Socialization, collectivization, secularization) 3) Globalization, the Modern issues and changes. For studies of this topic we try to analyze and summarize the existing data's, involving the historical sources, chronics, cultural and linguistic investigations of region, the results of some old and new researches on Central Asian statehoods, the data's of ethnography etc.

In the late XIX c. during the colonial era two superpowers, the Russia and Great Britain started battle over new strategic space in the Pamir and Hindukush regions with desire to protect their strategic interests without taking into account the will of the local people in Pamirs/Badakhshan, the people who are indigenous Tajik by their origin, have common history with broader neighboring area. In 1895 they have been divided into two segments: one went to Russia and another joined Great Britain imperia. The collapse of imperial order

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divided region: one remained with Russia, (now eastern part of Tajikistan), the second went to British India and (now parts (Xunzo, Gitral or Gilgit Baltistan), the third became part of Afghanistan, the Afghan Badakhshan; Forth is Tashqurgan-Tajik region of China, previously belonged to Roshorv Volost and to Murghab; In terms of cultural heritage and identity these regions were also facing severe transformation. Before division all Badakhshan being multilingual entity was a single cultural space, with dominating Farsi-Dari-language and one religious culture. After the territorial division, the segments which are under China's influence, i.e. Tashkurgan passed through unification with Uygurs, and Urdu language became the language of cultural expressions of the northern region of Pakistan instead of traditional Farsi. Although in spite of the injustice division of this region, the people until the 30th of XX c. enjoyed free markets, free individual movement and goods. For example, in small town of Pamirs, in Khorog there was market, where the sellers and traders from Pushover (now in Pakistan), Kashgar (now in China), Faizabad (Afghanistan), and Xunza and Chitral until beginning of repressions of Stalin (1936/37) were very active. No doubt that joining Russia and then Soviet Union had positive impact on the destiny of the people in Soviet Badakhshan. But here I am not intending to assess positive/negative aspects of this separation, since this already belongs to the History, but I am trying to learn what we can do now for the contemporary people to free them from isolation and to avoid such segregation for the future.

Fragmentation of Tajik Pamirs (and Badakhshan)

Before starting to speak about Pamirs and Badakhshan we should bring small introduction on the notion of “Tajik”. It is common knowledge that **Tajiks**, the old notion for the people who are not Arabs and not Turks, mainly Iranians, speaking in different ancient Iranian languages, dialects, like old Sogdian, Bactrians, Khwarazmians and sometimes, even modern Farsi, Kurdish, Pashtu, Mazandarani and Pamirian etc. as well. A.A. Bobrinskiy, one of the leading Russian orientalists visited this region at the beginning of XX century and noted following: “In Turkestan call themselves Tajiks hill tribes and lowland residents who speak some Iranian dialect and consider themselves not Turko-Mongol origin”.¹

Traditional identity of the people of Tajik Pamirs is multilayer, it is multistoried by its nature. Before the Russian revolution Pamirian Tajik identified themselves as Tajiks of Shugni, Wakhi, Rushani etc. Pamirs and Badakhshan in current time are in many cases perceived as synonymous notions, but previously they were containing different geographic and historical meanings. Till the Russian involvement Pamirs called only the eastern part of the modern GBAO. Also, till the final invasion of Shugnan, Wakhan and Darwaz's kingdoms by another neighboring western kingdom of this region, namely so called “Badakhshan”, all them had independence, sometime more fully, but sometimes nominally from the neighboring big states, paying just different tribute to them. Fragmentation was an historic process continuing in this area for the centuries; it was very dynamic historical-cultural region in Silk Road, not always fixed as a expanded state, but consisted of different kingdoms, providing different services for the world trade from China to Europe for centuries.

The main economic interest of big states (Great Britain and Russia) was - to invade the free markets of Central Asia as potential consumers of the goods produced by big and growing industries; For the Russia it was cotton production and the competition with British India. As it understood by British, the political interest of Russia according the George N. Curzon, the former viceroy of India and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Great Britain: “to force England to maintain more restrained politics in Europe by making her to do some activities in Asia, to have wasted energy there”. Accordingly, the main concern of England was just to prevent the attack of Russia from the north to India, as it was called the “crown of British Empire”.

There were other grounds and motives for that big games, but the “real” ground of course was the attack from the north and it was prepared by France first using Russia as an instrument: in 1800 the Russian tsar Pavel together with Napoleon issued Memorandum jointly to attack India from the west-north to drive England away from India, “to liberate Muslims from the tyrannical and barbaric yoke of the British”- as they noted in memorandum². Napoleon in his project suggested using the ways through rivers Danube, Don, Volga, Caspian sea, than from Astarabad through Herat and Kandahar. The project started to be implemented if not the case of the death of tsar Pavel in 1 of March 1801. The military forces with all needed equipments' started to move to the south. New tsar of Russia didn't support this project. The all further negotiation of Napoleon with new tsar Alexander 1st on continuation of this operation failed.

In 1891 Russian changed the rules of the games: they understood the seriousness of British plans playing with Afghanis and Chinese using Pamirs. The Russian brigade under the command of Ionov forcefully occupied the eastern Pamirs, annexed it in order not to lose it to its enemies demanding Chinese and British groups and researchers to leave this territory (Ionov twice time met there with Younghusband and forced him to go out peacefully). Chinese insistence inspired by British on the stone erected by Chinese brigade on the case of winning and annihilating of the Kashkarian refugees in Yashilqul (Murghab)³ as a sign of their invasion of this territory didn't work.⁴

So, the geographical principle as a main factor of delimitation of Pamirs between three-four countries; Now, from the contemporary point of view we can say that the only positive side of delimitation or invading of this region by big powers was the end of slave-trading which is now the shame to acknowledge, but it was one segment of economic life of local rulers, kings and governors of Badakhshan, Shugnan, Vakhan etc.

Meanwhile the opinions of the local rulers and populations were not taken seriously into consideration by external powers dividing this area of the new world. Finally at the end the geopolitical interests of the British and Russian empires come to compromise that the territory of Pamirs have to be divided according to their interests and in 1873 they came to first agreement which was then signed on the west and east Pamirs borders under which Murgab, Wakhan, Shugnan and Rushan were excluded from the sphere of influence of the Afghan emir. Nevertheless, in 1883 the Afghan Emir Abdurrahman Khan in violation of the first treaty captured Shugnan and Vakhan forcefully of the both borders of Panj River.

Russian consular Kashgar (now in western part of China) was suggesting the tsar how to divide the Ismaili community into different pieces creating the fraction within it *as "Russian Ismailis" against the "Ismailies of Aga Khan"*. The Ismailia Islam became as an *apple of discord* between Russian and British imperial states. Nevertheless, the Pamiris or as they have been called later on as Badakhshans had no other choices and applied several times the Russians in its Turkistan provincial government (General Gubernator) to help them with defense from the regular attacks of Afghanis. In 1888, the letter brought by some people to Tashkent from the Shugnan ruler, the Akbar Ali Khan, who was applying for the including Shugnan into Russia in order to avoid the invasion of Afghans and their permanent insulting of the population there.

Fortunately, but not to all Badakhshans, in 1895 Russia and British issued special agreement on the delimitation of the spheres of the influence in Pamirs/Badakhshan and at the same year they signed this document. Their spheres of the influence according to this agreement drew the line from Zor-Kul Lake along the Eastern Pamirs and the River of Panj through Vakhan, Shugnan and Rushan in the north. Russia gave the control of territory in the West part of Pamir directly to Turkestan (Russian) General Governor and the east part to Bukhara emir, which continued not long. So, the Panj River became as the line of delimitation between two empires: eventually the geography and the military interests of others divide the culture, past and future destiny of the people of Badakhshan⁵. There some similarities between this line in Pamirs and the Durant line between British India and Afghanistan created shortly before this dividing Pushtuns and Baluchies into two superficial parts⁶. Formally it was also partly division between Afghanistan and Bukhara's emirate, but Bukhara was not mentioned at all. Russians represented Bukhara as well. And the local people did not want to be under the Bukharians. According to the information provided by baron Cherkasov, the head of Russian Border Military groups in Khorog the people of Vakhan and Shugnan time to time were abused by the representative of the emir, humiliating the local beliefs (which was different from Sunni branch of Bukharians) and after several revolts the religious leaders heading by Sayid Usuf Ali Shoh and Sayyid Farrukhshh together with few local authorities of this region, like Aziz Khan demanded the direct rule of Russians (in 1904). From that time until the Russian October Revolution, in 1918 supreme power belonged to the Russian military forces. This was the time of stabilization of the territory, the borders, but starting point of real separation of the people, and their cultures. The main reason of that separation of course, as it was noted was the interests of the world powers and superficially approved geographical approach for delineation of region by them.

Together with all tragedy which had effected the people in this region Russian involvement served also a positive role on the destiny of the people. They played humanistic, civilizing mission at that particular time.

The institutional and structural reforms on economy, the implementing of the project for overcoming poverty are going on in Tajikistan (Badakhshan as part of it). Corruption also makes the economic life not easy. In Tajikistan the more prospering enterprises will be "punished" by the former warlords becoming businessmen or just state clerks. But post-conflict period of development shows that state made strong efforts to establish

political and social order, step by step the rule of law is establishing in most spheres of socio-economical activities in Tajikistan. For the recent decades independent Tajikistan did significant steps towards socio-economical, international and overall human progress. The visible advance already done in the field of infrastructure, development of the roads, tunnels, small and middle entrepreneurship, there are plans for regional development through reestablishing of communication, trade and exchange of culture alongside with the branches of old Silk Road.⁷

New Opportunities for Reviving Connectivity of North and South of Asia

Unfortunately this division of Central Asia and north parts of India (Pakistan) created many economic, political and cultural obstacles between people in North and South part of Asia; at the same time great games divided Pamiri Tajiks and Ismaili's into two parts that lost their connectivity during the centuries. Tajikistan with its Pamirs/Badakhshan and Pakistan and even India with their north parts and areas (including Kashmirs) can reestablish traditional multipurpose relationships. Now, after the independence, despite of the existence many opportunities, cultural and historical commonalities between the North and South Asia, agreements on bilateral cooperation between Central Asian states, in particular between Tajikistan and Pakistan, between Tajikistan and India, cooperation didn't improve too much during 25 years of independency, the traditional relationship of the people, exchanging goods between Central Asia and South Asia have not been completely restored, historical and cultural connectivity is not perfect from the start. Relations of Central Asian states and Pakistan and India are developing, but the level of this cooperation does not often meet demand. It is known fact that main obstacle for realization of connectivity of the region are religious extremist's movements such as the Taliban, IMU, so called "daish" etc. I asked Pakistanis how much their country is successful to prevent the damages of these movements, in restoration physical and economical communication, how much work began to revive cultural and scientific cooperation for recent years? How many scholars, scientists, doctors, artists, poets, singers for last decade visited Bishkek, Tashkent, Astana, Dushanbe or just the nearest regional cities and towns, like Kulyab, Khujand, Khorog, Osh etc., how many scholars, artists, singers, scientists have visited Karachi, Lahore, or Islamabad? Unlike of reconnecting the regions, establishing fruitful cooperation and supporting peaceful development, creating better economic and cultural relations with post-Soviet Central Asia after independence, we receive dozen madrasa graduates with fundamentalist worldview in contemporary Central Asia annually from Pakistan and Arabic (Saudi and Qatar) counties, who create political problems for modern states in Central Asia. In addition to this there is counterproductive, unnatural, counter-civilizational alliances supported by the Westerners dealing with Islamist terror, which has been mentioned by Alexandre del Valle, a French writer, journalist, and political commentator in his criticism of radical Islam and in his 'Red, green and brown theory' of alliance.

Although it is known that there are few effective initiatives sounds from both sides: Central Asian countries are interested to climb to warm Indian ports, to open sea water roads, even trying to put this into the practice. One initiative which came from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, supported by Pakistan is CASA-1000 to transfer relatively inexpensive hydro-energy to Southern Asia, the second is the TAPI project for transportation of Turkmen gas and oil to Pakistan and India etc. Construction dozen new HPPs in Tajikistan (Sangtuda 1 Sangtuda 2, and now well-known Rogun HPP, the Qambar-ata HPP cascades also serve this purpose. Apart from these and other projects, there are four (4) free economic zone (FEZ, namely - Sughd, in Danghara, Panj and Ishkoshim), who are looking for domestic and foreign investments. Addition to all there is project of transporting Turkmen and Uzbek gas through Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to China, moreover the plans for the railway between Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and China with the alternative through Uzbekistan etc.; For effective communication between South and north parts of Asia the government of Tajikistan already has built six bridges in Panj-Amu-Darya river between Tajikistan and Afghanistan, funding from local and international aids. Turkmenistan is also increasing its transport corridor towards Afghanistan and through this country, initiating railways connections. Uzbekistan is also showing interests to the Pakistani ports in Indian Ocean. Finally there is international University of Central Asia, which was built on the initiative of three presidents: Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and HH the Aga Khan, with the purpose for the development of remote and mountainous regions of Central Asia, which started functioning in Narin town of Kyrgyzstan. It was mentioned that all these existing and planned initiatives will play crucial role in integration regions: the people, their cultures, the commodities, promoting development of north and south areas of Asia.

Together with economic projects there are some cultural, educational and spiritual dimensions exist and it case of more effective cooperation they can be important vehicle for regional connectivity and mutual

development. There are faculties of oriental studies, many research centers and departments for studying south Asian languages, like Hindi, Urdu etc. There are lot of Arabic, Persian and Turkic manuscripts in Central Asian Academies which can be joint cultural heritage of both south and central Asia. Tajikistan and Pakistan both are reading the works of Allama Muhammad Iqbal without translations, also one in Persian and second in Urdu. The poems of Iqbal are very popular among the Tajiks; they became even anthem during the meetings for independence. There is the society of Iqbal, the department of Urdu of faculty of Asia and Europe of Tajik National University annually organizes conferences devoted to Iqbal. Muslim rulers of India moved from Samarqand to Kabul and Delhi, established state and mixed Persian-Turkic-Indian culture. Amir Khosraw Delhawi, Hasan Delhawi, Mirzo Abdul Qadir Bedil, Sebnunissa and many others created great people of poems in Persian and Urdu, which is joint cultural capital of our regions, which can be used as resources for future mobilization of the people and cultures, bringing people together. There many other research institutes within the national academy of Sciences of Central Asia where is possible to organize joint research projects for studying common cultural heritages. One of them is the Center of Avicenna in the Institute of Philosophy, Political Sciences and Law Academy of Sciences Republic of Tajikistan, where lot of works of Ibn Sina, Abu Bakr ar-Razi published in two languages, in Russian and Tajiks. Central Asian scholars have long time experiences of studying south Asia (Pakistan and India). For example, one of them was Abu Rayan Biruni (X-XI c.), who has been admitted as the first Indologist in the world history.

Actually the connections between Central Asia and South Asia are improving: there is exchange of goods, the products of agriculture, construction materials etc. But this connection goes mainly through Termiz (in Uzbekistan) and Panj bridges (in Tajikistan), which is long way to reach the destination and goes through zones something controlled by extremist groups. At the same time there is the shortest way connecting Central Asia (Tajikistan) and Pakistan is Wakhan corridors, the tiny territory of Afghan Badakhshan. In case of providing security to this area it can connect very easily and close distance two regions including northern and eastern parts of Russia. This way can be very profitable for all Central Asian states and even for Russian Federation. Some foundation has been made during quadripartite meeting of presidents of Russia (Medvedov), Pakistan (Zardari), Tajikistan (Rahman) and Afghanistan (Hamid Karzai) in Dushanbe. Four presidents in 2 September 2011 negotiated in Dushanbe economic cooperation, in the sectors of energy, developing hydroelectricity, transport, mining industry, the need to carry out regional projects, the specific plans for the road connections between North and South parts of Asia (through renovation of Salang tunnel, recreation of Wakhan corridors etc.). In north part of Pakistan there is Broghol pass (3798 m./12,460 ft), providing access to the Warkhan Corridor, the political creation of Great Game, between Britain and Russia in 1873 and between Britain and Afghanistan in 1893, effectively splitting this region.

Reestablishing peaceful cooperation between these two regions is extremely important for the development of both parts of Asia, including Russian part of Asia, which has no access to south parts of Asia without involving Central Asia. One of condition of for enhancing understanding of each other is people to people meeting, collaborations and interactions. The basic knowledge of the people in both regions is minimal. For the purpose of better understanding of the regions I made suggestion to create new university with teaching and researching units. It can be called as University of CASA (similar to the name of CASA-1000, the energy transmission line from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to South Asia). This suggestion and few words on Allama Muhammad Iqbal were well received by Pakistani participants.

I observed that many presentations devoted to Central Asia (from the West and Asia) were mainly based on internet resources, the presenters were not well familiar with the area of research, the geography, the people, traditions, cultures and even the locations in contemporary Central Asia states which they were describing. It is clear that using Media and distance knowledge are always problematic, usually they made by the order of some part making bad/good images for other parts. Same concerns the images of the countries in Central Asia in the world, many journalists describe them as opponents or even enemies. For example, media always speculates over the construction of Rogun Hydro Station in Tajikistan and Qambar-ota HHS in Kyrgyztan (upstream countries), which according to them are opposing by the countries in downstream: Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. They didn't know that such discussions are not dominant among the Central Asian countries (especially after the demise of the late Islam Karimov). One participant of the conference even didn't know that Wakhan corridor is in Tajikistan, but not in Turkmenistan. Another PhD student from Lahore University is prizing Pashtuns tribes for their fight for liberation of Afghanistan during the Soviet invasion, but didn't know that this tribe was not alone in this victory. Ahmadshah Mas'ud, Ismail-Khan (others from the north) was not

from Pashtun tribe, but made great contribution to this. It is sad that some students from the south of Asia are sharing the 'Salafi' idea of one entity, or one state order for all Muslims, which is not acceptable for contemporary Central Asian states. The same little knowledge on South Asia (India and Pakistan) we have among the people (students, professors) in Central Asia. All such cases justify the importance of people to people, face to face meetings and collaborations of Pakistanis and Central Asian people, to know each other better through direct interactions, conferences, scholarships, trades, businesses, etc.

During the visit to Pakistan I was delighting with the hospitality of all Pakistani people, the staffs, professors, students and ordinary people in the street and visit to the city of Lahore. All Pakistani people are very kind and the scholars, the intellectuals are very smart, with strong analytical and critical way of thinking. I convinced that so many common cultural and historical issues are connecting both in Central and South Asia (and even Iran, Afghanistan and India) and we have to take more serious responsibility to rebuild this old bridges for the benefits of current and next generations.

Concluding I have to mention that Tajikistan and Pakistan have an opportunity for making themselves as a hub of economic (trade) of Central Asia and Central Asia as crossroad of old Silk Road initiatives, since they are geographically locate in the gate of north and South of Central Asia. The first condition for doing so is recreation of Wakhan Corridor in Pamirs/Badakhshan (Afghanistan-Tajikistan) and opening direct roads (landroads and railways) between two regions, South and Central Asia. I think this is opportunity which have to be used for the own people, but not for the benefits of foreign geo-politic interests of superpowers (not for the dividing and ruling policy). But peaceful involving the superpowers (without their radical Islamist agenda and without global net of narco-cartels) can be always profitable. For this purpose should be established few working groups.

Some Pragmatic Recommendations for Modern Connectivity

- ✓ Provide close economic and trade cooperation and cultural and scientific relations between the scientists and experts of Central Asia (including the closest neighbor, Tajikistan (Wakhan corridor), the gate for the rest of Central Asia) and South Asia (in the case of Pakistan) by all possible means, on a regular basis and to be put into practice.
- ✓ Scholars and experts of the two sides in various directions (within different projects and programs), which have been noticed above, have to be involved in a specific cooperation and to promote development and progress of both the region and withdraw the sense of mistrust by minimizing Central Asia as zone geo-economic insulate zone (landlocked countries, without the links to external water channels, to open the roads to the maritime and southern ports ways.
- ✓ Re-live historical and traditional contacts of Wakhan corridor (tiny part of Tajikistan and Afghanistan separating them from Indian subcontinent) and transforming it into "hub network" - aimed central South Asia and to establish the contacts with all Central Asian countries and North Asia (Russia) and others. In case of not getting agreement with Afghanistan it is reasonable to establish this road through Karakoram Higher way, using the links in western China.
- ✓ With the development of socio-economic, cultural and scientific relations (which are weak at present time) it is possible to diminish extremism, to challenge narco-cartels and narco-syndicates using all roots and roads for their criminal goals, but we should transform these regions into the place of peace and cooperation. In this regards, it is possible to organize workshops, conferences of South Asian Universities (including Lahore University) with some universities in Central Asia, for example, the University of Central Asia with three campuses, the Institute of Philosophy, Political Sciences in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan Academy of Sciences, including Strategy Centers in mentioned countries under the President, so giving less opportunities for criminal bodies and their deals.
- ✓ For the better mutual understanding and providing opportunities for regional integration it is possible to establish learning and studying centers, like The University of CASA (like the Power Transmission Project "CASA 1000"), the name of the project between Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan with training centers for strategic, economic and social and cultural researches in Dushanbe, in Bishkek and Lahore and in future in other capital cities in Central Asia.

Both Pakistan and India have common cultural heritage with Central Asian nations. This can be great opportunity for cooperation, i.e. to use this cultural capital for contemporary development of both regions, avoiding conflicts and misunderstanding.

- ✓ Pragmatic view on English language, which should be considered mandatory as the main language of communication and international conferences for specialists and scientific staff in Central Asia, providing the staff with short-term courses using training centers at the University of Central Asia in Dushanbe, Bishkek or Khorog and learning centers in north parts of Pakistan/Afghanistan/India etc. One solution is applying for funds for English language training to the US Embassy in Dushanbe, Bishkek etc.
- ✓ Participation of representatives of Central Asian countries should be mandatory in international scientific conferences, in which Central Asians need to protect the strategic interests of their country.
- ✓ Based on such meetings and negotiation it is important to create strategic plans and programs for interconnectivity of both regions. Otherwise, the competing sides (for example, the oil rich countries, like Saudis and Qatar) would use these meetings for their own benefits, to cut traditional links between South and North of Asia and make them to be dependent on them politically, culturally and spiritually, since they are dominating Muslim sacred places.

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- ⁴One can ask the fact that if one stone can proof the evidence of occupation and belonging the territory, why not the existed in history Persian and Kushan imperia in this territory, the creation of the state of Yattishahr (the Muslim Central Asian state, now the province of Xinjiang in China) by Yakubbek (Tajik-Uzbek origin from Fergana) can be the evidence pretension of Central Asians to Kashgar, Yarkand and Khutan, the West parts of China?
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- ⁶ The original 1893 Durand Line Agreement was written in English, with translated copies in Dari or Pashto language. It is believed however that only the English version was actually signed by Amir Abdur Rahman Khan, a language which he could not read or understand. End of Imaginary Durrand Line: North Pakistan belongs to Afghanistan by Wahid Momand.
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CHALLENGES TO REGIONAL SECURITY IN SOUTH ASIA: A NEW PARADIGM

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Abstract: *Security challenges pose a common problem to the South Asian region. Interestingly, these very challenges when seen as common denominators by the respective countries could become the cause of collective regional harmony. India is the largest state in the region- economically, militarily, and territorially. Therefore, this research paper aims to illuminate and investigate the equation between India and its neighbors, and its impact on regional security. The role of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) will be examined to evaluate the regional agreements and steps taken to deal with the security challenges. This research is motivated by three significant research questions 1) What is the role of bilateral measures taken towards resolution of security challenges, have they been a success, and what are their shortcomings? 2) What is the significance of SAARC in developing a collective regional security paradigm for South Asian challenges to security? 3) What are the main causes that trigger the security challenges in the South Asian region? This study has, thereby, three main goals 1) To identify the causes leading to security challenges 2) To highlight the notion that security challenges are related to the overall progress of the region 3) To evaluate bilateralism and regional cooperation under SAARC. This study is qualitative in nature and is based on content analysis.*

Keywords: South Asia, Security, SAARC, Bilateral, Regional

Introduction

South Asian region has a history of conflicts for thousands of years, being the habitat of the descendants of Indus Valley civilization. “All the states of this region have faced insurgencies over the past generation, which in two cases (Afghanistan & Nepal) have actually overthrown the existing state. Sri Lanka and Burma have both faced rebellion which have lasted longer, covered proportionally far more territory, and caused proportionally far more casualties than has been the case with the Taliban revolt in Pakistan”¹

Regional alliances, organizations, or bilateral measures have not been able to resolve the challenges of regional security in South Asia. Among the several causes barring the way to successful resolution of security challenges, interstate territorial conflicts stand out. Pakistan and India, two conflicting states that are nuclear capable, have fought several wars over territorial disputes. Moreover, the overlapping territorial boundaries, often harboring similar ethnic identities, have caused problems for the states leading to perpetual air of rivalry and unease.

South Asia & Regionalism

Regionalism has emerged as a viable concept for collective progress of nations inhabiting similar geographical space. It seeks to garner collective solutions to common problems within the larger contemporary phenomenon of globalization. When it comes to South Asian region, India dwarfs other countries as far as its economic, historical and political standing is concerned. Indo-Pakistan tussle remains one of the most significant regional conflicts and has led the two nuclear capable countries to war in past for at least three times while the intermittent tensions have left an aura of instability for the entire region. “Pakistan is in fact a great deal more like India – or India like Pakistan – than either country would wish to admit”

SAARC

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) (which was established in 1985), when compared globally, is among the least successful regional organizations. India is the leading member of the SAARC. Interstate conflicts in South Asia remain unresolved over the years due to which the South Asian states have not been able to focus their attention on resolving internal challenges. The reason as to why SAARC has been unsuccessful in dealing with internal development challenges, such as poverty, health, education etc is because interstate conflicts especially, particularly that between India and Pakistan have sabotaged the steps taken towards common goals. This is what how the purpose of SAARC has been delineated in its Charter:

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“We, the Heads of State or Government of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka” are “Desirous of promoting peace, stability, amity and progress in the region through strict adherence to the principles of the UNITED NATIONS CHARTER and NON-ALIGNMENT, particularly respect for the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, national independence, non-use of force and non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and peaceful settlement of all disputes”²

The effectiveness of SAARC is even more relevant given that conflicts in South Asia are intensifying. One such example could be that of Balochistan - the Pakistani province bordering Iran and Afghanistan. As the scale of terrorist attacks in Balochistan is rising, Pakistan maintains that these acts of sabotage are not random but have careful planning behind them. Pakistan has publicly accused India of interfering in Baluchistan and has even captured an Indian spy, a serving naval officer, who was operating inside the province at the time of arrest. This is indeed a clear violation of the SAARC charter as mentioned above.

Security Dynamics in South Asia

Issues such as Kashmir, Sir Creek, Siachen, Tamils, Tibet, etc., have been major obstructions in the path towards regional cooperation. Conflicts between India and Pakistan, after the deadly partition in August 1947, resulted in wars of 1948, 1965, 1971, and 1999, besides a range of other low intensity conflicts. India is bordered by much smaller countries in size- some of which are largely dependent on India for trade and economy, which creates associated problems for India such as cross border infiltrations, smuggling, and trafficking.

Measures taken under SAARC

The interstate feuds among the states in South Asia and the lack of economic interaction are the major causes of low cooperation in SAARC. As a matter of fact, the most contentious of interstate conflicts have not even been included in the SAARC agenda. Instead, SAARC focuses more closely on areas of regional progress and development. However, bilateral conflicts often become the cause of disruption- the most recent example being the cancellation of SAARC summit to be held in Islamabad over the recent India-Pakistan tensions in Kashmir.

In this scenario, there are only a few instruments of security cooperation in SAARC ever since its creation. “The most important document is the Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism, which was already signed in 1987. But because of their divergent positions toward Kashmir, neither India nor Pakistan could agree on a common definition of terrorism, so the document remained meaningless. Following UN declaration 1373 of September 28, 2001, SAARC passed the Additional Protocol to the SAARC Regional Convention on Terrorism. The common terrorist threat was addressed at several SAARC summits, but it took a long time to arrive at more concrete forms of cooperation. In 1992 the interior ministers established the SAARC Drug Offences Monitoring Desk in Colombo in order to bundle information about the regional networks for drug trafficking. In 1995, the SAARC Terrorist Offences Monitoring Desk was set up in Colombo in order to collect and exchange information on terrorist activities. With the aim of fighting cross-border crime and discussing issues such as arms-, drugs-, and human-trafficking and money laundering, there were annual meetings between the heads of police of all SAARC members between 1996 and 2007; since 2007 the meetings have been biannual.⁸² Since 2006, the member states have been discussing the creation of SAARCPOL, a common regional police institution that would work similarly to Interpol”³

Bilateral Measures

Bilateralism is known as one-on-one collaboration and cooperation between two states or organizations. The following bilateral agreements make India as a focal point with whom all other smaller states in the region have made agreements at various points. Almost all the member states in the region of South Asia share a dispute with the Indian state.

India and Pakistan are the two leading conflicting parties when it comes to South Asian security. External security challenges in many cases emanate from the internal security challenges, such as ethnic and religious conflicts, scarcity of resources, and challenges of underdevelopment, poverty, malnutrition, and health related problems. All of them pave way for larger interstate conflicts in the region.

Pakistan's strategic ties with China pose a threat to US's regional aspirations, with Gwadar port on the horizon. US sees India as an ever more suitable regional protégé for furthering its motives. However, the Indian support comes with a price - its demand for the endorsement of its "Anti-Pakistan" doctrine.

Table 1: Pakistan's Bilateral Agreements

Indus water treaty was signed between India and Pakistan after mediation by the world bank. The treaty makes it an agreement that water will not be used as a weapon in the wars between both state ⁵	1960
During their rapprochement in the late 1980s, Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto agreed to exchange lists of nuclear installations in both countries that should not be attacked in the case of war ⁵	1988
Both countries agreed to pre-notification of test flights of ballistic missiles ⁵	2006
Both countries signed an agreement to reduce the risk of accidents with nuclear weapons ⁵	2007
There are also various confidence-building mechanisms in the conventional military field. A first hotline between the Directors General of Military Operations DGMOs was established over the LOC in Kashmir after the war ⁵	1971

Source: (Wagner, 2014)

Table 2: Afghanistan's Bilateral Agreements

After the international community intervened in 2001, India became the biggest non-Western donor in Afghanistan and has invested more than US\$1 billion since then ⁵	2001
India and Afghanistan signed a strategic partnership agreement, which is the basis for the military cooperation between the Indian Army and the Afghan Security Forces (ASF) ⁵	2011
India plans to train more than 1,000 members of the ASF. 31 In July 2013, the Indian foreign minister, Salman Khurshid, refused the request by the Afghan government to supply "lethal" weaponry to Afghanistan. But he promised to continue support for training, transport, and logistics ⁵	2013

Source: (Wagner, 2014)

Table 3: Nepal's Bilateral Agreements

The Peace and Friendship Treaty regulated the bilateral relationship with the Himalayan kingdom. The treaty also included secret letters that restricted the monarchy's international room for maneuver in favor of India	1950
Military collaboration began when King Tribhuvan called an Indian military support team for help with the reorganization of the Royal Nepalese Army	1952
Among others, there is Nepal-India Bilateral Consultative Group on Security Issues, the Joint Working Group on Border Management, and the Border District Coordination Committee.	1975

Source: (Wagner, 2014)

Table 4: Bhutan's Bilateral Agreements

The Friendship treaty gave India substantial influence in handling the foreign policy and international affairs of Bhutan. With the treaty, India also intended to protect its security interest vis-à-vis China in the Himalaya region	1949
The Indian Border Roads Organization, a unit of the Engineer Corps of the Indian Army, has been doing infrastructural work in Bhutan, for instance, building the airport in Paro	1961-onwards
More than 36 percent of funds from the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Program went to Bhutan	2012/13

The total strength of the Bhutanese forces was 9,021 soldiers. ⁴⁶ Both countries have established the India-Bhutan Joint Group on Border ⁴ Management and Security	2007
The military cooperation between both countries reached a new level of importance	2003

Source: (Wagner, 2014)

Table 5: Bangladesh Bilateral Agreements

With the military intervention into the civil war in East Pakistan, India made the independence of Bangladesh possible	1971
After democratization, the Awami League began closer collaboration with India once again, whereas the Bangladesh Nationalist Party was always much more critical of their neighbor	1990/91
Water-sharing of the Ganges had stressed the bilateral relationship for decades and could only be settled with a treaty	1996
Another treaty concerning the sharing of the Teesta River could not be signed because of political intervention by the state government in West Bengal and its chief minister, Mamata Banerjee	2011
After long negotiations, the conflict over the territorial enclaves was settled	2011
In recent years both states have extended their security cooperation. Since 2007 there have been joint border patrols. After the victory of the Awami League, which is traditionally close to India, joint military exercises were held, followed by naval exercises	2007
Both countries agreed on an extradition treaty in order to improve the fight against terrorism and cross-border crime	2013

Source: (Wagner 2014)

Table 6: Sri Lanka Bilateral Agreements

The first noteworthy security collaboration took place when India supported the Sri Lankan government in suppressing an armed leftist rebellion ⁵	1971
India and Sri Lanka signed an accord that deployed the Indian Peace Keeping Forces to the northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka ⁵	1987
India and Sri Lanka agreed to expand their military cooperation in the fight against the LTTE ⁵	2004
Until the end of the civil war in May 2009, the intelligence agencies of both countries shared knowledge, and both sides conducted joint military operations, which weakened the supplies of the LTTE and its readiness for combat in the final phase of the war ⁵	2009
New Delhi and Colombo agreed on an annual defense dialogue and regular talks between the different military services of both countries. India offered 1,400 places in its training institutions for the Sri Lankan security forces, and the naval forces conducted joint military exercises in Sri Lankan waters for the first time ⁵	2011
The Indian government has emphasized that it will continue its collaboration and signed an Anti-Terror Agreement with Sri Lanka ⁵	2013

Source: (Wagner, 2014)

Internal Security

Poverty
Health problems
Environmental security
Human rights violation

External Security

Terrorism/non state actors
Cross border insurgencies
Territorial disputes
Nuclearization

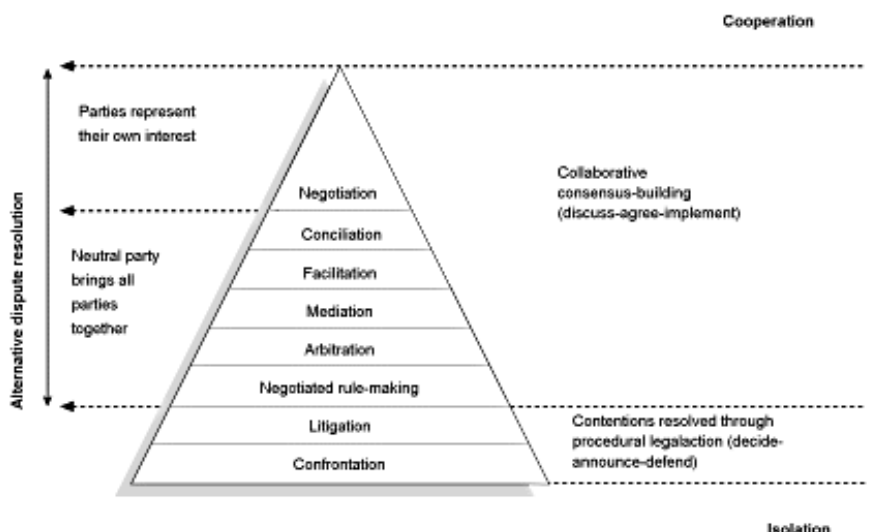
Conceptual Framework: Conflict Management

Conceptual framework applied herewith is ADR (Alternative Dispute Resolution). ADR techniques commonly entail arbitration, conciliation, mediation, and negotiation. “Conflict management is the practice of being able to identify and handle conflicts sensibly, fairly, and efficiently.”⁵

South Asia is known for its hyper sensitivity towards interstate conflict which have been lingering on for decades. This shows the need for a carefully carved approach towards bringing all the stakeholders onboard and managing a suitable conflict resolution technique to decipher the tensions that are sabotaging peace and prosperity of the region.

There are a several ways to handle a conflict, varying from resorting to violence at one end to entirely ignoring the conflict on the other hand, while there are a variety of conflict management techniques in between. The existence of litigation as common means of addressing a conflict cannot be overlooked, which is based upon the decision taken by the court, and predetermined legal rules which are binding on the conflicting parties. Nevertheless, ADR techniques can be applied for conflict management in South Asia. “These include negotiation, mediation and conciliation, which are more flexible and produce results that are more acceptable to the parties as well as more sustainable in the longer term. ADR is being used increasingly in conflicts over the environment and natural resources and has considerable advantages over traditional contentious methods”⁶.

Figure 1: ADR Conflict Management Technique



A New Paradigm

The new security paradigm in South Asian region is based upon post 9/11 shift in security perceptions. This new security perception poses following major challenges to regional security:

- ✓ The shift in the world order after 9/11 has also altered the internal dynamics of the countries which are members or frontline allies in the war on terror.
- ✓ American pre-emptive doctrine which has focused upon the regime change has destabilized the governments and toppled rulers in the Middle East. Regime change operations may be expanded beyond the Middle East.
- ✓ There have been negative political and economic consequences for frontline allies to the US-led war on terror such as Pakistan.
- ✓ The war on terrorism has itself followed a directionless path, ignoring the root causes of terrorism and focusing on elimination of the symptoms. This strategy has made the war-on-terror an end in itself rather than the elimination of the menace of terrorism.

After the occurrence of 9/11, the world has entered into a new world order, where economics and economic rivalries have taken the center stage. Conventional warfare has paved way for unconventional means of warfare to the extent that insurgencies and proxies have replaced traditional armies. Globalization has diminished the distances and eased the channels of communication. Emergence of Pakistan as a frontline ally to war on terror post 9/11 brought Pakistan to the center stage of terrorism, both as victim and host to some extremist elements. As a result, Pakistan had to undertake unusual measures, including larger engagement of military and law enforcement agencies. Eastern border is not the only threat anymore; threat on the western border coupled with internal threats have complicated the security situation for the country. Foreign policy of Pakistan has long been known for its lopsided India-centric inclinations. However, 9/11 has changed the long standing position of the country towards both internal and external threats which were overlooked earlier.

Afghanistan: The Rogue State

Afghanistan is often considered the buffer zone for the countries that seek to carry their mission in the region. Pakistan's 2,430-kilometre (1,510 miles) international border with Afghanistan poses perpetual threat to Pakistan's security and stability. 9/11 has paved way for making Pakistan's India-centric foreign policy largely multifarious. Pakistan now focuses more heavily on Afghanistan's soil being used by the Indian intelligence. US tilt towards India and India's sizeable trade and business with the Gulf States has further pushed Pakistan with regards to its dependency on China.

With the increase in India's presence in Afghanistan, India is also seeking to gain US endorsement for its role in Afghanistan. PM Modi has been visiting Kabul on many occasions. While India's interest in Afghanistan is multi-faceted, Pakistan's seems to be the direct affectee of its enhanced profile. Nevertheless, Pakistan sees Afghanistan as an indispensable part of its security concerns. Quite evidently, Pakistan's insurgencies possess a direct link to Afghanistan with a shared porous borders, which intermittently causes influx of huge, and mostly unidentified refugees.

Peace-Building Measures

India's insistence on maintenance of bilateralism or regionalism in South Asian political dynamics is causing fewer benefits than destruction. The latter notion has been expressed by India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in one of his speeches in 1961, while talking about display of intolerance to outside interference into South Asian matters. Nevertheless, the ongoing tensions in the region are persistently disrupting the peace because India has not been following up on its own preference to resolution of conflict under bilateralism.

The peace building measures initiated under both multilateral and bilateral frameworks have met failure because the ADR conflict management technique as shown in figure1. (ADR conflict management technique) have not been implemented or there is lack of visible interest in doing so. According to the given figure the existence of a neutral party is extremely important for the entire process of conflict management to take place in the first place. On the other hand, the involvement of a neutral party for a decisive solution to the regional conflicts is vehemently discouraged and denounced by India, considering it (India) being at the center of all the trouble in the region, as you can see below:

- ✓ Pakistan blames India of instigating separatists in Sindh and Balochistan.
- ✓ Bangladesh accuses India of supporting separatist movement in Chittagong Hill Tract (previously, East Pakistan, which India so brutally annexed into Bangladesh).
- ✓ Sri Lanka calls end to Indian support of its Tamil rebels, demanding Independent Tamil state.
- ✓ China vehemently condemns Indian backing of Tibetan Liberation Army.
- ✓ Nepal criticizes India for supporting Maoist rebels in Nepal, and pushing them into Nepalese region to rid Indian Territory of a separatist movement.
- ✓ Myanmar authorities and the local people in the bordering areas claim that India has encroached on its territory by redrawing an unjust border.
- ✓ Landlocked Bhutan lives constantly under influence of India's foreign policy interest as it is dependent on India of its trade and economy, thus manipulated over India's anti-china rhetoric keeping Bhutan from independent progressive foreign policy and greater economic benefits.

It is imperative for the South Asian region to understand that external security is dependent on the internal security, therefore, the more internally a country is viable, independent and progressive the more progressive regional environment would be achieved bringing peace and stability to the entire region.

Moreover, India as it boastfully claims to be the largest democracy in the world, and flaunts the highest GDP growth rate and blooming economy, while it is part of the BRICS, the future economic big names of the world, it is unfortunate to observe from close quarters that it practices least amount of democratic values when it comes to regional security dynamics and will to resolve regional conflicts. It shares border with all the territorially, economically and militarily smaller states which should rather be utilized as a factor to reach regional peace and peaceful resolution to the regional conflicts.

Conclusion

South Asian region has several problems, perhaps more than any other region in the world, keeping in view unavailability of bare necessities, environmental degradation causing over population, scarcity of resources coupled with the problems of governance. It is highly recommended that South Asian states should seek to resolve problems of basic needs for the regional prosperity. Security challenges are a common problem in South Asia, in light of that, this could become the cause of collective regional harmony, if considered as a common denominator by all the respective countries.

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TERRORISM IN AFGHANISTAN: A NUISANCE FOR INTER-REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY OF SOUTH ASIA AND CENTRAL ASIA

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Abstract: *Central Asia (C.A) is considered as a pivot of the world because of its strategic location and huge hydrocarbon resources. Major Powers including China, European Union (EU), India and Pakistan are actively engaged in this region for their economic and strategic interests. The C.A has the potential to be a reliable energy supplier for South Asia, but due to volatile security situation in Afghanistan the inter-regional connectivity faces uncertainty. Afghanistan is facing unprecedented level of challenges, which includes the resurgence of Afghan Taliban; the Islamic State, inadequate Resolute Mission forces, poorly trained Afghan forces, India-Pakistan proxy war, Pak-Afghan discordance and drug trafficking. The dialogue process is the only way to bring peace in Afghanistan. The US and other powers must carry out reconstruction and infrastructure development in Afghanistan. India, Pakistan and Afghanistan must end their clandestine activities against each other. All regional states must work together to curb drug trafficking. Peace and stability in Afghanistan would improve inter-regional connectivity between South Asia and Central Asia.*

Keywords: Terrorism, Energy Security, Inter-regional Connectivity, India, Pakistan

Introduction

The Central Asian region is placed in a strategic position because of its historical significance. This area served as the crossroads of many civilizations for centuries. Today, the Central Asian region is again in limelight because of its geo-strategic location and huge hydrocarbon resources.

The inter-regional connectivity between South Asia and Central Asia is of paramount importance for the mutual development and progress of these regions. The landlocked countries could be connected through Pakistan to the rest of the South Asia and Middle East. Pakistan and India are eagerly fomenting ties with CAS because both these states are facing acute energy deficiency. Both these states from South Asia can find respite in energy rich Central Asia to overcome their energy woes.

But there is one roadblock in the way of inter-regional connectivity and that is instability in Afghanistan. It is facing several challenges to its security that includes, resurgence of Taliban, the rise of Islamic State militants-Khorasan Province (IS-KP), meagre forces under Resolute Mission, weak Afghan security forces, India and Pakistan's proxy war, blame game between Pakistan and Afghanistan and Drug trafficking. All these factors played havoc with the security of Afghanistan.

The Strategic Significance of Central Asia

The Central Asian region got independence in the early 1990s from the Soviet Union.¹ There are five states in Central Asia, including Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Though this region is landlocked but still it holds key position in the world. It is surrounded by Russia, China, Iran, Afghanistan and Caspian Sea.²

The Central Asian region has been focus of major powers because of its strategic location and vast energy resources. Famous historian Mackinder called this region as *Heartland*.³ In his theory, he argues that he who controls the *Heartland* the pivotal point between the continental and maritime powers controls the world. Some parts of Russia and whole Central Asia comes in his theory, but another writer Zbigniew Brzezinski reactivated to this discourse and declared Central Asia and Afghanistan as a Grand Chess Board where many powers are struggling to make an impact and achieve their economic and strategic interests.⁴

The great game between the British and Russian Empire was dominant in the past and focused on this region. But there is a notion that Central Asia is facing revival of that Great Game with new actors and with

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new motivations. Many major powers including the US, EU, China, India and Russia are involved in tug of war to politically influence and get hold of the vast natural resources of this region.

China is the biggest investor in C.A; it is connected with CAS through New Silk Route initiatives, Rail Links, and Oil and Gas Pipelines.⁵ It shares almost 3,000km border with CAS. This region is important for China for economic and strategic reasons. The border proximity with CAS is worrisome because the Western province of China is facing insurgency by East Turkistan Islamic Movement- (ETIM) a militant organisation which has ethnic linkages with the people of CAS.⁶

China wants to ensure that no support is given by the CAS to ETIM. This is the reason that China is overwhelmingly involved in CAS. In 2013 the Chinese President Xi Jinping, during his visit to Astana, launched the “One Belt One Road” initiative to connect the *New Silk Route* to improve infrastructure, promote economic relationship and increase development in CAS.⁷ For China, Central Asia is of supreme importance because China is a country of about 1.39 billion population,⁸ and second largest economy in the world. To overcome needs of its huge population and economy China has secured substantial contracts to extract resources from CAS.⁹

The European economies are also heavily dependent on Russian oil and Gas supplies. They are also looking for access to CAS hydrocarbon reserves to overcome their energy requirements. In the same way initiatives like TAPI gas pipeline and CASA-1000 would connect this region with South Asia.¹⁰ India in 2009 secured a contract with Kazakhstan to explore the Satpayev Block in the Caspian Sea. This block has an estimated oil reserve of 1.85 billion barrels. The Indian company would take the 25% and remaining would go to Kazakh Company, KazMunaiGaz.¹¹ India has also invested \$70 million to renovate an airbase at Ayni, Tajikistan in 2004.

It has extended runway of the base to 3,200 meters and put in place air defence systems and radars.¹² The Ayni airbase is seen as an attempt by the Indians to remain relevant in strategically important CAS. Indian presence in Tajikistan will improve its overall command, control, Communication and Intelligence Network in the region which could be utilized in operational means against enemy.¹³ America got its foothold in CAS in the aftermath of 9/11 situation. Afghanistan had border with three C.A countries. To successfully carry out military operations against Taliban regime America secured bases in these CAS.¹⁴ When Pakistan’s supply route was blocked by the government after Salalah Check post incident in 2011,¹⁵ America utilized Northern Distribution Network-(NDN) to supply logistics using CAS routes to Afghanistan.¹⁶ So the concept of silk route is still relevant and it is connecting the different regions with CAS.

The Threat Matrix in Afghanistan

Afghanistan is passing through, toughest phase of its history. The security situation in Afghanistan is terrible and getting worse. The Afghan National Security Forces- (ANSF) are unable to cope up with these emerging threats posed by the Afghan Taliban and other terrorist networks. The Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper predicted that 2016 would be intense and bloodier than 2015.¹⁷ Most of the terror related incidents took place in Ghazni, Helmand, Kandahar, Kunar and Nangarhar provinces of Afghanistan.¹⁸ The Afghan Taliban in last year captured many districts of Afghanistan, though they were swiftly retaken by the ANSF with the help of the US air support, but still they pose serious threat to the peace and stability of Afghanistan. According to the UN, more than 22,634 terrorism related incidents took place in 2015 only.¹⁹ This shows volatile security environment in Afghanistan. In such precarious security conditions, the South and Central Asian connectivity is a distant dream.

The Strength of Afghan Taliban: A Challenge for ANSF

Afghan Taliban are stronger than ever before because there is no dearth of cash and recruits. According to one estimate the Afghan Taliban possess more than \$2 billion dollars’ worth of assets²⁰ which is lot of money to sustain a long term insurgency in Afghanistan. Due to uninterrupted supplies of funds, the Afghan Taliban would be able to recruit more people, equip them with modern weaponry, train them on modern grounds and could establish Improvised Explosive Device- (IED) factories in areas they control for terrorist activities in Afghanistan.

According to Matt Waldman, an Associate Fellow at Chatham House, the Afghan Taliban possess 60,000 fighters.²¹ Such a number is horrific because in last 15 years the number of recruits increased and war in

Afghanistan did not impact their strength. But here number does not matter. It is the capability of the ANSF that matters, which is questionable at this point of time. The US has spent over \$68 billion since 2001 on Afghan security forces. Most of the money was consumed for new recruitment, weapon and equipment, logistics and salaries of the ANSF.²² After spending such a huge amount of money and losing hundreds of men, the results are dismal. The Afghan Taliban are gaining momentum. For instance, the Afghan Taliban assassinated three senior Afghan Army commanders within four months.²³ They also carried out attacks on the recently inaugurated parliament building.²⁴ It is difficult to defeat well organized insurgencies. For instance, Pakistan took almost 15 years to root out Tehrik-I-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) from FATA. Pakistan has deployed more than 200,000 troops in FATA²⁵ an area of about 27,000 sq km²⁶ much smaller than Afghanistan which is more than 647,500 sq km.²⁷

Keeping in mind the huge territory of Afghanistan, over stretched ANA and ANP, multiple threats posed by the Afghan Taliban and other militant groups, it would be difficult for ANA to quell well organized, trained, well equipped and highly motivated insurgents. The ultimate solution is reconciliation with Afghan Taliban because fighting and defeating war is not possible for the ANSF. The Afghan Taliban may not talk in the near future because of the two reasons. First is the killing of former Taliban Chief Mullah Mansour by the US forces. Second, Afghan Taliban are in strong position in Afghanistan's southern belt. They are confident that ANA cannot defeat them and 14,800 US led forces under Bilateral Security Agreement- (BSA) lack the ability to make any difference.²⁸ Resultantly, the Afghan Taliban have increased terrorist activities in Afghanistan and expanded their areas of operation and influence to pressurize Afghan government before any negotiations takes place so they can negotiate from the position of strength.

The Khorasan Province: The ISIS Factor

The Islamic State after territorial gains in Iraq and Syria has established the Khurassan province in Afghanistan. The IS-KP is facing multipronged challenges in Afghanistan which includes the Afghan Taliban, the Resolute Mission and Afghan security forces. But despite these challenges the IS-KP militants have been successful in finding physical space in Afghanistan. Most of the militants in IS-KP are former Afghan Taliban commanders,²⁹ foreigners or Pakistani Taliban.³⁰

According to the US DoD estimates, this group is comprised of about 3,000 men but the Afghan government claim they are close to 4000 fighters.³¹ Most of the IS-KP militants have got safe heavens in the remote districts of Nangarhar province of Afghanistan, where Hizb-I-Islami and Haqqani Network have small presence along with other criminal gangs. The Afghan government also lack writ in these areas.

This is the reason that IS-KP got physical space here. But out of Nangarhar the IS-KP have suffered huge losses by Afghan security forces, the US drone strikes and Afghan Taliban. However, the IS-KP is not in great number as compared to the Taliban or ANSF but still they have shown their ability to carry out deadly attacks in Afghanistan.³² The IS-KP may not possess the capability to capture Kabul but they have the ability to disrupt any positive development in Afghanistan. The presence of such militant groups in Afghanistan is a grave threat for peace and a major roadblock towards regional integration and cooperation.

A Critical Analysis of the Competence of ANSF

The ANSF is now solely responsible for the peace and security of Afghanistan since January 2015. The ANA and ANP are preventing the fall of Kabul and other urban centres but at the same time they are unable to carry out offensive operations against Taliban strongholds in Afghanistan. The Afghan Taliban are using lethal tactics, guerrilla attacks, car bombing, snipers and suicide bombers against ANSF and soft targets like universities and other civilian installations. In one such attack the Taliban suicide bombers along with assault team attacked the American University in Kabul and managed to inflict heavy damages.

More than 40 people died in that attack. The Afghan Taliban have also carried out daring attacks against heavily guarded ministry of Defence and National Directorate of Security buildings.³³ Such attacks may not impose heavy damages but psychologically create great impact in the minds of common people. All these attacks demonstrate the ANSF lacks the ability to provide security against Taliban attacks. The ANSF are heavily relying on foreign funding to sustain their operations in Afghanistan.

For the FY-2016, the required funding for ANSF is \$5.01 billion.³⁴ The US planned a 352,000 force for ANA and ANP.³⁵ But so far the US could not reach the authorized number. The major issue for America is not

the number game but the quality of the ANSF. The ANSF are still developing and may take several years to get mature. The current ANA with the US air support can defend major urban centres but as far as counter insurgency operations are concerned, they lack the capability to do so. Which means Afghanistan would remain unstable in the near future.

The Pak-Afghan Discord: Indian Factor

The Pak-Afghan relationship is at its lowest ebb because of the border management, blame game, refugee crisis and cross border militancy and Indian factor. Trade between both has also been reduced by 50%³⁶. All these things would seriously hurt any move towards the regional integration and collaboration. Major irritant between Pakistan and Afghan is Indian factor.

India has got two major interests in Afghanistan, first economic and second strategic. India is a \$2-trillion economy;³⁷ to sustain its economic growth, it requires energy resources and raw material for its industry. India wants physical space in Afghanistan to exploit huge untapped natural resources with special emphasis on Iron reserves in Hajigak.³⁸ According to an estimate the total worth of Afghan natural resources is more than \$3 trillion dollars³⁹ which makes it an attractive destination for a country like India. This explains why is India striving for long term economic engagement in Afghanistan.

Second reason of the Indian presence in Afghanistan is of strategic in nature. India wants to counter Pakistan's support in Indian Held Kashmir. For this purpose, it has been supporting insurgencies in FATA and Baluchistan. Former Defence Secretary of America, Chuck Hagel said that India has financed problems for Pakistan from Afghan soil.⁴⁰ Recently nabbed Indian spy Kulbushan Yadav has also confessed of Indian subversive activities in Baluchistan and Karachi.⁴¹

Pakistan takes Indian presence in Afghanistan as a two front war dilemma keeping in mind harsh memories of East Pakistan where India actively supported Mukti Bahini guerillas and ultimately opened another front, which led to the dismemberment of Pakistan.⁴² The Indian aggressive approach to destabilize Pakistan using Afghan soil has created serious fissures between Pakistan and Afghanistan and it is also considered to be the major stumbling block towards regional integration and cooperation.

Drug Trafficking and Funding of Insurgents

The Afghan Drug Trafficking is one the main reason of instability and turmoil. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime- (UNODC) report of 2016, the estimated value of illegal Afghan opiate economy is around \$2.8 billion which is 13% of the Afghanistan's total GDP.⁴³ The drug trafficking in Afghanistan is money-spinning, many state and non-state actors are involved in this business. The estimated total worth of Afghan opium is around \$61 billion.⁴⁴

Most of the profit goes to the war lords, drug traffickers, transnational distributors and militants. This is one of the major sources of funding for the militant groups in Afghanistan. According to a UN report in 2012 the Afghan Taliban generated more than \$400 million annually from the drug trafficking, taxation and extortion.⁴⁵ This is the reason that militants in Afghanistan are never short of funds which has allowed them to carry out their terrorist activities without any disruption.

Recommendations: A Way Forward

The use of force is not the only solution to end conflicts or wars. There are many other steps, which may include diplomatic, economic and political measures. Some of the steps are discussed in below to bring long lasting peace to the turbulent Afghanistan which is essential for the connectivity of South Asia and Central Asia.

- ✓ **Unconditional Reconciliation and Dialogue Process:** It is beyond the capacity of ANSF to defeat or degrade Afghan Taliban in Afghanistan. The military solution has miserably failed because of the US withdrawal, shift of the NATO from Afghanistan to Syria and Iraq. The Resolute Mission Force by the US led alliance along with ill trained Afghan forces cannot defeat well trained, organized, highly motivated Afghan Taliban. The ultimate solution is negotiation between Afghan government and Taliban. Pakistan, China and America must work together with all stake holders in Afghanistan and find an amicable solution which is accepted to all and end this deadly conflict for better inter-regional connectivity.

- ✓ **End of Proxy War- India and Pakistan:** Both countries must end proxy war and work together for peaceful, stable and prosperous Afghanistan. Peaceful stable Afghanistan can help India and Pakistan to connect with strategically important region Central Asian region for better future. Both states can work collectively and help Afghanistan in rebuilding and development. This border of confrontation must be converted into border of cooperation.
- ✓ **Pak-Afghan Rapprochement:** Pak- Afghan rapprochement is crucial for the stability of Afghanistan. The Pak-Afghan border is used for drug trafficking, arms smuggling, illicit trade and movement of the militants. Both countries must overcome their differences, settle the border dispute, secure the border and collectively work for the regional connectivity and collaboration.
- ✓ **Reconstruction and Infrastructure Development:** The US, China, Russia, India, Pakistan and European Union must support Afghanistan in reconstruction, development and infrastructure building. Better roads, Rail Links are necessity of this region for better connectivity. Initiatives like CASA-1000 and TAPI would help this region and pave the way for more cooperation between South and Central Asian countries.

Conclusion

Afghanistan holds the key for the inter-regional connectivity of South Asia and Central Asia. Due to its central position in the region, security situation in Afghanistan would decide the future cooperation and development between these two regions. Currently, the major issue is instability and turmoil in Afghanistan which needs to be addressed as soon as possible. The renaissance of Afghan Taliban and changing security dynamics in the region needs multipronged strategy to overcome security challenges in Afghanistan. The ultimate solution to Afghan problem is meaningful negotiations between Afghanistan and Taliban. Because military strategy has failed since 2001 and now political settlement is the only way out from this quagmire.

Followed by political resolution, the regional and global partners including China, America, Russia, EU, India, Iran and Pakistan must help Afghanistan in rebuilding, reconstruction and economic development.

All the regional states especially CAS, Iran and Pakistan must work together to curb the drug trafficking in the region, which directly funds insurgents and other criminal elements in Afghanistan. Pakistan, India and Afghanistan must join hands, end blame game, stop clandestine activities against each other and collectively work for the peace and stability of the region.

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INTER-REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY IN SOUTH ASIA AND CENTRAL ASIA: SECURITY CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

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Abstract: *South Asia and Central Asia are two emerging partner regions in the ongoing process of globalization and have arguably the potential to emerge as a unified entity on the lines of regional blocks such European Union (EU). Both the regions inhabit diverse natural and human resources some of which remains unexplored till now. However, security challenges have placed major obstacles in the way of regional integration. This article applies neo-functionalism as a theory as well as a strategy for regional integration whereby functional spillover facilitates the process of connectivity. However, insecurity may still neutralize positive effects of potential spillovers. This paper, while conceptualizing inter-regional connectivity, will attempt to evaluate as to what have been the major factors impeding the attempts for inter-regional connectivity in South Asia and Central Asia. Inter-regional connections must be understood through an array of factors including the political divisions between participating nations, insurgencies, and terrorism. Exploration of challenges to peace in the two regions will provide grounds for provisions of way forward for inter-regional peace and security-centric cooperation. In this way, by implying qualitative methodology, this study will focus on provisions of regional connectivity for shared peace, stability, and socio-economic development.*

Keywords: Regional Connectivity, South Asia, Central Asia, Security Challenges

Introduction

In twenty first century, the concept of globalization has transformed the process of international integration. From ideas, thoughts, products to societal ethos, globalization has impacted virtually everything.¹ Modern means of communication and transportation have created greater potential for economic and cultural interdependence across different regions. In the existing world order, regionalism has emerged as the most significant socio-economic and political trend. It defines the ongoing socio-political transformation of different regions made possible through a range of regional collaborations. Regionalism can also be effectively used to resolve the issues of economic development and regional security. Europe and East Asian countries present the best possible structures of integrated monetary and security groups. As far as EU is concerned, there has emerged a little uncertainty from the recent divide, but it is still hoped that the fallout will be temporary.² South Asia and Central Asia are two neighboring regions and emerging partners for the ongoing process of regionalism and have enough potential to emerge as unified entity similar to that of EU in future. The concept of regionalism has already attracted traction not only in Central Asia but it also in South Asia.

Existing narratives regarding these two regions usually refer to a forthcoming socio-political transformation. However, trans-regional bonds may link them to many other Asian sub-regions while bypassing the Western norms of socio-political development. South Asian states are gradually engaged to establish foreign relations with Central Asian Republics (CARs) in diverse sectors. There are some exceptional factors that make connectivity between Central and South Asian regions all the more significant. Firstly, China sharing its boundaries with the states located in both regions seeks to wedge itself centrally between the two regions. Emergence of China as the leading economic power may potentially bring further dividends for these two regions in future. Secondly, Central Asian states are Muslim majority which share common history, religion and culture- a very opportune condition for regional connectivity. Thirdly, Silk Route is an ancient trade route linking Asia, Europe, and Africa and serving as trade belt which will be connecting all these states with an inexpensive land route. Such facts reflect very bright prospects for the success of regional connectivity.

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Neo-functionalism is a renowned theory for understanding regional integration. It became popular in 1950s with the genesis of European integration and has evolved considerably till 1990s. It provides an outline of detailed stages required for regional integration and connectivity. As per neo-functionalism, favorable public opinion and strong democratic institutions act as the pre-requisites for greater integration. Public opinion can be evaluated through demographic surveys and techniques. For establishment of regional level organizations and institutions such as Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), a whole host of state institutions, and non-state actors play their role in the initiation and negotiation phases.

It is believed that demographic and economic drive are already proving to be favorable factors when it comes to South Asian and Central Asian regions. However, both the regions also inhabit diverse natural and human resources, many of which remain untapped. It again comes down to security challenges that potential of these two regions has not been fully harnessed. The most recent integration initiative, China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)- is also being threatened by these very security challenges.

Inter-Regional Connectivity in South Asia

South Asia is home to 1.7 billion people. Inter-regional connectivity within South Asia is critically important to cater for the requisite development in the region. According to the statement released at the 12th SAARC Summit 2011, the decade 2010-2020 was declared as the decade of regional connectivity.³ For enhanced collaboration with the active participation of private sector, few sectors were identified such as transport, communication, commerce, and industry. It was decided that commercialization strategy would be required for result oriented outcomes in this regard. At a state level, Sri Lanka⁴ is very well connected with other countries of the region and sets an example for other countries to diversify their connectivity.

From 2011, Government of Pakistan allocated heavy budget to enhance regional connectivity among member states of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO).⁵ Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has also been fulfilling the same goals. However, despite these positive steps taken till 2013, “the volume of trade between SAARC member states has not exceeded 3 billion US dollars.”⁶

The concept of South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) was introduced in 2004 and discussions over SAFTA started in 2006. SAFTA could have been a transformational step to promote trade between SAARC member states. Economic experts believe that there is a dire need to instill a mechanism which would boost the efficiency of SAFTA.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is another example of Asian regional cooperation for SAARC to look upto. Through ASEAN, member states not only enhance economic cooperation but are also able to address political and security issues diplomatically.

Inter-Regional Connectivity in Central Asia

In 2006, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan assembled in China under the platform of Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) and issued a statement called the Urumqi Declaration, which was based on a comprehensive action program to support regional connectivity drive.⁷ In keynote address to the ministerial conference, the president of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Haruhiko Kuroda expressed:

“Regional cooperation is the way that societies are able to achieve together what could not be achieved working alone. We see this around the world, with members of the European Union, NAFTA, ASEAN and numerous others creating strong regional partnerships to solve common problems and to succeed in the global economy.”⁸

China’s speedy economic rise in Asian region is comparable to Japan’s rise in far Eastern region, Russian economic rise in Northern region, and India’s rise in the South Asian region. Although, all these countries are growing at their own pace, they are gradually experiencing sectoral growth in specific areas. Pakistan and Iran are engaged in gas pipeline project. If the project is successfully completed, it would set another efficacious example of regional connectivity. Another suggested oil and gas pipeline projected is almost finalized between Turkmenistan and Pakistan through Afghanistan, known as TAPI. It would create another dynamic linkage between the two regions.

Pakistan has been declared permanent member of SCO in 2015.⁹ Pakistan is following the Chinese approach to revive the ancient Silk Route in which Pakistan has a crucial role to play. Frequent visits of Pakistan's political leadership to Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and other Central Asian states indicate that Pakistan seeks to adopt a multi-pronged connectivity approach.

Another mechanism of South and Central Asian connectivity happens to be "Central Asia-South Asia power project", usually identified as CASA-1000. It is a \$1.16 billion project presently under construction. This project will allow for the export of hydroelectricity from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan and Afghanistan. Inauguration of the project took place on May 12, 2016 in Tajikistan in a meeting attended by the Tajik, Kyrgyz, and Pakistani Prime Ministers, and is anticipated to be finalized by the end of 2018. The project primarily also included transfer of electricity to Afghanistan. However Afghanistan abandoned its share of electricity due to lack of demand but Pakistan will receive 1,300 megawatts of electricity.¹⁰

CASA-1000 also signifies innovative collaboration between Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. It demonstrates that member states of this program are highly concerned to develop inter-regional linkages between Central Asia and South Asia. For example such projects would work on the similar lines as the "North American grid spanning over 340,000km and European power system traversing a territory of 230,000km".¹¹ Additionally, besides the assurance of states benefiting from the Casa-1000, it has the backing of the World Bank, the Islamic Development Bank, USAID, US State Department, AUSAID, etc and other contributor organizations. Initially, Russia opposed this project but with the passage of time there is a positive change and announced financial support of \$500 million for the completion of the project. This was announced by the Russian leader Vladimir Putin in the assembly of 10th Shanghai Cooperation Organization, on July 10, 2015, meeting held in Petersburg.

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) was established in 2001 and is gaining popularity among Central Asian and South Asian regions. It has potential to expand and establish strong regional bonds in both regions in next few years. All South Asian and Central Asian states are somehow connected through land routes. Afghanistan has common boundaries with three states -Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. Afghanistan's Eastern borders connect it with Pakistan, India, and China. Afghanistan's Southern borders, on the other hand, are connected with Iran. Therefore, unification of South Asian and Central Asian region can be materialized. Geo-strategic importance of both regions is already widely accepted by the international community. However this importance of regional connectivity have been overshadowed by some socioeconomic and political irritants as security challenges are more striking in this regard.

Main Security Challenges

Security and development are obviously mutually related processes and it is a general understanding that internal and external security is a prerequisite for economic, social and even political development. Apparently, it is hard to "develop" countries that have been suffering from internal conflicts to such an extent that international intervention have often been mandated to establish "order". Countries like Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Chad, and Kosovo can be viewed as pertinent examples in this regard. Security issues are affecting internal as well as regional conditions of South and Central Asia as well.¹²

The accomplishment of above mentioned projects in Central and South Asian regions is dependent upon peace and stability conditions in both the regions. This becomes even more pronounced when Afghanistan's situation is taken into account. Its geographical location renders it as the necessary transit state. A stable law and order situation, thereby, happens to be a requirement for state actors as well as for the business community. It also favors Afghanistan to be a central "transit state" between two regions to secure economic development for itself. To that effect, strengthening cordial relations with Pakistan becomes Afghanistan's pivotal interest in economic terms. Pakistan has a 1046 km long coastline and working sea ports on which Afghanistan depends for its trade outreach. So, without Afghanistan-Pakistan cooperation, it is very hard to achieve the goal of South Asian and Central Asian connectivity. Afghanistan, therefore, acquires primacy in this phenomenon primarily by account of its geographical location.

Following are some of the main security challenges for Inter-Regional Connectivity in South Asia and Central Asia:

- ✓ **Terrorism:** The understanding of terrorism has always been chaotic. On March 17, 2005, UN panel defined terrorism as an act that: "Intended to cause death or serious physical harm to civilian or non-

combatants with the purpose of intimidating a population or compelling a government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing any act.¹³ Armed militancy saw an upsurge in South Asian and Central Asian regions in late 1980s when the West sought to contain communism's advance into Afghanistan, with the help of Pakistan. Anti-communist militancy was also actively supported by UK, Saudi Arabia, and many other countries.¹⁴ Terrorist groups that emerged from this era, later on, threatened security and stability of the whole region. These security concerns have already become primary challenge to CPEC, especially the activities of groups like Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), Daesh (ISIS), Baluchistan Liberation Front (BLF), Baluchistan Liberation Army (BLA), East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) etc. A curve of militancy stretches from Xingjian to Gwadar and involving almost all South and Central Asian states bordering Afghanistan. However, some of these groups are not directly opposing China but intend to use terrorist attacks to achieve their own goals and demands.

- ✓ **Extremism:** In 2015, Kazakhstan arranged a conference on countering violent extremism in South and Central Asian regions in Astana. The conference participants were from nine different countries and represented eleven different organizations. The participants concluded the conference with the remarks that new strategies were required to deal with the issue of extremism. Participants were agreed on cooperation for securing internet communication system which was identified as one of the major source in spreading extremism. Through internet groups, extremist groups may find space that remains unavailable otherwise. Thereby, such groups succeed in establishing strong connections with each other and promote extremism.
- ✓ **Separatist Movements:** According to the Cambridge dictionary, separatist means "Someone who is a member of a particular race, religion, or other group within a country and who believes that this group should be independent and have their own government or in some way live apart from other people". Many separatist movements are also creating serious security concerns in South and Central Asian regions. For example, in Afghanistan's Badakhshan area located near the Wakhan Corridor, the Ethnic group named Pamiri is active with the demand of United Badakhshan Peoples Republic. In China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous region, an active insurgency exists. A range of separatist movements exist in India where the issue of Jammu and Kashmir requires particularly urgent attention so that the peace and security can be maintained in this region.
- ✓ **Ethnic Conflicts:** There are some ethnic groups in both regions which also pose a security threat. For example Baluch nationalists militants seek to sabotage any connectivity project under CPEC that encompasses Balochistan.
- ✓ **Foreign Agencies:** Indian connection in Pakistan through RAW vis-à-vis TTP and other anti-Pakistan groups is not a new story. An ISPR report on a meeting of the Corps Commanders held at the General Headquarters said that "In private conversations military officers say that besides Baluchistan, RAW's footprints have been found in Fata and Karachi. Confessional statements of some criminals they had arrested recently, they said, point towards RAW's growing activities."¹⁵ There is also evidence of involvement of other foreign intelligence agencies that are closely watching the advances under CPEC. According to some sources, RAW has established a special wing for the surveillance of CPEC.
- ✓ **Indo-Pak Rivalry:** Former US President Bill Clinton once defined the South Asian Region as the "most dangerous place on earth on the eve of two emerging antagonistic nuclear powers".¹⁶ India and Pakistan are facing the chronic issues of poverty, insufficient health facilities, and lack of clean drinking water. Energy crisis is proving to be a major hurdle in the growth of industry. Recent signing of electricity and gas pipeline projects may improve cross-border energy trade. Nevertheless, both countries should sign the treaties for the construction of road and railway tracks. Due to mistrust between two states SAARC forum is fail to prove itself as a strong regional connectivity bridge.

Role of Women in Regional Connectivity and Integration

ASEAN's Women Entrepreneurship Network (AWEN) set an example for the productive role of women participation in regional connectivity.¹⁷ It is observed that in South Asian and Central Asian regions, women participation is not up to the mark. It may be due to social and cultural norms and perceptions in the society but it is the dire need of the hour to address this issue and enhance women participation in regional connectivity and integration. It would play very positive role and almost 50% of population of the region will

not feel deprived in performing their role as productive citizens. This thoughtful awareness has the prospective to reflect it into the policies encourage women entrepreneurs and other roles in this regard.

Way Forward

Following steps are required to promote regional connectivity:

- ✓ Concept of a single market to be promoted among both regions;
- ✓ A common commercial policy among both regions;
- ✓ All States should allocate budget for promotion of regional integration;
- ✓ A common patrolling force and network of safekeeping agencies should be introduced to address the security issues in both regions especially to control the terrorism;
- ✓ To enhance the role of women as an entrepreneur and diplomatic affairs;
- ✓ Positive steps towards CBM between India and Pakistan so that both countries resolve their mutual issues and play positive role for regional connectivity and stability;
- ✓ To introduce common policy to control cyber-crime and social media websites.

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PAKISTAN'S STRATEGIC AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS IN CENTRAL ASIA: MAKING ITS WAY AND CONTAINING INDIAN INTERESTS

Syed Abul Hassan Naqvi*

Abstract: *The geo-strategic, political and economic significance of central Asia makes it one of the most essential regions in the world which connects South Asia, West Asia, Russia and China through historic silk route. It is rich in gas and oil resources and has attraction for all regional countries as well as the world. For Pakistan regional proximity, many commonly shared features and religious bonds are reasons for both sides to be closer. Pakistan being industrially and energy thriving is making effort to link with Central Asian Republics while Indian interests are in terms of trade both by sea and road routes through Afghanistan. In this article it is described that Pakistan's objective is to secure its interests as well as to contain the Indian influence in the region by overcoming obstacles in respect of Afghanistan. The regional organizations especially Shanghai Corporation Organization are essential as Pakistan has become its full member.*

Keywords: CARs, geopolitics, strategic interests, economic interests, landlocked region, SCO.

Introduction

The Central Asian republics emerged on the map of the world after the collapse of Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1991. The Central Asia consists of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. It is a land locked region, rich in gas and oil resources. At the same time these states have common factors and many differences as well.¹ Although these states have common history and culture and mostly common religion yet they have differences in ethnic, economic condition and in external relations. Even after the disintegration, Russia has a significant role in the region. Russia has influence on domestic and external policies of the Central Asian States and this influence started soon after the appearance of these states during the 1990's till now.²

The geo-political scenario of the region changed with the emergence of Central Asian States on map of the world and it also affected the political and economic situation because of possessing gas and oil resources more than that of the Middle East States and abundance of the metals found not anywhere in the world.³ Since the independence (CARs) are in search of establishing new routes to consume their resources but many obstacles due to its land-locked location and convergence of routes towards Russia and its influence.

Significance of CARs for the World Powers

If we go through the pages of history, Central Asia had remained bone of contention between imperial powers of Britain and Russia during the 19th and 20th centuries because both struggled to establish their hold in the region.⁴ Their objective was to contain each other in Afghanistan as it was center of conflict. British-India was threatened by Russian access to warm water to reach British Balochistan through Khandhar while Russia's fear of undermining in Central Asia by Britain through Muslim tribes of India and rulers of the area.

Now keeping in view the resources and wealth of the Central Asian Republics, the great game has been started by the world powers for the access to these resources. The players of this great game included not only world powers, Russia, United States of America, China, India but regional countries as well Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan. Russia is the dominant power of the region and is re-surging as great game of the world while USA is the only super power and wants to maintain its hegemony.

China is rising super power and has attained the status of economic giant state of the world while India is a huge economic market and has risen as regional power. Iran aiming at dominance of the Gulf region while Afghanistan is significant for the flow of Central Asia resources to the international market. Pakistan is the most important country because of existing on the cross roads of Central and South Asia. It is significant due to its warm water ports and routes for transportation of resources of Central Asia not only to India and China but towards the other world.

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Central Asian Republics and Pakistan's Interests

Common Factors: Pakistan and Central Asian Republics have many commonalities. The religion of Islam is main source of binding between the both. The other factors are having the architecture, art and tribal system. Both regions have historical connection as the Central Asian conquerors ruled this part and people came along with these leaders settled here and made imprints on the cultural life of this region. In old times the bilateral trade between these region through Afghanistan in the city of Peshawar continued and even the hindko language of this part of India was used for the trade.

Strategic Interests of Pakistan: It is established fact that Pakistan is energy arcade in the region and is strategically significance for landlocked Central Asia which has the only shortest route through Pakistan and its role is carping because of its influence and coincidence with Taliban and other militant groups in Afghanistan. The economic and cultural ties of Pakistan and CARs may provide strategic depth to Pakistan against hegemony of India in South Asia.

- ✓ The most significant interest of Pakistan in Central Asia is promotion of high-level business liberalization.
- ✓ Pakistan is aspirant for having a stronger position for defensive purposes and to contain Indian involvement in this region. For security measures with Afghanistan, in reference of regional integration and co-operation, Pakistan has the closest border with this region.
- ✓ The major interest of Pakistan in Central Asia is transportation of goods and services by sea-route which would restrict Indian interests in the region.
- ✓ The continuous efforts of Pakistan for cordial relations with Kyrgyzstan for thorough fare connections to Karachi and Gwadar sea-ports as facilitating Pakistan in large-scale electricity.
- ✓ Pakistan's botherance for a winning player in the great game of the region and containing Indian influence.
- ✓ To counter the terrorism and violent organizations with the collaboration of Uzbekistan and strengthening its position in the region.⁵
- ✓ To increase the means of transportation from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Economic Interests of Pakistan in Central Asian Republics: The geographical location of Pakistan has facilitated it the significant role not only in South Asia but also for land-locked Central Asian Republics. Pakistan provides the shortest way to the Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean to connect it with other world because it is like a bridge between the South and West Asia. The old silk route Karakoram Highway among Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Pakistan and China now Gwadar reach to port. Through Tajikistan this route is land link to the Central Asian States. Three Pakistani ports, Karachi, Pasni and Gwadar are the shortest way for economic and trade between Central Asia and Pakistan with the distance of only 1600 km. The Pakistani ports can provide boom to Central Asia which can edge the region for another Middle East.

Significance of Gwadar Port for Central Asia: The Central Asian states can be connected with Gwadar Port through Karakoram high way, Chaman and Turkham pass. There are lot of opportunities and economic activities both for Pakistan and Central Asian Republics from this route. With the establishment of this route and corridor, Pakistan's dependence on Middle East and on Saudi Arabia will reduce.⁶ Another project, Turkmenistan Afghanistan Pakistan India (TAPI) gas pipeline is good proposal to avail the resources of CARs.

"The Gwadar port is the first step for Pakistan's ambition of becoming a trade and energy corridor for China which will help shipping Persian Gulf oil from Gwadar to China".⁷ China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is not only significant for both China and Pakistan but also for Central Asia and West Asia as well. It will prove an economic Jugular Vein for Pakistan.

The Central Asian Republics and Iran are looking for energy markets with purpose of their gas and petroleum resources. The only concern of the TAPI gas pipe line is security problem. This gas pipe line start from Turkmenistan and reach the famous city of Indian border Fazilka.⁸ But the TAPI gas pipe line project is connected with the peace and tranquility in Afghanistan and confidence building between India and Pakistan.

It is the fact that sometimes economic interests dominate the political interests and conflicts. However, macro-level trade might lessen the historic tensions between Pakistan & India and India & China. The most significant factor that Central Asian states trade through Pakistan's corridor would reduce tension between

Afghanistan and Pakistan which are connected in terms of history, ethnicity, geographically, security and terrorism affairs. It is assumed that TAPI gas pipe line project may become a reason between India and Pakistan to remain away from waging the war. But India showed a vindicate due to attacks on Mumbai because this even occurred just after the TAPI.⁹

- ✓ Then Pakistan has large capacity and capability in irrigation, livestock, poultry and agricultural machinery which can be shared with Central Asia.
- ✓ Being an agricultural country Pakistan's capacity to provide Central Asian states the agricultural products and facilities to reduce Indian interest from the region.
- ✓ With a strong and 6th largest standing army, Pakistan can provide military trainings and develop defense industries of CAR.
- ✓ Pakistan can also provide skilled human resources to CAR for defense industries.
- ✓ The transportation of fuels from Turkmenistan to Pakistan via Afghanistan.
- ✓ Pakistan can develop cordial relations with Russia in defensive material by using the Central Asia.

The Arabian Sea is the shortest route for Central Asian States through ports of Pakistan. The Central Asian Republics can get link to Gwadar Port by rail and road. The nearest rail heads at Kuchka and Termiz where transportation can be made to Kandhar, Quetta to Karachi and Gwadar ports. But it is the open fact that stability in Afghanistan is essential for successful operating of any of the route and to utilize the resources of Central Asia.

Indian Interests in Central Asia

India is called the largest democracy in the world while population wise it is the biggest economic market with 1.2 billion people. Military, it is sixth nuclear power and with third largest standing army. Being considering its military power and economic potential, India claims its regional authority and power aspirant not only for regional dominance but also asserts its international role politically and economically. India is making efforts to become the permanent member of United Nations Security Council and aspirant for membership of Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG).

After the disintegration of USSR, India was threatened by imagining of Islamic block of Central Asian States inclined towards Pakistan. Immediately, India reacted, managed its relations with these states with the help of Russian and prevented Pakistan's religious based influence in the region. The destability, turmoil and civil war in Afghanistan supported Indian interests. During this civil war in Afghanistan, Pakistan supported Taliban while India along with other regional actors, Iran and Central Asian states favoured Northern Alliance forces for hold in Kabul. This resulted a Gulf between Pakistan and Central Asian Republics.¹⁰

In this scenario, India succeeded to create Pakistan's bad image among Central Asian States because this was helpful for India to access the resources of Central Asia having good relations with Afghanistan. The Incident of 9/11 and US invasion in Afghanistan proved a blessing in disguise for India. After invasion in Afghanistan, USA installed anti-Taliban government which also proved a facilitation to India in establishing more cordial relations with Central Asian Republics. On the name of counter terrorism co-operation and security concerns in the region, Afghanistan and Central Asia, India initiated the security co-operation with Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan.¹¹

India had economic and political interests in this region. By adopting this policy, it made efforts to undermine and counter the influence of Pakistan and it was also aspirant to acquire arms market of Central Asia by reducing influence of China. For Indian energy security interest the Central Asian Republics contain vast fields of hydrocarbon both on-shore and off-shore in the Caspian Sea.¹²

India's Significance for Central Asian States: Indian significance for Central Asia is due to its rising attitude for economic, military, regional, social and cultural intentions towards this land. In the past India was not much force in this area due to over-controlled policy of Russia in the region. Recently the Indian government has declared that "it refuses to lay down a quota for importing gas and oil from any country including Iran. Instead, India will buy oil and gas from where ever it gets the best deal."¹³ India has also the scope to assist Central Asia Republics in developing small and median-scale enterprises.¹⁴

Indian Military Interests in Central Asia: Militarily main objective of India is to counter the Chinese access to Central Asian states market. For this purpose it is making efforts for best results in CARs. India is

using of the foreign air base called as Ayni Air Base which is Tajik Air base in West Dushanbe. This air craft base has been used by Soviet Russia in cold war period.

Indian Strategic and Economic Interests in CARs: India's strategic interests are described as follows:

- ✓ To acquire energy resources of the region.
- ✓ To pursue its geo-strategic and economic goals.
- ✓ The prevention of possibility and threat of emergence of Muslim block and check Pakistan's influence in this reference.
- ✓ Protection of Indian interests which are conflicting with China, Russia & USA.¹⁵
- ✓ To stop Pakistan directly or indirectly by gaining benefits from the region and create obstacles for Pakistan in its easy access to the regional resources while keeping an eye on Pakistan for getting its share in every project like TAPI gas pipeline and its leading to India.
- ✓ Indian endeavour to counter China in the region and stop its hegemonic role.
- ✓ India's effort for cordial relations with Iran and especially with Afghanistan to counter influence of Pakistan in CARs. For this purpose it has established 14 consulate in Afghanistan and is training Afghan forces and facilitating Afghan students.
- ✓ Indian efforts to capture Afghan market with cheaper goods. Its contribution to construct road network and infrastructures in Afghanistan.
- ✓ Indian efforts to create in security on the Western border of Pakistan by implying the mindset of Afghanistan's leadership that Pakistan is a permanent security threat for Afghanistan.
- ✓ Indian interest to provide training in software and development of IT center in Kyrgyzstan.

Indian effort to Defuse Gwadar Port: The main purpose of India is to prevent Pakistan from getting benefits advantages from Gwadar port and finally counter strategic interests of Pakistan in Central Asian States. For this, It made North South corridor agreement with Iran and Russia in 2000. This corridor connects Mumbai with St Petersburg via Tehran and Moscow. Mumbai will be connected with Bandar Abbas port of Iran and road and rail networks to connect Bandar Abbas port with Caspian Sea to ship to Russian port.¹⁶ By this it will bypass Pak-Afghan route.

Indian, Pakistan and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

Shanghai cooperation organization (SCO) was established on June 15, 2001 by six member status as China, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. It is internationally recognized inter-governmental organization for political, economic, security, regional and mutual co-operation. The basic reason behind the establishment of this organization was a border conflict between China and Russia which became a multipartite issue with the emergence of Central Asian Republics after disintegration of USSR in 1991. In 1996, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan along with China and Russia inscribed Shanghai Agreement on confidence building. In 1997, agreement for reduction of military forces in border areas was made among five states for mutual borders and this mutual understanding led for this organization as Shanghai five. Later on, Uzbekistan became the member of this Shanghai corporation organization for its security and regional integration.

Pakistan along with India and Iran became the observer states in SCO in 2005. Pakistan was first to apply for full membership in 2010. It's request was approved at the SCO heads of state summit in UFA, Russia in July 2015. Pakistan has become a full member of Shanghai Cooperation Organization after signing memorandum of obligations on June 24, 2016, in SCO heads of state summit in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. India has also been admitted as full member of the SCO at the same summit.¹⁷

It is significant that how Shanghai Cooperation Organization can be beneficial for the two opponent states India and Pakistan in the presence of China and Russia in this organization. Actually both Pakistan and India are making efforts for strong links with SCO with objective to have access to energy rich Central Asian States. The major aspect of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in reference of its regional organizations and its geographical features, is that it is extended from the white sea, in Russia, to the South China sea. Moreover, after the full membership of Iran, Afghanistan and Mongolia it can reach to Indian ocean and Middle East. Iran may get the full member status in next summit of SCO as the only hurdle in its way of United Nations Sanctions has been lifted and it has been explicitly declared by Chinese foreign minister during the Tashkent

summit in June 2016.¹⁸ Iran has also shown interest in developing bilateral energy co-operation with China. Then Iran is considered a good for its stake in combating drug trafficking.¹⁹

In September 2013, in Bishkek conclave all the participant of Shanghai Cooperation Organization clearly notified to provide security protective measures to both Afghanistan and Central Asia in reduction of the military forces, especially the ISAF troops. Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and AL-Qaeda would be halted from crimes in Afghanistan and Central Asia. The extremist and fundamentalist groups have created critical situation in the region. There is threatening situation because of striking attempts of Islamic movements in Fergana Valley as near to the big parts of Central Asia as well as to Afghanistan and China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region.²⁰

Obstacles between Central Asian Republics and Pakistan

- ✓ The political instability during 19902's were the main hurdle in establishing cordial relations with Central Asian states while India took advantage of the situation and established its links with the region in economic, military, technology, education and communication sectors.
- ✓ The role of Jihadi elements in Pakistan and their links with the Islamic Movements in Central Asian.
- ✓ The Jehadis from Central Asian states as Tajiks, Uzbeks and their collaboration with terrorists groups in Pakistan.
- ✓ Competition among India, Iran and Turkey in acquiring more advantages in trade and resources links in Central Asia.
- ✓ Lack of infrastructure in Pakistan to attract Central Asian Republics and their resources.
- ✓ The instability and law and order situation in Baluchistan. The Baluch nationalist movement for the rights of Baluchi people.
- ✓ Another main obstacle is of Wakhan, closely linked with Afghanistan and China, as most suitable border, connecting Pakistan and Tajikistan. Lack of direct sharing border with any Central Asian state is impediment in accessing the region.²¹

Pakistan's Opportunities and Countering Indian Interests

Although Pakistan has many obstacles, hindrances and tough competition from India and Iran in availing the advantages of Central Asian resources yet it contain the one of the biggest-opportunity and accessibility that no other state of the region can claim or has such natural gift due to its geographical location. Pakistan is the only way for landlocked Central Asian Republics and Afghanistan to have access to warm water. Pakistan provides a corridor to the Central Asian region and shortest route for exploiting their energy resources.

- ✓ The Gwadar and proposed road and rail networks linking Central Asia with Arabian Sea and China through Karakoram Highway will provide Pakistan outlet to Central Asian States.
- ✓ To link Central Asian States with Arabian Sea, Iran has developed road network with support of India. Iran has established Chahbahar port with Indian collaboration. They have made effort to attract resources of Central Asia. Indian efforts to exploit the situation by creating tension between Iran and Pakistan.
- ✓ To counter this Indian plan Pakistan need to be strengthen her relations with Iran and project of Iran-Pakistan-India IPI gas pipeline should be executed.
- ✓ Iran has shown interest in CPEC through Gwadar Port by its collaboration with Chahbahar port.
- ✓ Iran's decision join CPEC would usher living standard across the Sistan-Baluchistan region by trade between Islamabad, Beijing and Tehran and also provide gateway to the Gulf-region even for Russia and India.²²
- ✓ By early functioning of Gwadar port and establishing CPEC, Pakistan can counter the Indian approach with Iran and its strategies regarding Chahbahar.
- ✓ The Chinese province Xinjian, bordering Pakistan, is required to develop infrastructure which would further provide access towards energy corridor.
- ✓ Peace and tranquility in Afghanistan is the utmost requisition to avail the benefits of Central Asian Republics. To defuse the Indian influence in Afghanistan two prong policy needed to be followed; first-relinquishing the policy of strategic depth in Afghanistan and secondly, end of trust deficit between Pakistan and Afghanistan regarding end of terrorism and support of terrorist groups and individuals by both sides.

- ✓ To counter India, Pakistan is endeavoring to sign memorandum of understanding with Central Asian Republics.²³ For this purpose certain policies are needed to be adopted.
 - To develop cordial relations with every Central Asian State.
 - While peace process going on Afghanistan, Pakistan should engage with Central Asian Republic in signing bilateral agreement and treaties.²⁴
 - Pakistan must not separate herself with any conflicting state of Central Asia.
 - To create trust and confidence building Pakistan should supplement regional and international caucus.
- ✓ For cultural bonds and cooperation, Pakistan should focus on education sector, research and scholars. It should invite Central Asian students by giving them scholarships. Successful completion of CPEC. It will not only defuse Indian intrigues but attract more countries toward Pakistan for enhancement of foreign investment.
- ✓ Restoring Countering Indian objective to isolate Pakistan on international forum.
- ✓ Restoring of its image amongst international community that Pakistan is not supporter or exporter of terrorism but the only one fighting against terrorism in the region in reality.
- ✓ Portray India as the meddler and supporting terrorist activities inside Pakistan to destabilize it specially in Baluchistan.
- ✓ Success of TAPI gas pipeline project.
- ✓ Extending bilateral relations with Russia in military and economic fields.

Conclusion

Pakistan and India are major players in the regional game of Central Asia. Geopolitically both these hostile states are endeavouring to make continuous efforts in achieving benefits from oil and gas resources of Central Asian Republics. But comparatively Pakistan is in advantageous position in fiscal and mercantile knot with Central Asian states and it is more contiguous rather than India. The foreign policy of Pakistan is determined to engage its relationship with region because of Afghanistan's prospects. On the other hand, India has established chemical industry and is increasing impressive development in the region while benefiting from the prevailing situation due to Afghanistan. Pakistan is in endeavour to contain the Indian access and influence in the region in terms of its geo-strategic location. Both countries have separate objectives in acquiring more fascinating and nearer to this Central Asia. Pakistan and India are making utmost efforts to be a win-win position by becoming closer to Central Asian Republics in capturing energy resources and stronger CARs.

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Academic Session: 7

***Socio-Cultural Connectivity: South Asia and
Central Asia***

Session Chair: Prof. Dr. Ishtiaq Ahmed

IMAGINING TRANSNATIONAL CONNECTIVITIES: SOME ASIA-CENTRIC PERSPECTIVES FROM CENTRAL EUROPE

Martin Hribek*

Abstract: *Connectivity between and among regions is contingent upon geopolitical as well as ideological imagination. The notion of „sisterly nations“ can be indeed very flexible in terms of linguistic, ethnic, religious, and cultural distance it is able to transcend. The standard model of Orientalism devised by Edward Said notwithstanding, national discourses on the Orient in Central and Eastern Europe were very different from those of colonial nations. Instead of constructing an image of inferior other, many proponents of national revival movements in those countries in the 19th century looked for their national origins in South and Central Asia and argued for affinity and coevally rather than otherness. Such patterns of identification tend to be fairly stable as countries of Central and Eastern Europe have traded affiliation to the imaginary East and West several times in last one hundred years. In this paper I will map some examples of non-colonial European imagination about South and Central Asia as well as about connectivity in between South and Central Asia as such imagination is relevant at times of geopolitically shifting sands in both continents.*

Keywords: Central and Eastern Europe, Central Asia, national imagination, Germany, Orientalism, South Asia

Introduction

Turning away from natural resources, security, infrastructure and other vital pragmatic issues I will focus in this paper on something much less tangible and seemingly ephemeral to hard facts and counter-facts of geopolitics, yet something which nevertheless lies at the heart of all possible connectivities, namely on creative imagination. If I may borrow the words of Muhammad Iqbal, the national poet of Pakistan, “New worlds derive their pomp from thoughts quite fresh and new / rom stones and bricks a world / was neither built nor grew”.² It is highly symbolic that I am able to read this paper at a conference inaugurated on the 139th birth anniversary of this foremost South Asian thinker who pursued an important part of his academic career in Heidelberg, that is within larger Central Europe, and who devoted much of his creative genius to critical exploration of philosophical traditions of East and West. Rich tapestry of his thoughts and indeterminacy inherent to subtle poetry lends itself to conflicting interpretations, yet it is precisely that indeterminacy what allows to inspire them all at once. Such poetic indeterminacy animates discourses of freedom struggles and national movements in Asia as well as in Europe. Indeed, the poetics and politics of identity are closely related both within and across states. At times inward looking and hostile to foreign elements, the poetics of identity often generate possibilities for unexpected transnational affinities. In the following I shall unpack the imaginaries of East and West to explore some examples of non-colonial European imagination about South and Central Asia.

As a major critical exercise on East/West binary, Edward Said in his seminal work *Orientalism* applied Foucauldian genealogical method with a devastating effect to the European discourse on the Orient.³ Said has convincingly exposed how European scholarship in areas including linguistics and philology, anthropology, history, and geography as well as European art, literature and poetry in collusion with colonial interests portrayed the Orient as essentially other and inferior to the imagined European western self. The knowledge about the Orient and the domination over the Oriental subject fuse in his narrative into a single nexus of colonial power. This narrative is based mostly on English and French primary sources and generally focuses on representations of Islam. His analysis presumes that discourses in other European languages largely followed those of the two major European colonial nations, the Great Britain and France, albeit to a lesser degree. However, when the same methodology is applied to the discourses about the Orient in other European countries it produces rather different results. Germans were champions of Indology (philology of languages and history of peoples in the Indian subcontinent) without having a comparable colonial empire and any colonies whatsoever in South Asia. Russia’s engagement with her own East did too follow a different trajectory.⁴ The Central and Eastern European traditions of knowledge production about the Orient have been comparatively much less exposed to critical examination of their situatedness in political contexts and power relations. Specific

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Orientalisms from that region thus provide an important and fresh terrain to study the discursive practices of constructing East and West; among other reasons because some of those countries had been themselves subjects of the Ottoman Empire for extended period, and others lived under the influence of Soviet Russia, an Eastern power representing a particular, non-capitalist hence non-modular, version of modernity.⁵

Several studies on German imagination about South Asia⁶ have shown quite a different scenario in terms of relation between power and knowledge than that expounded by Said for British and French discourses. In the early 19th century, Germans, then in the process of national unification, considered South Asians not inferior others but a distant kin people who had greatly advanced civilisation in the past. This imaginary connection with ancient inhabitants of South Asia served nationalist pretensions of the reunifying Germany in the wake of Napoleonic wars. The German case involved an imaginary connection in the past and disconnection in the 19th century modern times as it was deemed to be the role of resurgent Germany to revive the ancient Aryan civilisation. Moreover, Kris Manjapra in his recent monograph argues that intellectual connections, or entanglements, between Germans and South Asians served both parties equally in their historical situatedness to articulate the possibility of a non-Anglocentric world, in particular between 1880 and the end of the Second World War. His approach seeks to “inject a necessary dose of realpolitik into the study of transnational intellectual history, through a focus on alliance building, political rivalries and multilateralism”.⁷ The entanglements, which Manjapra seeks to establish as a separate concept, refer to intellectual, namely academic and artistic but also political liaisons between German and South Asian personalities who used each other’s cultural resources and “platforms of recognition” to jointly conceptually restructure the Anglocentric hegemony. While Manjapra builds on Foucaultian and Saidian theory he shifts the focus from what we may call with Donna Haraway ‘situated knowledges’⁸ to situations, transnational episodes and networks that generate transformative knowledge.

Czech and other national discourses on the Orient in Central and Eastern Europe did develop in relation to Orientalist discourses in Western European countries but not as their mere reflection. Rather those many national discourses represent an active contribution of indigenous nationalist thought to Western imaginations of the East. In particular, the nationalisms of the Slav-speaking peoples from within the Austro-Hungarian Empire conceived their sense of national identity at the same time reflecting and opposing the German identity constructions including its Oriental component.

Czech national identity, to give an example I am most familiar with, contained an Orientalist element since the beginning of the Czech national revival in the first half of the 19th century. The Slavic nations of Europe who were asserting themselves against the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires looked partly to Tsarist Russia for support. This affinity with the Eastern power established a self-orientalizing strategy expressed in the ideology of Slavness⁹, which is present in the core of the nationalist imagination of many Slavic nations, including the Czechs. The idea of Slavness presents a geographic reorientation of Said’s scheme in which the Eastern Russian Empire looks at its Western would-be-colonies as the supplement of Russia. However, this supplement is not other but (almost) identical. Secondly, the Slavs construe themselves as external to, but at the same time, derivative of the Europe/West. In many ways, Czech nationalist imagination is analogous to that of aspiring colonial nations.¹¹ The concept of hybridity introduced for the colonial setting by Homi Bhabha as a location “where cultural differences ‘contingently’ and conflictually touch,”¹² characterises much of the Czech discourse too. Hybridity of one’s own location on the East/West scale is one of the most salient features of Czech identity politics.

Besides Russia, early Czech national revivalists also turned their attention towards South Asia and noticed soon that Czech as well as other Slav and Baltic languages are structurally closer to Sanskrit than German is and claimed that the affinity between ancient inhabitants of South Asia and Slavic peoples was even closer than that of German’s. Primarily evidenced by lexical and grammatical proximity of Slavic languages to Sanskrit, philological studies expanded into a complex exercises, which included composing Czech poetry in classical Sanskrit meters or looking for similarities of the Vedic religion and mythology with the pre-Christian Slavic cults and myths.¹³ As I have argued elsewhere,¹⁴ Said’s notion of Orientalism as a discourse on the other and inferior subjects of colonial empires has to be substantially modified to fit the Czech perception of South Asia. While German authors differed from Said’s notion of Orientalism in that they construed affinity with ancient inhabitants of South Asia, as far as modern times were concerned, they considered themselves superior and more able civilization builders. Yet, as Manjapra shows, German and South Asian intellectuals at least from 1880’s shared a common interest in the decline of the British Empire. The Czech nationalists in their turn

undoubtedly identified with both South Asia's past and presence. Since the middle of the 19th century, they began noticing the movement of the Bengali reformists in Calcutta and associated their struggle against the British dominance with the Czech national revival against the German cultural hegemony and the rule of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The dominant Czech perception of South Asia was based on an affinity thesis which involved not just common ancestry but also coeval nationalist struggle. Many Czech authors, for example, identified the Czech nationalist project with Rabindranath Tagore's humanist project. Tagore was thus often invoked in Czech discourse to endow Czech nationalism with an aura of universal humanism.¹⁶ Up to the first years after WWII the Czech Orientalist construction of South Asia had been based on imagined identity and equality rather than on Saidian other-and-inferior thesis, because the imagination in terms of identity-and-equality served better the Czech national agenda based on opposition to German (perceived or real) hegemony. Those ideas were at least to some extent reciprocated by South Asian intellectuals. Jan Marek in his brief account of Czech-Pakistani relations¹⁷ mentions that the Khaksar movement founder Allama Mashriqi published in the movement's mouthpiece *Al-Islah* (The Reform) in 1936 an extensive report on Czech Sokol (The Falcon) patriotic mass organisation¹⁸ which focused on physical education and fitness of the nation. The article gave an overview of the Czech national struggle way up to the independence and compared Sokol to the pan-Islamic movement and, most notably, saw in that organisation an inspiration for the Khaksars.

During the communist period in Czechoslovakia (1948-1989) the aforementioned identity-and-equality thesis survived to the extent to which the ideology of the communist state encompassed Czech nationalism. Yet a more universal narrative of progress had taken over and countries in South Asia as well as anywhere in the so called Third World started to be viewed as potential converts to the Soviet-style socialism. The idea of coevalness slowly dissolved into a more high-handed discursive approach of a "progressive" country to "developing" ones. In particular the idea of a spiritually inspiring Orient able to unsettle our notion of modernity and progress seems to have been purged from official publications but at the same time it was highlighted in some dissident undercurrents. The official authors, however, often reinforced the difference between Czech and Western interest in South Asia and emphasised its non-colonial nature by somewhat romanticising and celebratory statements such as, e.g., "at the bottom of this remarkable interest lies the longing of a nation, wedged in the heart of Europe without a sea-coast, for broad vistas and bold flight,"¹⁹ or claims that the Czech tradition of Oriental scholarship is "being free of any colonial tendencies as well as of any religious or racial prejudices."²⁰

Another major turn in perception of South Asia appeared after 1989. It can be characterised as re-orientalisation. The Czech Republic was along with neighbouring states in Central and Eastern Europe incorporated into the West and identification and "reunification" with the West has been a major driving force for state policy and ideology since 1989. As a part of this process, much of the Western Orientalist stereotyping of the East as described by Said has entered Czech public discourse. At the same time, the 1990's witnessed withdrawal on the official level from South Asia and other so called Third World countries, namely a drastic reduction in diplomatic and commercial representation in the wake of the postsocialist transformation and the dissolution of Czechoslovakia into two smaller entities. Until very recently, a prominent feature of Czech post-socialist representations of the Orient was the perception of identity with Tibet and Tibetans and their independence cause. This imagined identity is a direct continuation and a post-socialist avatar of earlier nationalist constructions of South Asia. In this picture China is the communist big bully and Tibetans represented by the Dalai Lama are a small nation fighting against Chinese hegemony. Such reconstruction of identity politics on the East-West axis establishes, by way of analogy, continuity with the original nationalist narrative about the small Czech nation struggling for freedom from German/Austrian hegemony and at the same time fuses it with the dissident narrative of struggle against the communist power.²¹ Since 2013, however, there has been a reversal of this long-standing line of foreign policy in a massive pro-Chinese turn.

Having outlined at some lengths Czech imagination about South Asia and having shown its similarities and dissimilarities with imagination of other Slav peoples and of Germans, I will now turn to the case of Hungary as a contrasting example. Unlike the Slav peoples in CEE who struggled with the German hegemony, Hungarians managed to carve out a better place as a nation within the Austrian Empire, renamed to Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1867. While Slav peoples celebrated the end of monarchy and post WWI division of Europe, Hungarians felt disgruntled by the Treaty of Trianon (1920) which had large swathes of territory inhabited by ethnic Hungarians ceded to neighbouring states. Also the Hungarian imagination about the Orient is not quite the same because Hungarian is not an Indo-European language, but a Finno-Ugric one and together

with Finnish and Estonian its philologically related kin languages are spoken not in South Asia but in Western Siberia, that is in larger Central Asia. Hence their search for eastern origin leads them to Central Asia rather than to the Aryan civilisation of South Asia. Imre Bangha in his detailed introductory chapter to the book on Hungarian-Bengali literary contact speaks in general on Hungarian notions of the Orient. Although he acknowledges British and especially German influences on one side and, as was the case of Slav Orientalisms, sympathy to the anticolonial struggle on the other side, Bangha claims that “till the present day Hungarians think that speaking a non-Indo-European language they are a lonely oriental people in Europe.”²² It is, therefore, no coincidence that Hungary has produced many linguists and explorers of Central Asia, e.g., Ármin Vámbéry, Sándor Csoma de Kőrös – the founder of Tibetan studies, and Auriel Stein, who got his first post in South Asia as a lecturer at the Oriental College in Lahore. In a similar fashion, Bangha writes, “Scandinavians and Poles at a time linked themselves to the Scythians, who challenged the Roman Empire, while Bulgarians would emphasise their relationship with the Onogur Turks of the Eastern European steppe”.

The North-South axis cutting through the Indus valley was also of great importance to European imagination for it was in this direction that the mythical mass movement of nomadic peoples from Central Asia into South Asia was supposed to take place. The so called Aryan Migration Theory has been under fire for some time, eroded equally by new archaeological findings as well as by Hindu fundamentalists’ desire to match mythology with history and move the time of composition of the Vedas way back into history. Controversial as it might be, it was this hypothesis what for over a century constituted the crucial link of kinship between Europeans and South Asian Aryans – the supposed makers of the ancient Indian civilisation. Moreover, some linguistic studies on the relationship between Dravidian and Altaic²⁴ might suggest that the North-South connectivity could have been still broader in distant past. Are that imagination and its challenges relevant for current debates of connectivity between Central and South Asia?

To sum up my argument, even when reduced to the Foucaultian knowledge/power perspective, European imagination about the Orient is much more variegated than Edward Said in his seminal work envisaged. Poetics and politics of Central and Eastern European Orientalisms are inseparable from individual nationalist discourses in that region, from their goals and mutual positioning. At the same time, their proponents were no less free to imagine past and future worlds than Muhammad Iqbal was when he penned his ideas about the Persians, Persianism and Arabs, about Aryans and Semites in search for modern identity of South Asian Muslims.²⁵

The Czech Orientalist discourse about South Asia is a way of strategic positioning of the Czech national self on the imagined East-West axis and the same is true for other such national discourses. That position seems to rest on increasingly shifting sands nowadays as the East-West divide seems to reposition itself on the map of Europe. Recent change of the Czech foreign policy towards China and receding official support for the cause of human rights in Tibet are symptomatic of this shift. Russian military build-up on her Western frontier and soft-power projection to the region is just another symptom. Last but not least, the refugee crisis in Europe has amplified the difference between the CEE countries and its western core, both in economic terms as well as culturally in the generally unwelcoming attitude towards refugees in CEE. Twenty five years after the end of the Cold War, eastern influences stand poised to challenge the western identity of this region.

In this paper I strove to point out that connectivity between and among regions is contingent as much upon geography and intended state policies as upon unbridled poetic imagination which may connect regions set apart by many a pragmatic interest. The Indus valley civilisation or any ancient geography of human habitation, which is ex-post in a certain epoch and discursive environment considered a *civilisation*, itself a politically loaded term par-excellence, conveys a notion of centrality to the outside world. The Indus valley, broadly conceived, has been by its sheer geography at the crux of cultural flows both on the East-West axis and the North-South axis and so it has been an object of multiple imaginations about those flows. The power of poetic imagination, however naïve it may seem to be, lies in the unabated freedom to conceive future worlds anew out of the dust of contemporary existence and inspire many by a single line or two. Notably, intellectual expressions of connectivities are not limited by geographically bounded states and downright pragmatic interests, yet those impulses are hardly entirely divorced from them. Every nation as an imagined community, to use Benedict Anderson’s relativist term, harbours in its imagination much more possibilities than any given state of affairs suggests. While roads, railroads, pipelines, waterways, optic cable lines and other materialities, which have the potential to enhance Pakistan economically and geopolitically on both the East-West axis and

the North-South axis, will have been the work of engineers, the conception of those within and across the region calls for young poets with fresh thought who see through the times to be to connect the past and future anew.

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WHY MATERIALISM WON? INDIAN AND CENTRAL ASIAN SUFI TRADITIONS VIS-À-VIS REGIONAL POLITICAL IDEOLOGY IN THE FAR NORTHERN MUSLIM PERIPHERY AT THE TURN OF THE XXTH CENTURY

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Abstract: There are some reasons why materialism prevailed in the territory of the Volga Tatars despite that it was somewhat contrary to the European philosophical materialism and contraposing to its Asian Muslim analogy – Central Asian scholasticism. So it came out to be closer to realism or occasionalism. This article tries to see the way Tatar Muslim theology used to struggle with the dogmas of Central Asian scholars. Opinions of modern social scientists were added as 'ultima ratio', to underline its social, collective nature. It is the delinquent social structures, common sense and logic, that made Tatar progressive clergy appeal to everyday practice and individual sensual perceptions, as well as to Holy texts, for 'clearing' presuppositions that ruined the meaning of religion of truth i.e. Islam. So Tatar's geopolitical location between western 'reality' and eastern 'soul' was the reason why here, in modern day Russia, was 'born' such unusual form of Islam, a product of thousand years long historical development.

Keywords: Realism, materialism, Tatars, Islam, Marjānī, scholasticism, Islamic theology, collective mind, occasionalism

Introduction

In this short research we will use the term 'matrix' as a sphere of collective and unconscious, but intellectual affection. In the West it was based on the question "what is the world?", whereas in the East, "what is the truth". Detailed answers were given by materialism and theology (especially, Muslim one) which were the dominant discourses in these parts of the Earth. Tatars lived on the crossroads. Through centuries, Tatar's religion, fortified by the historical circumstances, prevented Russian and European thoughts from being absorbed. So there was only theological form for every idea. But scholasticism's formulas and patterns of reasoning also did not help to understand the routine, everyday practice. Social laws of Central Asia, constituted by the sharia, in Tatar's case also did not work. In the end what triumphed was the reality. But how did it look like in Tatar's case?

Our understanding of materialism comes close to 'practical materialism' - definition of which was given by the Director of Global Center of the Advanced Studies in New York, Creston Davis:

"The key element [of practical materialism] is *practice* (italics in original – D. G.), which is, in its most basic sense, human thinking, saying and doing, and whether of extraordinary practices such as ritualized events or everyday practices of "getting through the day".

We find ourselves inside this discourse- concerning the realism in the sense of the object-oriented idealism, close to the phenomenological understanding of the world. Its evaluation was demonstrated by Graham Harman in one of his articles². European realists, as well as Tatars, were also seeking consistency and concreteness, e. g. real objects distinct from other's meaning.

For Tatars, it was existential choice or principle way of life as opposed to theorization and mind games of their brothers in Bukhara. Their lives were closely linked with the social community as they were bound with the question of political authority while fighting for theological orthodoxy. It was easier to get rid of the policy of Bukhara than of its theological dogmas. For example, disliking Bukhara by inner Russian Muslims is stated very clearly in *Sharḥ* to *sūfī* poem of living in Bukhara Āllāhyār Sūfī 'Thubāt al- 'Ājizīn', written by Tatar 'ālim Tāj ad-dīn Yālchīgūl (1768—1838) and named 'Risālah 'Āzīzah'. In this *Sharḥ* Bukhara was set against the ancient capital, burning place of *Khujā Naqshband* city of Samarqand³. This fact also states the contiguity of the Muslim scholasticism and European materialism.

In 1861, 'Great Reforms' in Russian Empire ended up the serfdom. Sooner after, the idea of the modernized society begins to gain strong popularity among the Tatars. The main 'content' of innovations for

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Muslims came from Turkish '*Tanzīmāt*' and Indian '*naqshbāndīya-mujāddidīya*' *sūfī* order, that effected more quietly and subtly. Close to that period, Muslim conservative circles were 'besieged' by the whole Muslim community. They were criticized and identified not only with pitiful backwardness, but with espionage and unscrupulousness. Tatar merchant's capital, with the ideological claim of some leading clergymen, led to the convergence of personal interest with national needs. That was mental revolution for Tatar Muslims, who lived in 'captivity' for centuries. So, in the first decade of the XXth century, it would be difficult to find famous and educated Islamic traditionalists.

The first theologian of the 'new' epoch was Shihāb al-Dīn al-Marjānī (1818-1889). He was a sort of '*mujāddid*' the other way round. He became famous and influential among Tatars not because he was doing something for religion, but for talking about the coherence between the profane and Islamic. He was among those who supported studying of Russian language by Muslims before the government's decision came. He even taught the basics of religion in Tatar Teacher's School in Kazan, opened by government for preparing the Russian Tatars' elite. Many Tatars (including his opponent, the translator of the 'real *mujāddid*' *imām* Rabbānī's letters from Farsi to Arabic, Muḥammad Murād [Ramzī] al-Manzalāwī (1854-1934)) understood this as a new style of converting to Christianity and made *hījrah*. Al-Marjānī says that the concentration only on negative aspects brings the conflict of *dīn* and *dūnyah*, a lot of his contemporaries are suffering from.⁴

The definition of the ratio is quite significant for both scholars. Muslim scholastic tradition in the words of al-Manzalāwī briefly and clearly states: "Mind ('*aql*') – is the interpreter of the soul"⁵. For Tatar traditionalist, however, it's better to acquire knowledge without intermediary (*bilā vasīṭah*)⁶. He writes about the necessity to purify the heart from loving the material objects⁷. In the works of al-Marjānī, as well as modern social psychologists', mind is associated with fallacy. He puts prophecy in the first place, but doesn't contrapose it to the mind:

"Only fiction can contradict it in that case, occupying it – so wrong things constitute the truth. Mind should be cleared of the sensual impurities and temptation for reverting to reality because they have nothing to do with religious beliefs⁸, the essence of the objects is in contingency (*wāqī*), but mind with its own forms doesn't give it the existence."⁹

Al-Manzalāwī thinks that mind studies the soul, but his opponent thinks it only studies the occasional world. However, both scholars use all the same filters to purify the heart, the soul, and the mind. Social psychologist Dan Gilbert calls ability of the human brain to imagine objects and episodes that do not exist its greatest achievement¹⁰, but calls it cheating¹¹, saying that human mind tends to exploit ambiguity¹², "Even though we are aware in some vaguely academic sense that our brains are doing the filling-in trick, we can't help it."¹³

It is the collective mind that prevents the critical reasoning from doing its work; "They are arguing about the truth of the things before comprehending them, calling religious that does not have any relation to it"¹⁴. Scholar of Muslim Hanafī theology Baber Johansen also applies this to the social differentiation that produced religious casuistry¹⁵. D. Gilbert agrees with it:

"As we have seen, ideas can flourish if they preserve the social systems that allow them to be transmitted. Because individuals don't usually feel that it is their personal duty to preserve social systems, these ideas must disguise themselves as prescriptions for individual happiness. We might expect that after spending some time in the world, our experiences would debunk these ideas, but it doesn't always work that way."¹⁶

He also states that belief is a mental as well as social state¹⁷. This is because every person tries to make the others think as they do themselves. Al-Marjānī was the representative of urban community, which from 1861 onwards became highly stratified. He reflected upon the ideas of Tatar urban elite who wanted to seek modern opportunities proscribed by the administration for the citizens. The majority of traditionalists, lived in the countryside nearby. They didn't comprehend the complexity of Bukhara's norms, and often ended up taking them uncritically.

Al-Marjānī stated that morality is something ordinarily out of the notice of the mind: "It is not mind that separate good from the bad – only prophecy can afford this"¹⁸, "it is impossible to understand what sharia is referring only on our mind because it does not feel any necessity for Sharia"¹⁹. According to al-Marjānī, mind does not differentiate the image and the essence: "*Kāfir* does not have ugly image"²⁰.

This point of view concerning God's attributes is very representative in analyzing the differences. For example, al-Manzalāwī wrote that the number of God's Attributes is countless, and studying and distinguishing them get people closer to *Āllāh*²¹. Therefore, he went further than Central Asian *'ulamā*. D. Gilbert says that students also chose certainty over uncertainty, although it is very uncomfortable²². However, al-Marjānī contradicts his counterpart:

“Names and attributes of *Āllāh* are constant without the metaphorical interpretation (*ta'wīl*), they do not replace each other, like they don't increase in number, differ or define location or quality according to the Truth (*ḥaqīqah*), not according to meaning (*mā'na*). *Mā'na* – opposite to collective opinion (*ḥallāfa ijmā'*)²³, “the quantity isn't something that is coming out of the mind, which contradicts the Truth (*ḥaqīqah*), which is united and associated (*muqtāranah*) with it, and it is out of the attention of the mind.”²⁴

It implies that meaning is good, but the truth is better. Al-Manzalāwī sees no contradiction between them. Gilbert calls it vague and squishy²⁵:

“Meanings matter for even the most basic psychological processes, and while this may seem perfectly obvious to reasonable folks like you and me, ignorance of this perfectly obvious fact sent psychologists on a wild-geese chase that lasted nearly thirty years and produced relatively few geese.”²⁶

But there are common ideas concerning the community. Al-Manzalāwī sees *'ḥaqīqah* of three types: the highest is *'ḥaqīqah muhammadiya*, then comes *'ḥaqīqah al qa'ba* and then comes *'ḥaqīqah al-jumhūr*. Therefore, the outside of the individual truth is more important for him than produced by individual himself. But al-Marjānī was more driven by the formation of citizenship identity.

Al-Marjānī had a very peculiar 'image' of Ummah. He refused to accept the Ottoman Caliphate, seeing the Abbasid one as the only legitimate²⁷. He contraposed it with Andalusia Kingdom which saw the 'pain' of a lot of Muslim people as culturally inferior²⁸. It is other way according to his opponent al-Manzalāwī, who straightly associate Tatar lands with occupied Andalusia. After the destruction of sovereign Khanate, Muslim elite lost its glory (*al-bahā*) and socialness (*al-anās*)²⁹. Therefore, for him, the history stopped when the sovereign political authority was lost. Al-Marjānī says that society, especially made of *'ulamā*, can be a mechanism for understanding the truth in case of impossibility by the individual mind: “The mind is social and conditional (*ḥūjjah ittifaqiyah*). We can link to it with the prophecy which is not understandable by the reasoning”³⁰.

Al-Marjānī is apolitical and does not give consideration to political questions like political sovereignty. That was one of the reasons why he was under suspicion – because he talked about Russian history in less than seven pages of his 600-page book, *Mustafād al-akhbār*³¹. In the preface of his work he speaks about the community as if it has no political dependency on orthodox Christians. *Jamā'a* is important for him, but it should be taken into consideration that individuals form it. You will not be an unbeliever joining the community (*jamā'a*) without noticing the sinful deeds, not paying attention to it³². The idea that all Muslims are relatives is noticeable from the statement that Shiites are Muslims. Nevertheless, he strongly opposes the importance of *imām* (part of Shiites' doctrine). He says that the most important task of the *imām* is saving the *'aqā'id*³³. Ummah depends on its elite³⁴ and saving of Ummah depends on the faith (*'aqīda*) of elite³⁵. He calls for doing what was written for Ummah without excesses³⁶.

Tatars did not have complicated situations when it was a problem of the element of sharia law that did not correlate with some social practices. In Central Asia, the *'ulamā* were authorized by administration to judge the correspondence of social relations to Islam. In the Middle Volga region, *imāms* were not in charge of these cases. So local *imāms* had two choice – to say that Empire is *'Dar al-ḥarb*' and stay outside the public life, or to accept the fact that it is acceptable to live in the country as Muslim *jamā'a*.

Scholars also say that casuistic, as well as collective beliefs, are from the desire of activity: “False belief is a super-replicator because holding it causes us to engage in the very activities that perpetuate it”³⁷.

Al-Marjānī was also calling for practice: “discussion about the new things after the reference only to religious law (*sharī'a*) without concerning the practice (*'amal*) and doctrines (*i'tiqād*) turns into quarrels and disputes.” But we get true information from eyesight ourselves that is contradictory to the substance of the things that are produced in our minds with no attention to its outside representation. They told that essence is defined

by the wholeness like the element, particle identity is defined by the essence (*dhāt*) and constant truth (*haqīqah*). The obliged form of understanding is the meaning to believe in. The truth of the things is specified with their names, in reality existent and constant. But constant with its definition and proof. If it has clear meaning in mind, then it should be given the commentary. If there is a conflict between the common and the concrete, the final decision should be given by concrete manifestation in the *ayāh*.³⁸ What can we do to break out with 'cheating' of the mind? Al-Marjānī writes:

“Mind is learning from the disputes. It is power of the self (*kūah al-nafs*), with the help of which learn reasonable things (*ma'qulāt*), like feelings study the concrete”³⁹, “there is no truth without widening the experience (*imtidād al-gārzi*) and connecting the materials (*ittiṣāl al-jism*)”⁴⁰.

So the key thing to cope with this problem is detailed and empirical investigation. Al-Marjānī also criticizes *qiyās* saying that using it requires deep knowledge and morality⁴¹. He quotes the *ḥadīth* that the first who used *qiyās* was *Shaitān*⁴². Ummah and sharia, as well as all prophets, were confronted with the mindfulness and arguable wholeness of the wisdom⁴³. Some people only play with their brain power, but they are free from knowing the truth. But the majority followed them, because those, who were after them said that this is the feature of the true path⁴⁴.

Which strategy was the most adequate for the situation? Al-Marjānī was idealist in practical sphere and materialist in religious. He can be named as the *sūfī* Salafist, whereas his opponent is Salafist *sūfī*. But there is bridge from one to another: al-Marjānī states that attributes can be defined by some very unique individuals⁴⁵. It is opposite to the 'teacher' and 'forefather' of al-Marjānī in Tatar Muslim theology. Al-Qursawī was strongly against the defining the attributes (his principal conflict with Bukhara authorities made him radical in this question)⁴⁶.

Religion should be ambiguous, but people's 'ego' fights with it – their mind tries to know it in details. In our opinion Arabic language does not provide us with distinct comprehensive solutions, because of enormousness of literal heritage in different cultural circumstances. This language is ideal for religion, but not for the science. It gives the men hint, allusion, which inspires them to live in a meaningful way.

Closeness to the Sufism erases differences between the two opposite theologians. They both were sufis from *Mujaddidiya*. They were talking the same things about the menace of *takfīr*, and about basics of *ijtihād*. Al-Manzalāwī said that *fatwas* improves the situation⁴⁷ so that the individual can be against the *jumhūr*⁴⁸. So, al-Marjānī is just a philosopher of the community, of the Tatar Muslim majority, living in a definite territory. He is the 'face' of Islam (as he considered himself). But he is not for national Islam of Tatars.

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² Graham Harman, “Realism Without Materialism,”

³ Yālchīgūl, *Risāla-i 'azīzah*, 90-92.

⁴ al-Marjānī, *Kitāb al- Ḥikmah al-bālighah*, 112.

⁵ al-Manzalāwī, *Aṭṭyah al-wahhāb*. Vol. 2, 157.

⁶ Ibid, Vol. 3. 126.

⁷ Ibid, Vol. 1, 342.

⁸ al-Marjānī, *Kitāb al- Ḥikmah al-bālighah*, 6.

⁹ Ibid, 8.

¹⁰ See: Dan Gilbert, *Stumbling on Happiness*, 5.

¹¹ Ibid, 87.

¹² Ibid, 168.

¹³ Ibid, 105.

¹⁴ al-Marjānī, *Kitāb al- Ḥikmah al-bālighah*, 7.

¹⁵ See: Baber Johansen, “Casuistry: Between Legal Concept and Social Praxis”, 155.

- ¹⁶ Dan Gilbert, *Stumbling on Happiness*, 257.
- ¹⁷ Ibid, 236.
- ¹⁸ See: al-Marjānī, *Kitāb al- Ḥikmah al-bālighah*, 47.
- ¹⁹ Ibid, 50.
- ²⁰ Kalanbawī, Marjānī, and Khalkhālī. *Khāshīyah khāṭimah*. Vol. 2, 258.
- ²¹ al-Manzalāwī, *ʿAṭīyah al-wahhāb*. Vol. 2, 147.
- ²² See: Dan Gilbert, *Stumbling on Happiness*, 209
- ²³ al-Marjānī, *Kitāb al- Ḥikmah al-bālighah*, 26.
- ²⁴ Ibid., 27.
- ²⁵ Dan Gilbert, *Stumbling on Happiness*, 170.
- ²⁶ Ibid, 169.
- ²⁷ al-Marjānī, *Kitāb al- Ḥikmah al-bālighah*, 118.
- ²⁸ al-Marjānī, *Muqaddimah kitāb waḥḥiyat al-aslāf*, 155.
- ²⁹ al-Manzalāwī, *Talḥīq al-akhbār*. Vol. 1, 25.
- ³⁰ al-Marjānī, *Kitāb al- Ḥikmah al-bālighah*, 75.
- ³¹ See: Walidī Aḥmad Zakī, “Rūs tārikhī adabīyātindah Marjānī”, 478-481.
- ³² Ibid, 69.
- ³³ Ibid, 122.
- ³⁴ Ibid, 126.
- ³⁵ See: Kalanbawī, Marjānī, and Khalkhālī. *Khāshīyah khāṭimah*. Vol. 1, 18.
- ³⁶ See: al-Marjānī, *Kitāb al- Ḥikmah al-bālighah*, 131.
- ³⁷ Dan Gilbert, *Stumbling on Happiness*, 242.
- ³⁸ Ibid.
- ³⁹ Ibid., 15.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid., 20.
- ⁴¹ See: Kalanbawī, Marjānī, and Khalkhālī. *Khāshīyah khāṭimah*. Vol. 2, 274.
- ⁴² Ibid, 300.
- ⁴³ Ibid., 276.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., 278.
- ⁴⁵ See: al-Marjānī, *Kitāb al- Ḥikmah al-bālighah*, 26.
- ⁴⁶ See: Nathan Spannaus, “Islamic Thought and Revivalism in the Russian Empire, 186.
- ⁴⁷ Al-Manzalāwī, *ʿAṭīyah al-wahhāb*. Vol. 2, 27.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid., 71.

JAKKINI: A LOST DANCE FORM THAT VALIDATES THE CULTURAL CONNECTIONS BETWEEN INDIA AND THE PERSIAN COUNTRIES

Dr. Swarnamalya Ganesh*

Abstract: Art plays a significant role in gathering the historical connections between nations. When these art forms go into oblivion, with them, disappear the connected histories. Jakkini is a dance repertoire that was influenced by the Persian music and language and was part of 'Bharatanatyam', the classical dance of South India. It has been out of vogue since the beginning of the 19th century. Using textual and representational sources, along with archaeological evidence Jakkini was reconstructed during my research. This dance resurfaces the lost connections between South India and the Persian countries. It also helps to demonstrate the cultural intersections between Pre Islamic art and the art of the Tamils. Manuscript treatises, including nama-s of various Turkish emperors, traveller's and musician's accounts such as Nartana Nirnaya (16th CE, Pandarika Vittala), the Velur gold hoard excavation, were crucial in understanding the spice route trade connections and in-land settlements in the Southern coast of the peninsula that paved the way for this cultural amalgam.

Keywords: Jakkini, Bharatanatyam, Nartana Nirnaya, Spice Route, Tamil country, Nayaks, Pandarika Vittala, Persian dance, Indian dance.

Introduction

Jakkini is the name of a dance form that finds mention in a number of treatises on dance, between the 14th and 19th centuries in India. At the outset, let us trace the etymological origin of the term *Jakkini*. Some texts offer varied readings such as *Jakkadi*, *Jhankini*, etc. For example, there are several works in the South Indian language of Kannada that mention *Jakkini* dance. Vallabharaya's, *Kridabhiramamu*, Sri Kanakadasa's *Mohana Tarangini* for instance, mention *Jakkadi*. Because many Kannada treatises on dance and music refer to this form, it was presumed that the term and the dance itself, might have a Karnataka origin. Thus the Karnataka *desi* origin of *Jakkini* through many of the literary works is traced from the *Jakkula* tribes, of course suggesting a mythological and divine origin to the dance form. A rare manuscript in the *Tanjavur Saraswati Mahal* Manuscript Library titled *Adi Bharatamu*¹, in its *lakshana* or description of *Jakkini* suggests a mythical connection to the Goddess *Kali*. Anticipating her dance duet with Lord *Siva*, *Kali* asked sage *Janaka* and *Matanga* "what should I do to attract the Lord towards me?" and they said perform *Jakkini*.

Interestingly, all these works however while describing the dance and music of *Jakkini*, clearly say that it has to be sung in the *Yavana Bhasa*. A work titled *Nartana Nirnaya* by a scholar/ composer Pandarika Vittala who lived in Karnataka Maharashtra border, in the 16th century, throws much light on *Jakkini/ Jakkadi*. He says *Jakkadi* is a dance and song of the *yavana* experts, who are from Persia. He also further adds that *Jakkini* is a favourite of the *yavanas* (Persians)². He wrote the entire text at the behest of Emperor Akbar and says

"yavani bhasha yuktam yatra geetam dhrutanchalam
...Komalaangairyada nrutyam bhramaryadivirajitam
Sasabdha ca kriya yatra dhruvasampadibhedataha
Yatra cheshtavirahitam tanrutyam jakkini matam
Parasekaihi panditaitudagrahadisvara bhasya
Yad geetam jakkini sanjyam yavananamatipriyam"

- NN-660cd-661, 662-663ab, 663cd-664ab)

The term *Yavana* here clearly denotes Persians. This has been researched and documented by Dr. R. Sathyanarayana, the historian and Sanskrit scholar who writes elaborately in his critical edition of *Nartana Nirnaya*³. History has well established that through the periods of the various Mohammedan rulers, South India had an influx of Turkish, Moghul, Ottoman, Arab and Persian population. They brought their cultures, food, clothes, customs, music and dance with them, which came into close contact with local traditions. A reading of

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early Tamil literature from the *Sangam* age (3 century B.C – 4th century A.D) compilations, reveal to us the ancient trade connections Southern India had with Central and West Asian countries.

India was part of the great spice route. The *Cera* and *Pandya* countries were pepper kings among other goods. Merchants and travellers sailed through India, particularly the southern regions on their spice route for procurement and trade. The practice of setting sail along the monsoon winds meant that they have to spend time in-land, between monsoons. This spice route was called *peruvazi padai* the great route. In fact, from Pulicat to Calicut was called *Mabar*, which in Arabic means transit. Even today this region is called *Malabar*. Historians now write affirmatively that the West-Asians may have very well come before even the Greeks and Romans into India. There are many literatures as well as archaeological evidences to support this fact. Later, 17th century, sculpture panel at *Tirukurungudi* temple in Tirunelveli, Southern India, depicts entire retinues of either Arab or Persian (*Yavana*) traders, along with horses, elephants, musicians, musical instruments and camels carrying chests full of trading goods. While it is true that *Sangam* literature refers to early Mediterranean traders as *Yavanas*, it is important to understand the term *yavanas* through various historical times. The term *Yavana* means a foreigner or a traveller. At various times in history the term *yavana* has denoted people from Greece, Rome, Persia, and Portugal etc. in India.

But coming back to the reason why this study believes that the *yavanas* who are mentioned in *Jakkini* texts are in fact Persians, let us examine the early historical connections of Southern Indian coast with international trading communities and civilizations. Two of the most notable Mediterranean civilizations were the Greeks and the Phoenicians. While the Greeks were spread through the black and red sea, the Phoenicians were reaching northern African regions and Iberian Peninsula. There are records of them having provided naval forces for the Achaemenid Persian Empire which was, at this time, dominated by the powers of Mesopotamia or Persia. It was only under Alexander the Great that the Greeks through their three decisive battles ousted the Persian forces and took the empire over which included the Phoenician lands as well. It was after the downfall of Alexander, that the Middle East, Egypt and Greece gained individual identities, separated from each other. It was during the time of Alexander that the Greek civilization, their culture and knowledge spread throughout the world. Indian peninsula had trade connections with the Mediterranean countries from the very beginning of the common era, if not before. The *Vellalur* gold hoard finding by archaeologists is very crucial in understanding the early trade connections that the South had with them. Amongst the findings are gold rings which depict the Mediterranean civilization. A ring with the incision of a horse and another with a Venus-like figure add to this evidence. It was as always attributed to the *Yavanas* or Roman traders until now but has been identified as from the period of the Phoenicians.

I would like to draw your attention to a another latest discovery of a pot shred found in Berenike in Egyptian coast with *Brahmi* letters that read as “*kora puman*” which identifies it with the *Cera* Prince. Dr. S. Nagaswamy reread this as “*kora puha*”. The Prakrit word for “*Puha*” is “*puga*” meaning, a merchant guild⁴. This proves that Indian traders went on business to the Mediterranean and had close interactions with West Asians, Egyptians, Persians and Greco-Romans. Apart from trade, they also had intimate contact and exchange between artists and artisans. The *nanadesi-s* (indicated in *Sangam* works) landed here for trade from 500 different directions and were called *tisai airettu ainuruvar*. The west sea coast of Cranganore is where the traders landed, went through the Palghat gap, reached Coimbatore and Karur which was the capital of the *Ceras* and from there, Pugalur and through the river Kaveri moved on to Uraiyur, the present day Trichy. They proceeded from there to the Chozas capital and then went to Pompothar the trading port of the Chozas. From this above account one can easily infer that the cultural connection with South India was not restricted to the Greeks and Romans (in fact we find Numismatic evidence of only Roman coins, so far here in South) but also surely extended to the Phoenicians, the west Asians who arrived here at the same time.

Does *Jakkini* the term then have a Persian origin? *Jhank* means ankle bells in Persian language. The terms *Jhanak*, *Jhankini* means the sounds of the *gunghuru* or *payal* while dancing. It is of the feminine gender. The suffix “*ini*” as part of *Jakkini* or *Jhankini* can be attributed to a *Dakhni Urdu* dialect. A dance form that is performed with the sounds of ankle bells is *Jakkini* or *Jhankini*. *Jakkadi* in Persian means “to arrest”. It is also in the feminine gender. *Jakanna* or *Jakala* is the masculine gender for frigidity or to freeze. Used in contexts of saying “*Pakad jana*” (hold) etc. Here too “*ini*”, “*ana*”, “*i*”, “*ye*”, “*kana*” are all local accents added to the root word⁵. *Jakkini* could be interpreted as a dance using the sound of the ankle bells and freezes and poses interspersed. Of course by the time of Pandarika in the 16th century and later works which were written in the next centuries, *Jakkini* or *Jakkadi* had gotten very well assimilated into the Indian *desi* system and tradition of

dance, subsumed in local myths and getting canonized. Music and even poetry were considered in local languages, although curiously, all works until *Sangita Darpana* (17th century), *Sangita Muktavali* (17th century) mention *Jakkini* as a dance form that *yavanas* appreciated and was to be done in the *yavanika bhasa*. In the *Koil Olugu*, an elaborate written documentary record, running into twelve volumes about the administration and history of the *Srirangam* temple at Trichirapolly, the first volume makes a reference to the story of *Tulukka Nachiyar* (the Muslim princess who was so mesmerized by Lord *Visnu* that she was addressed as *Tuluka (Turushka)* Princess). In this section they describe a dance that was specially performed by the *araiyars* called *jakkini*. It was the favourite of the Delhi Sultan and in the language he most appreciated. Thus, winning them the bronze of *Azagiyamanavalan* (the processional deity that was taken away as booty) by the Sultan Ghiyath-Ud-din-Tughlak⁶, from *Srirangam*.

Establishing thus the link between *Jakkini* and the Mohameddan rulers, these evidences prove that *yavana* in *Jakkini* context is definitely the Persians. Persian language was the favourite of the Mohammedan rulers across various periods between 12th and 17th centuries. The question then is, was *Jakkini* performed in the Southern courts too in the Persian language? South India also greatly patronized Farsi poets and scholars. Sultan Ibrahim Adilshah of Bijapur (17th century) was himself a scholar and poet and poets like Zahuri Tarshizi received much favor in his court. There were also a string of political ties that brought the southern native culture and Persian culture closer, for instance, the marriage of Ibrahim of the Quli dynasty and Bhagmati. The existence of muslim lineages along the coastal village of *Kayalpattinam* (Tamil Nadu) who trace their geneology from Egyptian or Cairo Muslims, from the beginning of the first century onwards proves the extent of the interconnection between communities through the spice route. In the court of Akbar, were Pandarika Vittala was patronized, he therefore represented *Jakkini* as a dance form that was the favourite of the *Yavanas* but highly popular in the Hindu courts of the South and performed by dancers extensively in the Southern kingdoms as well.

Finding the *Yavana Bhasha* or language, in *Jakkini-s* was a challenge. This was particularly so because, even though the various treatises acknowledge the origins of the dance to *yavana bhasa*, the *Jakkini-s* now available in Manuscript form, are in either Sanskrit, Marathi or Telugu, thus eschewing the Persian element of poetry or music over time. *Jakkini* got so well assimilated into mainstream *Bharatanatyam* as a local (traditional) dance form.

However, the words or syllables “*ellilam ellilam deva ellilam ellilam lale*” along with *svaras* (solfa syllables) and *sahityam* (Telugu, Sanskrit or Marathi poetry) are employed in every *jakkini*, all the 19 compositions available in Mss form. These syllables sound very different from the usual ones we employ in other dances in *Bharatanatyam*. These are exclusively found only in *Jakkini-s*. The term “*Ilahi*” with the root word “*Ila*” means God in Persian. It is with this significance that Akbar named the city of the Prayag on river as Ilahabad (Allahabad), the city of the God. In Urdu “*eliya*” means “look at me”. “*Ilaha*” in Urdu too means God or Oh! God (Bahadur). The suffix “*am*” “*lam*” and “*e*” are Persian accents. It can be seen even in Dakhni Urdu of Andhra Pradesh. Therefore, the terms “*ellilam ellilam*” mean “Oh! Lord, oh! Lord”. Several of the *Jakkini* compositions use “*elilam elilam deva*” etc which also go to mean “Oh! Lord, look at me”.

Interestingly, Jesus Christ’s last words were

“*Eloi Eloi lama sabachthani?*”

“*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*” (Psalm 22)

The term *Eloi* here is said to be Aramaic. It is therefore astounding to see how linguistic influences and cultural practices have been embedded in a dance form practiced within the classical dance form of *Bharatanatyam*.

Now to the reconstruction of the dance: The use of whirling movements and twirls, called *bhramari-s* have been suggested for the dance movements (Vitthala). The most striking feature while reconstruction was the continuous twirling or repeated twirling (like the *chakkars* in *Kathak* dance). This has a significant similarity with the “whirling dervish” of the mevlavi, Sufi mystic order. With one hand facing up and the other facing down, suggesting a connection of energies between the ether and mortal world. This kind of hand movement is also seen in *Kathak* today while performing *chakkars*.

Some scholars argue that *Jakkini* has nothing to do with Persian or Persians and has close connections to the *Yakshagana* traditions of Karnataka. The term *jhakkini* or *Jakkha* is the Prakrit derivative of the term

yaksa, they say. However, these interpretation too only further strengthen my argument and finding. For instance, cosmologists and anthropologists derive that the root “Yaks” to mean “to move quickly”, “a glimmer or flash” and therefore a *yaksa* would mean “a momentary appearance of light” like a “phantom”.

While the *Rigveda* identifies deified versions of *Varuna* and others as *yaksas*, the *Atharva veda* clearly says that the Brahman is the great *yaksa*. It is a supernatural power that the deities could not even identify, says *Jaiminiya Upanishad Brahmana*. “Therefore *yaksa* was synonymous with *Brahman*, *Atman*, *Purusa* and *Prajapati*, which designates a single spiritual principle which assumes multiplicity and diversity of aspects by its immanence in all things, being at the same time essentially invisible, and at the same time always manifesting, in this sense recognizable”- Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy. Coomaraswamy further also feels that the only English word that can be the equivalent of *yaksa*, covering its meaning is “spirit”. The *yaksa* is in essence a Numen, an invisible power unalterable in itself, but susceptible of participation. It is this participatory quality of this *yaksa* (*jakkha*) that lends itself to the whirling (movements) where the dancers (performer, priestess, priest) connect the Atman (soul) to the ether world.

The concept behind *yakshagana natakams* (theatrical dance dramas of Karnataka) evolved from the tribal mountainous regions of Karnataka, Maharashtra borders. The Gods of these cults were mostly *Kubera* and *Varuna*. The operatic dramas were based on the tribal cult stories of these Gods. The tribal cultures and life of the *Jakkas* is ancient, but the *Yakshagana* drama forms that evolved based on them, are from a later period. Dr. K.S. Karanth in his work on *Yaksaganam*⁷ decisively states the above. But the “spiritual connect that these tribes had with the “local deity” through their individual arbitrary will, to the natural phenomena, has an electric system which is like “polytheism”. This metaphysical overture is very much there in the *Jakkini* where the dancer/ performer is connected through poetry, music and the whirling movements to the mystic, invisible power. The *mevlavi* mystic order through the whirling movements and the *chishti* order through the musical traditions are reflective of this core metaphysical connection. I see the influence of Persian, Mediterranean and Tamil cultures as mutual give and take, just as Dr. Nagaswamy points out that the trading routes were not one-way traffic, but a two way process where South Indian traders interacted closely both on commerce and culture with men from various parts of central Asia. The inter mingling of cultures was also an essential diplomatic route where the kingdoms understood and developed a taste for each others’ arts and cultures as a symbol of acceptance, understanding and negotiation. And *Jakkini* surely was an outcome of such an intercourse. That alone can explain the cultural generosity and acceptance between kingdoms, simultaneously while they were divided on religious and political lines. A dance of this antiquity that finds mention in extant literatures surely must be seen beyond its immediate Hindu, why even Indian pantheons alone. It belongs to the mystic and inter connected cultural understandings of mankind and man’s search for truth. He used the arts as a course to find it. He imbibed the best in music, movement, poetry and philosophy, practiced it and patronized it.

The music for *Jakkini*: although every *Jakkini* found in the manuscript has poetic verses, the solfa syllables written down with the name of the musical scale, it provides no notation for the reconstruction. The Indian music system has interacted closely with the Persian musical traditions for centuries. In fact, ragas such as *Huseni-turushka todi* (Turkish Todi), *Hejiji*, *Zuluf-Bhairava*, *Irakh (iraq)*- *Karnataka gauda* etc are mentioned in *Nartana Nirnaya*. I found a close association between *Jakkini* and the *Jangda saili* musical renditions of the Manganiyars. Set in *Sindh Bhairav* and *Kaafi*, the Manganiyars of the Thar desert region, settled in the Sindh regions of India and Pakistan have the closest relation to the remnants of *yavana* musical traditions of India. They are Muslim by religion, they sing many Sufi traditions in their lineage and are traditionally patronized under the “*Jajmani*” system by many Hindu patrons.

By the time of the Nayaks, the Hindu rulers of the Tamil country between the 16th-18th centuries, *Jakkini* was well assimilated into the local Hindu culture and was part of the classical repertoire. In the *laksana granthas* of their times, *Jakkini* was still mentioned as a dance in the *yavana bhasa* or language. Perhaps they were aware or perhaps not that the syllables found in every *Jakkini* they composed and sang “*Ellilam Ellilam deva...*” was in fact Persian or *yavana bhasa*. A Nayak period ceiling painting at the *Ramanathapuram* palace, depicts a Hindu king seated on the throne, flanked by two *chowri* bearers (fan) wearing *sarees* in the South Indian style. He is witnessing a dance by a Hindustani female dancer wearing a long *kafni* and a *pyjama*, whirling with one hand up and the other facing down. Behind her, wielding the symbols is a fakir-like man the musician and master. This painting is an exemplary example of the cultural connectedness and seamless assimilation.

In my reconstruction of *Jakkini*, I begin with a Persian verse written by a pre-Rumi *Farsi* poet. As a

dance practitioner of the classical Indian form called *Bharatanatyam*, whose history has been steeped in the provincial origins, Sanskrit and Hindu origins exclusively, a discovery such as this, has changed the way I look at the world. The multiculturalism of the arts and their histories is according to me, one of the most effective and powerful, yet aesthetic and gentle ways of showing the world, the connectedness between regions and cultures, thereby also moving art from a mere cultural rhetoric of nation-statehood to a place of contemporary, political relevance.

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Academic Session: 8

***South Asia-Central Asia Connectivity
and the World***

Session Chair: Dr. Vladimir Boyko

RIISING SOUTH ASIA-CENTRAL ASIA REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY: IMPLICATIONS FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA

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Abstract: *This paper attempts to analyse the implications for Southeast Asia of the growing regional connectivity between South and Central Asia. As a new region since 1991, Central Asia has emerged as a new ground for competition among the great and regional powers due to its strategic and economic importance. The Russian and Chinese imprimatur in the region has become very evident since 1991. The continuing instability due to inter- and intra-Central Asian disputes as well as rising threat of religious extremism and terrorism have also led to increased attention being paid to the region. The course and contour of relations between South and Central Asia also have important consequences for the Southeast Asian region. This can be evaluated from three perspectives, namely, Southeast Asia and the New Great Game in Central Asia, the burgeoning Sino-Indian rivalry in the region and its impact on Southeast Asia, and the threat posed by Islamist extremism and terrorism in Central Asia and how it can impact upon the Southeast Asian region.*

Keywords: South Asia, Central Asia, Southeast Asia, Russia, China.

Introduction

At a macro level, the discussion of South Asia, Central Asia and Southeast Asia is essentially about the role and place of regionalism in international politics. While largely a post-Second World War phenomenon, the dueling superpowers in the Cold War stunted the rise of regionalism by incorporating strategically important countries into their respective spheres of influence, be it in Europe, Asia, South and Central America, and the Middle East. The Superpowers also saw the importance of regional organizations from the strategic and security perspective, especially since the Cold War was a zero-sum political, economic, social-cultural and ideological struggle. Hence, there were ‘good’ and ‘bad’ regional organizations from the point of view of the United States and the USSR, ‘good’ and ‘bad’ depending on whether the regional organizations sided with one or the other Superpower, with partisan international politics defining the character and orientation of various regional groupings. Still, regional organizations, inter-governmental or non-inter-governmental, became important elements of the international order in the post-Second World War period in the duration of the Cold War. This included regional groupings in South and Southeast Asia even though Central Asia was devoid of such groupings as the territories were part of the USSR.

The post-Cold War era saw the continued rise and importance of regionalism even though there was a marked shift in focus from geo-strategic to geo-economics. For long, most of Southeast Asians’ Asian preoccupations were focused on East Asia, South Asia and West Asia. These were mainly driven by political, economic and strategic considerations, especially during the Cold War era. Somehow, Central Asia did not figure at all in Southeast Asians’ *weltanschauung* (worldview), or if it did, it was only momentary or as a consequence of some other primary interests. On its own, Central Asia held little direct importance for the Southeast Asian region. This can be explained by two important factors: first, for more than 350 years, the Southeast Asian region was colonized by the Western powers; and second, after 1917, Central Asian republics were part of the USSR and not independent entities on their own right. This only changed following the implosion of the USSR in 1991. The distance between Southeast Asia and Central Asia also did not help the process of interaction or integration, compared to Southeast Asian’s South Asian relations. Yet, for a variety of reasons, Southeast Asians’ interest in Central Asia has been rising and this is due to a number of factors, not least of which, is the rising connectivity between South and Central Asia.

While Southeast Asia has developed intense political, economic and to some extent strategic relations with South Asia, similar ties with Central Asia are markedly missing (see Table 1-4). Yet, as Central and South

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Asia enhance their regional connectivity, there are important fallouts that have led to an increasing interest in the region. While political and economic ties are important (Table 1-4), however, it is the strategic and security elements that are causing greater interest being paid to Central Asia including the rising Central Asia-South Asia regional nexus.

The Old and New Great Game

Historically, the metaphor of the ‘Great Game’ described the centrality of geopolitics.¹ It invoked the 19th century strategic rivalry and competition for supremacy between Great Britain and Russia over Central Asia. It captured the era of territorial expansion by Great Britain and the counter-moves by Russia in Central Asia and vice versa.

Table 1: Basic Data of ASEAN Member States

Country	Area KM2	Population (Million)	Nominal GDP (Million US\$)	GDP Per Capita (US\$)
Brunei	5765	0.42	9636	27,759
Cambodia	181,035	15.92	19,714	1,140
Indonesia	190,569	260.91	936,243	3,600
Laos	236,800	6.92	13,548	1,785
Malaysia	329,847	30.75	309,479	10,073
Myanmar	676,578	54.37	74,775	1,269
Philippines	300,000	102.31	297,314	2,951
Singapore	707.1	5.7	294,959	53,224
Thailand	513,115	68.15	409,536	6,022
Vietnam	331,690	94.45	201,805	2171

Source: Compiled by the author.

Table 2: Basic Data of SAARC Member States

Country	Area KM2	Population (million)	Nominal GDP (billion US\$)	GDP Per Capita (US\$)
Afghanistan	652,864	32.1	21.4	1,976
Bangladesh	147,570	160	205.4	3,581
Bhutan	38,394	0.8	2.2	8,158
India	3,287,263	1.28 bn	2308.0	6,266
Maldives	298	0.38	3.0	14,980
Nepal	147,181	28.5	21.6	2,488
Pakistan	881,913	190.1	250	4,886
Sri Lanka	65,610	21.8	80.4	11,068

Source: Compiled by the author.

Table 3: Basic Data of Central Asian Republics (CARs)

Country	Area KM2	Population (m)	Nominal GDP Million US\$	GDP Per Capita US \$
Kazakhstan	2,724,900	17.1	216,036	11,772
Kyrgyzstan	199,950	5.9	7,402	1,152
Tajikistan	143,100	8.6	9,242	903
Turkmenistan	488,100	5.4	47,932	5,330
Uzbekistan	447,400	31.0	62,613	1,780

Source: Compiled by the author.

Table 4: ASEAN Countries Trade with Central and South Asia, 2013, US\$ Million [selected Countries]

Countries	Ind	Pak	Kazak	Kyrgyz	Tajik	Turkmen	Uzbek
Indonesia	20.1bn	1 bn	170.4	1.9	5.0	5.1	0.32
Malaysia	9.5bn	2.1bn	122	11.4	5.5	36.6	87
Singapore	19.3 bn	2.5bn	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Thailand	8.19 bn	940.4	163	6	3	9.2	NA
Vietnam	7 bn	90	234	3.1	NA	9.2	NA
Philippines	1.6bn	87	7,3	NA	NA	NA	NA
Cambodia	120	43	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Laos	171	10	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Myanmar	2bn	70	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Brunei	1.3bn	5	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Source: Compiled by the author.

The actual stake was, however, much bigger than Central Asia. It was the British determination to safeguard its colonial territories in the Indian Subcontinent against assumed Russian ambitions there.² The British saw Russia's ambitions in Central Asia as being the first step, through salami tactics, to capture Afghanistan, which was seen as the gateway to the Indian Subcontinent. The reading and perception of each other's intentions created an atmosphere of intense distrust and imminent threat of war between Russia and Great Britain during the period of 1830 and 1895.³ The Russo-British rivalry was brought to an end by domestic crises in Russia, especially following its defeat in the 1904-1905 Russo-Japanese War. With the outbreak of the First World War, Russia and Britain fought as allies against Germany. The political drivers changed further with the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. The Great Game ended with Central Asia no longer a zone of competition between Russia and Britain, and eventually, the whole of Central Asia was incorporated into the USSR that lasted until December 1991.

The end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, in many ways, ignited a new Great Game in Central Asia. It changed the balance of power in the region.⁴ As a consequence of the dissolution of the USSR, five Central Asian republics were born, namely, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Due to its proximity to key major and regional powers in south and west Asia as well as Russia and China, it has emerged as a distinct regional entity with its own racial, religious, political, economic and strategic character.⁵ This led to the re-birth of Central Asia as a region of great significance. The collapse of the USSR and the delinking of these states from the former USSR led to a race among the great powers to bring these states and even the region under their influence. The key players involved were Russia, the US and China with regional states such as Iran, Turkey, India and Pakistan also vying to gain influence in what was considered as a natural region for these states to expand and extend their influence. The primary importance of Central Asia was strategic and economic.

Historically, Central Asia has been culturally important, being a source of Buddhism and later Islam. Its location at the inter-section of Russia on the north, China on the east, NATO countries on the West and American military forces supported by NATO based in Afghanistan in the south (after 2001), and the presence of Turkey, Iran, Pakistan and India made the region a natural zone of competition and potential conflict. It was also primarily a Muslim-dominated region and since the 1990s, was afflicted with challenges from Islamist extremism and terrorism. Equally vital was the fact that land-locked Central Asia was rich in natural and hydrocarbon resources, especially oil (2.7 percent of the world's reserves) and gas (7.0 percent of the world's reserves).⁶ Central Asian states were also looking for access to the sea to export their hydrocarbons, partly to weaken the historical Russian stranglehold over them and their economies.

The rise of the new Great Game was clearly evident in the structures of regionalism that affected Central Asia. Central Asian republics have developed relations with multilateral groupings such as the Commonwealth of Independent States, Economic Cooperation Organization, Organization of the Islamic Conference, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Collective Security Treaty Organization, Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia, Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Eurasian Economic Union.⁷ Of all these regional interactions, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, established in

2001, has emerged as a powerful regional grouping. Presently, this is mainly China-led and driven. The SCO has emerged as the anchor regional organization in Central Asia with India, Pakistan and Iran included first as observers and in June 2016 they signed the memorandum of obligations, starting the process of joining as full members by 2017.⁸

It is, however, the development, since 1991, of uneven all-round ties between South and Central Asia that is also affecting the dynamics of Central Asia's New Great Game. For South Asian states, especially those geographically close to the Central Asian neighbourhood such as Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, Central Asia is increasingly important from a number of perspectives. The region's abundant oil and gas reserves, its geographical location and hence importance as a transit zone and bridge between Asia and Europe, and geopolitically and geo-strategically its importance stems from the simple fact that the region borders Russia, China and Iran, making it vitally important for countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. To these factors can be added the historical, cultural and religious linkages between the South and Central Asian regions.

Strategically, the rising connectivity between South and Central Asia can also be seen as part of an effort to create a new balance of power, with South Asian involvement seen as a counterweight to increasing Russian, Chinese and Western involvement in the region. For many secular regimes, South Asian activism, especially by countries such as India, is also seen as part of an effort to contain the rising threat of Islamist extremism and terrorism in the five Muslim Central Asian republics. Still, looking at strategic considerations broadly, the South and Central Asian dynamics are driven by concerns for security and economy, with the former a function of conflict and cooperation among external and regional powers and the latter a consequence of the massive hydrocarbon reserves in the region.

While the eight SAARC and five Central Asian republics have been developing all-round relations, of particular importance are the ties of three SAARC states, namely, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India with the five Central Asian states. While both regions are mindful of the need for stability in the region, especially in the post-US dominated Afghanistan, there is also the need to be concern of great powers rivalries, especially Russia and China, rivalries among regional powers such as Turkey and Iran as well as competition between India and Pakistan for influence in the region. At the same time, Central Asian states have welcome external involvement in the region to develop a pluralistic geopolitical environment so that no one power is dominant. Equally significant is the need to cooperate with great powers such as China and Russia and regional states such as Turkey, Iran, Pakistan and India to prevent the rising threat of Islamist extremism.

From the security perspective, as far as South Asia is concerned, the Central Asian states main concern is the situation in Afghanistan, with the aim of preventing the outbreak of a civil war, the return of extremist groups such as the Taliban as well as to minimize cross-border threats to national stability. Central Asian states have also developed close ties with Pakistan, mainly in an effort to contain the threat posed by extremist groups, be it from Pakistan or Afghanistan. There are also growing economic ties as well as infrastructure projects. One of the most important is the construction of the TAPI pipeline from Turkmenistan to India. Central Asian republics also view India's rising political and economic influence as a source of counterweight to Russia and China in the region. While Indo-Central Asian economic ties are weak, the potential is immense, partly explaining the growing ties between the two parties. India has also developed close security ties with a number of Central Asian republics, including sharing a common understanding to contain the rise of Taliban, the need to neutralise extremist groups, expanding military-to-military ties as well as Indian purchase of Russian weapons that are produced in Central Asian factories. A unique endeavour in this regard was India's assistance to Tajikistan to modernise its Ayni airbase even though Russian opposition eventually prevented the deployment of Indian aircraft at the base.

Rising South Asia-Central Asia Regional Connectivity: Implications for Southeast Asia

As a starting point, it is useful to note that all ASEAN member states have diplomatic relations with South Asian states. Almost all also have embassies or consulates in South Asia and vice versa. However, while all ASEAN states have diplomatic ties with Central Asian states, very few have embassies in Central Asia. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have embassies in Singapore while Singapore only has a non-resident diplomat assigned to the two states. Malaysia and Indonesia have embassies in all Central Asian states and vice versa. While air travel between South and Southeast Asian states is quite dense, this is not true of Southeast Asia and Central Asia. While Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand have regular flights to various Central Asian states, the rest of the countries barely have flight to the region. For instance, flights between Singapore and Central Asia

did not exist until 2014 and currently only Uzbek Airlines service the route. The demographic factor is equally important as there is a significant presence of Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan and Bangladeshi diaspora in Southeast Asia, dwarfing very significantly the limited presence of Central Asians in the region. The one area where Central and South Asia share much in common with Southeast Asia is the presence of Sunni Islam.

Without doubt, there have been increasing political, economic, security and social-cultural ties between South and Central Asia. Of immense importance is Southeast Asia's concern with the security dimension of South Asian and Central Asian relations and increased connectivity. While growing political and economic relations will not pose any particular threat or concern, and if anything, will provide new opportunities for the region to tap the rising economic connectivity between South and Central Asia, of particular interest is the security implications of the dynamics. There are three areas of particular concern, namely, the 'Great Game' among the great powers in Central Asia following the independence of the five Central Asian states from Moscow, the intensification of rivalries involving China and other states, including India, and the rise of Islamist extremism and terrorism that can affect the Southeast Asian security terrain.

Southeast Asia and the New Great Game in Central Asia

The key question here is the great powers' rivalries and their implications for global peace and security. While great powers are involved in Central Asia, including the US, Russia, China, Japan and even India, of immense interest is the American-Russian rivalry and competition that has ramifications for the Southeast Asian region. While, during the Cold War, non-communist countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, Singapore and Brunei aligned themselves closely with the US while Vietnam in particular, was close to the USSR, today, in the post-Cold War era, there is a greater degree of strategic latitude and autonomy in Southeast Asia. All states have close ties with the US and Russia even though the former is more strongly entrenched in most parts of Southeast Asia on the political and economic fronts, and where many are also closely aligned with Washington through strategic links, especially Thailand, the Philippines and Singapore. Russia also has a strategic presence in the Southeast Asian region, best evident in the recent Russian dialogue with ASEAN at Sochi in May 2016.⁹

From this perspective, the increasing competition between Washington and Moscow, though important, has had little immediate impact on the Southeast Asian region, compared to the increasingly great powers' rivalries, say in East Asia, including the Sino-American differences over the South China Sea region. Yet, there will be a need to watch out for spill overs as the interests and competition of the great powers are global and transnational in character, especially over all of Asia.

Southeast Asia and the Intensification of Sino-Indian Rivalries in Central Asia

With both China and India heavily involved in Southeast Asia, their rivalries in Central Asia do have a more direct impact for the region. Still, due to India's policy of maintaining strategic autonomy and distance from the great powers, including the US and Russia, and its poor delivery performance as far as economic relations in Central Asia are concerned, it seems to have lost out heavily to the Chinese in the Central Asian region. This will also have serious concerns and impact in Southeast Asia. For all that has been said in New Delhi about its interest and focus on Central Asia, including through its 'Connect Central Asia' policy announced in June 2012, little progress has been made.¹⁰ If anything, China has far outstripped India in Central Asia as the *primus inter pares* power vis-à-vis India. The initial hype of India acting as a counter-weight to Russian and Chinese presence in the region and being able to act as a bulwark against Islamist extremism and terrorism has proved to be over-rated and false.

Even though Central Asia has been identified by Indian policy makers as a region of great importance from the perspective of energy, trade and security needs [referred to as the extended neighbourhood], prior to the coming of the Modi Government, it has been largely left isolated in the region.¹¹ While Indian strategic thinkers have talked of counter-balancing rising Chinese and Pakistani influence, two of India's traditional adversaries, and even Russian influence in Central Asia, this has been more talk than deed. India's economic weaknesses in Central Asia and its policy of maintaining strategic autonomy from Moscow and Washington and later even aligning with Washington has caused Russia to marginalize India in Central Asia. Thus even though both India and Pakistan have become full members of the SCO, New Delhi finds itself side-lined in the region. Russian and Chinese economic superiority vis-à-vis India in the region, especially in terms of bilateral

ties with each of the Central Asian republics has ensured New Delhi's isolation in the region. Russia's historical economic stranglehold in Central Asia ensures its influential position in the region.

China's increasing financial outlays in Central Asia also ensured its increasing importance to the disadvantage of New Delhi. This is mainly driven by Beijing's policy of One Belt One Road initiative that aims to undertake infrastructure investments in the region. The PRC provided Pakistan with US\$46 billion infrastructure package to establish the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, linking China-built Gwadar port on the Indian Ocean coast in Pakistan to West China in Xinjiang. Even Moscow, India's traditional ally has been building closer ties with Pakistan, including through the supply of arms. While China is far superior to India in terms of economic ties with every Central Asian republic, even in Tajikistan where India invested US\$70 million to refurbish the Ayni air base that was lost to Russia by 2010. Clearly, compared to China (and Russia), India is strategically isolated in Central Asia. India's 'Look North' policy towards Central Asia has largely failed mainly due to its obsession with containing Pakistan and its growing influence in Central Asia. New Delhi could also not compete with Moscow and Beijing's power and influence in the region.¹⁴ As long as Delhi's policy towards Central Asia is premised on isolating Pakistan and China in Central Asia while benefitting economically, this has been a tall order. Pakistan has been more successful in reaching out to Central Asians, partly through developing ties based on common Islamic identity, in turn, which has expanded its economic ties while gaining strategic depth in the region.

The consequence of India's isolation in Central Asia also means that in the ensuing Sino-India competition in Southeast Asia, there will be limits to which India will be able to play a role of balancing against the increasing Chinese political, economic and strategic outreach that have been taking place in the last twenty years or so. With China becoming increasingly aggressive in the South China Sea region and economically, emerging as the most powerful and dominant economy in the region in terms of exports and imports, India could not be counted to counter balance China. This is one of the key reasons explaining the ASEAN countries' preparedness to continue their close political, economic and strategic ties with the United States that will be able to provide a degree of counter-balance in the coming years or even decades as China's expands in all-round power indices. This also explains ASEAN countries' willingness to invest more heavily in various regional mechanisms such as the ASEAN+3, the East Asian Summit, ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting + Eight, etc, as there is no other alternative to check the fast expanding Chinese power and where, like in Central Asia, India cannot be relied upon.

Southeast Asia and the Rise of Islamist Extremism and Terrorism in Central Asia

If there is one area that has had direct impact on South Asian-Central Asian connectivity is the security implications of the threat of extremism and terrorism. While historically, Southeast Asian region has experienced both secular and religious extremism and terrorism, it was the rise of transnational Islamist terrorist groups that fundamentally altered the security landscape in the region since the 1980s. Today, Southeast Asian states are confronted with the threat posed by the Al Qaeda and its affiliate, the Jemaah Islamiyyah as well as the Islamic State, which itself originated from the Al Qaeda. Compared to the Al Qaeda, the Islamic State is posing a far more serious threat, with many fighters from the region fighting in Iraq and Syria as well as having established a Malay-based combat unit, the Katibah Nusantara. Following the intense pressure being put on the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, as in some other parts of the world, the Islamic State established its 'province', or Wilayah Philippines, a province in southern Philippines, in a region that has seen Islamist contesting the authority of the Philippines State for more than 50 years.

Even though the number of Central Asian fighters in Southeast Asia is very limited, presently, the key threat from the Central Asian region is emanating from the Uighurs from Xinjiang in China who are ethnically linked with Central Asians. There are two routes by which the Uighurs make their way to Iraq and Syria to fight for either the Islamic State or Al Qaeda-linked groups: through overland route through Central Asia to Turkey and then to Syria or Iraq, or through Southeast Asia, mostly from Thailand, then by air to Turkey and then to Syria and Iraq. Of growing concern has been the Uighurs' links with Uzbek fighters that are based in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The presence of Uighurs and their alleged bombing of the Erawan Shrine in Bangkok, and the many Uighurs that are believed to be fighting for jihadi groups in Indonesia and the Philippines, are major sources of concern in the region. What is essentially a South Asian and Central Asian security problem is also having ramifications in Southeast Asia and this will be a major area of concern as South Asian and Central

Asian connectivity increases – will this connectivity be able to manage the threat of extremism and terrorism, or will its failure have consequences for the Southeast Asian region.

Linked to this, a major source of concern is the manner the Islamic State will be ousted from Iraq and Syria. The Central Asian dimension could become more significant with the elevation of former Colonel Gulmurod Khalimov to the position of Adnani, the former de facto number two of the Islamic State. Khalimov was Tajikistan's Special Forces Chief until he defected in April 2016. There are already jihadi groups such as the Tablighi Jammāt based in Kazakhstan and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, not to mention various Uighurs groups, including the Turkistan Islamic Party, that operate there. If the Islamic State is militarily defeated in Iraq and Syria, there is a strong chance that its fighters will 'migrate' to Central Asia, posing a new security threat to South Asia as well as Southeast Asia.¹⁵ These fighters could be fighting under the Islamic State banner or even join the Al Qaeda and its affiliates, such as al Nusra. This will also pose a security threat to both South and Southeast Asia.

Conclusion

The nature of the globe's political, economic and security inter-connectedness is primarily responsible for the linkage between Southeast Asia with South and Central Asia. As the Central Asia has grown in importance from the strategic and economic perspective, including its close ties with South Asia, the Southeast Asian region is also keen in developing ties which have largely lagged behind compared to other regions. Of all the areas of immediate concern, Southeast Asia is mostly concern with Central Asia, including the rising connectivity between South and Asia, from the perspective of security, including the rise of the new Great Game among the great powers. The Muslim character of Central Asia is an important element that needs to be factored in Southeast Asia's strategic view of what Central Asia is and how it is likely to evolve in the coming years.

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 - ³ The Great Game is believed to have begun on 12 January 1830 when Lord Ellenborough, the President of Control for India ordered Lord William Bentinck, the Governor General to establish a new trade route to the Emirate of Bukhara, with the idea of using it as a buffer between Russia and Great Britain in Central Asia. The Great Game is believed to have ended on 10 September 1895 when the border between Afghanistan and Russia was defined following the signing of the Pamir Boundary Commission protocols.
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PERSPECTIVES IN ANALYZING CARs' RELATIONS WITH POWERS IN NEIGHBORING REGIONS AND BEYOND

Fu You-qiang *

Abstract: *Ever since the collapse of USSR and the independence of Central Asian Republics, the Relations between countries in Central Asia and those outside the region, especially the relations of CARs with Russia, China, Pakistan, India, for example, have been one of the foci of international academia. Here in this article, the author, himself a historian, attempts to outline some of those perspectives of the academics, mostly from English-speaking countries. These perspectives have been used in analyzing the relations between the Central Asian States and those powers from neighboring region(s) and beyond. For example, China*

Keywords: Central Asia, International Studies, Relations, Perspectives.

Introduction

Ever since the collapse of USSR and the independence of Central Asian Republics (CARs), the Relations between countries in Central Asia and those outside the region, the relations of the five CARs with China, Russia, U. S. A, Pakistan, India, for example, together with their strategies to these powers, have been attracting the attentions of international academics. Here in this article, reading through the literature he can collect, the author attempts to outline some of those perspectives the academics, mostly from English-speaking countries, used in analyzing the relations between the Central Asian States and those great powers from neighboring region(s) and beyond, China as an example, as well as relations between these great powers in Central Asia..

CARs Relations with PRC

China's engagement with the Central Asian states has been one of the recent foci of the international academics. Scholars such as R. Legvold, A. Goldstein, P. C. Perdue, E. Rumer, H. H. Karrar, Sebastian Peyrouse, D. Kerr, X. Liu, M. E. Clarke, Nicolas Swanstrom, S. Aris, Charles Hawkins, Robert Love, E. Kavalski, Nadine Godehardt and many others have contributed to this topic.¹

Of these studies, security and security cooperation is one of the most important subjects. Iram Khalid et al, using ideas of holistic constructivism, analyzed the bilateral relations between PRC and CAR's from the perspective of socio-economics and security. They argued that China's efforts to diversify energy resources to fuel its economy, its concern about security threats posed by USA and its allies, the Strategic Importance of Central Asia and the CAR's eagerness to step out of isolation and economic backwardness, helped when both sides developed their relations with each other. Though the history and culture of China and Central Asia pose a threat to the long term bilateral engagement, the economic and security interests are enormous which may overwhelm this divergence.²

Nicolas Swanstrom, using a new concept, that is, "Greater Central Asia" (GCA), which means Mongolia, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan as well as the five Central Asia Republics, examined the history of Chinese engagement in the whole region and how this engagement had contributed to the very formation of China and its current political, military and economic outlook. Swanstrom also analyzed the motivations and considerations involved in China's Strategy toward the GCA states as well as the strength and weakness of this strategy. Then in his conclusion, Swanstrom argued that the key to a strong EU and U.S. influence in this wider region was to convince the regional states that they had both staying power and patience with political development, while a solitary China in the region was also doomed to fail because of two factors, namely the costs involved, and the fact that without a western presence, major issues with political infighting and legitimacy would arise. However, the prospect of a more coordinated and active policy looked dim at the moment and GCA was to a large degree left to itself and the short-term interests of the West and China.³

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Access to energy and other natural resources is another theme when China's Relations with the five CARs are discussed. The economic growth and the domestic energy demand-supply gap in China since 2000s had increased the importance of energy imports. China's energy strategy and its overseas investments attracted a lot of attentions and became subjects of an intense debate. Central Asia, as a neighboring region with abundant oil and natural gas reserves, is surely to play an important role in the Chinese strategy to reduce its dependence on energy supplies from the Middle East and diversify its access to energy. In her UNISCI Discussion Paper, Irina Ionela Pop attempted to assess China's energy strategy towards Central Asia while analyzing the following issues: China's interests in the region, its energy security strategy, its energy diplomacy and investments in Central Asia as well as its interactions with Russia, India and Japan in the energy field. Then in the conclusion, Pop argued that China's Energy Strategy, influenced both by geo-political and geo-economic considerations, which is not without its weak points, had succeeded to achieve its goals. In comparison with other competitors' energy strategies, China's energy strategy in Central Asia was one of the most efficient. However, a new great game, as a result of strategic competition with Russia and reduce of USA's influence, was to be played between China and Russia.⁴

China's access to Central Asia energy and resources is also linked with its security aspirations. Are China's energy security objectives in Central Asia competing or even conflicting with its more traditional security goals? What impact has China's increasing economic and trade influence in this region had on its security interests? Has it enhanced its security cooperation with Central Asia or has it, on the contrary, weakened it? How has this cooperation influenced and been influenced by the China-Russia "strategic partnership"? Jean-Pierre Cabestan, Professor at Hong Kong Baptist University, considered these questions and tried to reflect on the Xin Jiang factor in China's relations with Central Asian countries. He also attempted to see China's relations with Central Asia in the larger context of its foreign policy and global international strategy, and argued that Central Asia has become a substantial feature of China's foreign policy but cannot fundamentally alter the country's well-established hierarchy of partnerships and priorities.⁵

Xin Jiang, with its massive ethnic minorities and long borderlines with three of the Central Asian Republics, is an important factor which cannot be neglected when the relations the Peoples Republic of China with the CARs and other neighboring countries are examined. In the volume edited by Frederick Starr which is entitled as *Xin Jiang: China's Muslim Borderland*, the authors carried out a hitherto most elaborate study of how the centripetal and centrifugal forces had affected Xin Jiang's role at the crossroads of China-GCA engagements.⁶ Michael E. Clarke, who was then a research fellow at the Griffith Asia Institute, Griffith University, Australia, provided in *Xin Jiang and China's Rising in Central Asia: A History* (2011) an account of how China's evolving integrationist policies in Xin Jiang have influenced its foreign policy in Central Asia since the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949, and how the policy of integration is related to China's concern for security and its pursuit of increased power and influence in Central Asia. Chronically, Clarke traces the development of Xin Jiang, from the collapse of the Qing Empire in the early twentieth century to the present, and argues that there is a largely complementary relationship between China's Xin Jiang, Central Asia and grand strategy-derived interests. China's diplomacy in Central Asia and its approach to the governance of Xin Jiang is inferred and shaped by this pattern of interests.⁷

In the same line, Malika Tukmadiyeva, testing the three hypotheses proposed respectively by realists, liberals and constructivists about the roles Xin Jiang had played in China's policies in Central Asia, argued that the arguments made in these hypotheses did not necessarily contradict each other, but rather were all parts of an interrelated continuum between state-directed means and ends, as well as strategic actions and reactions. Depending on domestic and international dynamics, China's interests and priorities in Central Asia had also evolved, becoming more complex and interconnected. Like different sedimentary strata, the new imperatives, interests, and tactics formed on top of previous ones, complicating the policy, making it more diverse and profound. The role of Xin Jiang remained essential at every layer of Chinese interest in Central Asia. The strategy of opening up of Xin Jiang to Central Asia in order to pacify it had borne fruit, and had resulted in the expansion of China's political influence in the region. What may look like a cohesive, considered strategy of the "Chinese rise" appeared to be more of a result of adaptation strategies and reactive policies to changing internal and external dynamics?⁸

When Chinese are more deeply involved in Central Asia, local people respond differently. How will these responses affect relations between China and CARs as well as their strategies towards each other? How the Central Asian Republics view China's presence in Central Asia and its alliance/competition with Russia

there, how the public opinions as well as the Elites views have shaped their policies to Russia and China, have been of interest to western scholars and policy makers.

In her article titled as 'Central Asian Countries and China: Managing Transition', the Kazakhstan female scholar Venera Galyamova also traced the early development of relations between the five Central Asian Republics and China. Using concepts from geopolitics, she pointed out that "The fact that the geopolitical location makes Central Asian countries strategically important for the world community's dealings with Russia and China, as well as the fact that the possession of rich oil and gas resources makes Central Asia of interest to industrialized nations as a strategic area for diversifying their hydrocarbons supply, defines how the Central Asian region has treated by the international community".⁹ Later, when Galyamova was examining Central Asian Views on rising China, she explored how the public opinion, their perceptions of China, particularly Sinophobia in CARS, nurtured and encouraged by those who do not want to see the Chinese influence growing there, had been shaping their governments' early strategy to China.

Cooperating with Marlene Laruelle, Sebastien Peyrouse, a scholar from George Washington University, went beyond the traditional questions such as security and energy by paying special attention to their views of the "Chinese question" in their *Silk Road Monograph*.¹⁰ Later, Sébastien Peyrouse, in his paper 'Discussing China: Sinophilia and Sinophobia in Central Asia', addressed the multifaceted impact of the China factor on Central Asia, using concepts such as 'region', 'area' from geopolitics as well as concepts from cultural studies. Firstly, Peyrouse outlined China's growing political and economic relations with Central Asia from the fall of the Soviet Union. Then, he discussed the emergence of Pro-Chinese and anti-Chinese groups in Central Asia, their capacity and limits of influence on Central Asian states' relations with Beijing. Later, he analyzed how and to what degree the public and experts (academic circles, think tanks, political circles) opinion had imposed impact on the stakes, profits and risks of the Chinese presence in the region. Then he argued that the rise of Sino-philia and Sino-phobia will impact the political, geo-strategic, and cultural situation in the region, working either to speed up or to slow down Chinese expansion in it.¹¹

Energy figures prominently in China's Foreign Policy as well as in Russia's. The five Central Asian Republics, abundant with oil reserves and natural resources, has become a focal point of Sino-Russian Relations. In his book¹², Thomas Stephan Eder, refining the theoretical background to a two-pronged neoclassical realist-perception theory approach, first traced the history of relations between Russia and China, then he examined the activities of both countries in the region and their possible impacts on the future relations of the two countries. He argued that in short term Beijing might resolve to be patient with its important neighbor and to repeatedly make compromises to calm matters, the rest of this decade will not see a crisis bursting out to truly challenges the Sino-Russian "strategic partnership", though in the long-term open friction might be expected as Chinese government that has marginalized Russia in trade and energy cooperation with the CA republics, refuses to make further concessions to the RF that refuses to accept a situation where it plays second fiddle to the PRC.

Triangular or Multilateral Relations in Central Asia

At the turn of centuries, with China's rise to a global power status, its relations with other powers are necessarily renegotiated. Of these powers, USA, Russia, India, are important. These countries' respective strategies in, their policies towards Central Asian Republics as well as their strategies towards each other are catching more and more attentions. As far as these great powers' presence and their competitions with each other in these Central Asian Republics are concerned, many scholars have contributed.

Of the competitions between or among the great powers, the most important are those between or amongst China, Russia and United States of America. Alexander Cooley's book *Great Games, Local Rules: The New Great Power Contest in Central Asia* contributes significantly to the intellectual exploration of the dynamics of the great powers in Central Asia. In this book, Cooley skillfully weaves the scattered knowledge about the experience of the three great powers and different local actors in Central Asia into a larger picture that is valuable to both the academic and policymaking communities. He argues that while the three major powers—China, Russia, and the United States—are not involved in a nineteenth-century-style, zero-sum competition but rather are pursuing different individual strategic purposes in Central Asia that have allowed them to co-exist in the region without major confrontation in the last decade; the Central Asian states and their rulers, who adopt the multi-vector policies to balance great powers' influence in their region, are important actors in their own right.¹³ Charles E. Ziegler and Rajan Menon, using the theory of neo-mercantilism, also sought to explain the

so-called twenty-first-century Great Game amongst Russia, China and United States of America, that is, vying for political influence and control of natural resources in Central Asia.¹⁴

Shahram Akbarzadeh, in his article, examined Indian and Pakistan's rivalry and strategic competition for influence in the CARs as well as the motives and considerations behind this competition. He argued that the long-standing dispute over Kashmir, the diplomatic advantages that closer ties with a host of Muslim states in Central Asia would offer them over their adversary, the region's mineral resources and its geo-strategic location, the need for fossil fuel in the case of India and the potential of cross-border trade income in the case of Pakistan, Pakistan's search for regional friends and allies, and India's determination to deprive Pakistan of its (now-diminished) strategic assets, are the factors that influence these two countries' policies in CARs.¹⁵

Cooperation is also a factor that should not be forgotten as far as the activities of various countries in Central Asia are concerned. Khan Faqir and Dr. Fakhru Islam, in their article, first traced the history of Pak-China relations, of the relations between Pakistan and Central Asia as well as that of PRC with CARs, then they pointed out the prospect of China cooperating with Pakistan in Central Asia.¹⁶

Religion and culture play an important role in traditional societies. The traditional and moderate Islamic beliefs and practices with strong indigenous and Sufi content in South and Central Asia are diametrically opposed to the radical Wahhabi and Taliban ideologies and practices which are intolerant of other cultures and groups. The emergence of radical and extremist Islamist movements in South and Central Asia is the main source of instability and conflict in the region. With the disintegration of the former USSR and the emergence of newly independent Central Asian states – all having a predominantly Muslim population – a new geopolitical situation arose in the region. Due to its geo-strategic proximity to Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and China, and being a distinct geopolitical entity, developments in Central Asia and adjoining regions have a direct bearing on South Asia. The rise of the Taliban to power in Kabul in September 1996, which turned Afghanistan into the centre of religious extremism, global terrorism, drugs and arms trafficking, brought the entire region into the focus of global attention. The establishment of a radical Islamist order in Afghanistan and the active involvement of armed Islamist militants in cross-border terrorism and jihad (holy war), whether in the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan or some other CIS countries, has adversely affected regional security, peace and stability in South and Central Asia. In the book edited by K. Warikoo, an Indian scholar from Jawaharlal Nehru University, the contributors of the book examined questions such as 'Taliban's Resurgence in Afghanistan and Pakistan', 'Resurgence of the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan', 'Islamic Radicalism in Central Asia', 'Islam in contemporary Tajikistan', 'Ethnic-religious separatism in Xin-Jiang', and analyzed the roles religious extremism, global terrorism, drugs and arms trafficking had played in respective country and the threats these problems had posed to regional security.¹⁷

Emilian Kavalski, in his book published in 2010, explored the patterns of India's post-Cold War international interactions, especially those as indicated by its relations with Central Asia.¹⁸ Amiya Chandra lately makes an elaborative study and in-depth analysis of the most important economic dimension of India-Central Asia relations. He argues that in the significantly changing context of the post-Cold War global scenario, even though India was seen merely as a country that enjoyed traditional, historical and civilisational ties with Central Asia, it is, and could also be, an important force to reckon with.¹⁹

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PAKISTAN AND INDIA'S ACCESSION TO THE SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION: PROSPECTS FOR INTER-REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

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Abstract: *This paper critically assesses the accession of India and Pakistan to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as full members by the 2017 SCO Summit to be held in Astana, Kazakhstan. This paper looks specifically at the geo-economic rationale and implications of India and Pakistan's accession to the SCO, at a time when the organization is expanding its portfolio beyond security cooperation to include a wider-range of economic issues, including a focus on connectivity, transportation infrastructure and the development of trade corridors. The paper concludes that there is a significant amount of untapped potential in increasing inter-regional economic exchanges between Central and South Asia under the SCO platform.*

Keywords: Connectivity, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Pakistan, India, corridors, energy.

Introduction

“The central fact of the age we live in is that every country, every market, every medium of communication, every natural resource is connected”.²

Pakistan and India have recently been affording a greater priority in their foreign policies to Central Asia, an increasingly central pivot in the global order attracting the interest of all major powers, as predicted in the early 20th century by geostrategists Nicholas Spykman and Halford Mackinder, who argued in the context of the ongoing Great Game between the British and Russian empires for contiguous territory: “Who Rules the [Eurasian] Heartland commands the World-Island, who rules the World-Island commands the world”.³ Although the hypothesis is over a century old, it provides a valuable theory to understand the geostrategic value of Central Asia. Central Asia, indeed, has been at the crossroads of the movement of people, goods, capital and ideas across Europe and Asia for millennia.

Pakistan, for its part, portrays itself as a natural trade and energy corridor for the landlocked republics and Afghanistan, offering vitally important overland routes to the port of Gwadar, which provides the shortest route for the export of Central Asia's vast energy resources to world market, and giving the landlocked countries critical access to key sea lines of communication. India, on the other hand, manifested in its ‘Connect Central Asia’ policy launched in 2012 the need to remain engaged with the Eurasian heartland region and boosting bilateral trade with the Central Asian Republics (CARs).

It is argued that India and Pakistan's inclusion presents a win-win scenario for both regions, greatly facilitating the streamlining, integration and realization of planned inter-regional connectivity projects (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India pipeline (TAPI), International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), among others) while benefitting from closer ties to energy-rich Central Asian countries. At the same time, Central Asian countries can benefit from the vast consumer markets of India and Pakistan, which are also a key source of technology and investment, human resource availability and can act as export hubs for the Central Asian economies.

The expansion of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) to include the two largest South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) members will facilitate the breaking down of existing trade and investment barriers (including the lack of regulatory harmonization and an underdeveloped banking infrastructure) that impedes these geographically contiguous regions from reaping the full benefits of proximity. The paper concludes that the SCO, by bringing India and Pakistan together, can be conducive to creating a climate of trust and confidence-building needed for the realization of the above-mentioned inter-regional infrastructure projects, despite the geopolitical complexities of the region.

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Connectivity: The Buzzword of Our Times

The new world order is characterized by increasingly integrated economies and regions, connected through a myriad of transportation, energy and communication infrastructure networks. At major multilateral summits (ASEM and G20, among others) the focus lies squarely on improving infrastructure connectivity. As geo-strategist Parag Khanna argues in his latest book *Connectography: Mapping the Global Network Revolution*, “Connectivity is the new meta-pattern of our age”.⁴ Connectivity is the major driver of a new world order in which political borders are acquiring a decreasing relevance.

The measurement of the strategic weight and power of a country is also changing, with less importance attached to traditional indicators such as a country's size, area, population or military spending as percentage of GDP, in favour of measures reflecting how well it is connected to global markets, infrastructure networks, trade and resource flows. The paramount measure of power in the 21st century is connectivity. “The most connected power wins. What matters is the trade routes and cross-border infrastructures they control”, writes Parag Khanna.⁵

The Eurasian landmass is not alien to the forces of connectivity, with several grand-scale connectivity initiatives traversing it. Among them, it is worth highlighting China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), announced by President Xi Jinping in Kazakhstan in 2013 “to break the bottleneck in Asian connectivity”, is the largest infrastructure initiative in history.⁶ Many of these inter-regional connectivity corridors being planned today track back to ancient passages and the historical network of trading routes known as the Silk Road that cut across Eurasia (such as the Grand Trunk Road which connected Kabul with Kolkata), which enjoyed a golden era of approximately 1,500 before their decline following the advent of sea-borne trade from the 15th century onwards. Nowadays, they are being revived, and South and Central Asia, two regions with a long history of commercial, cultural, religious and trade links, are set to benefit from these trends, in the hope of reversing the poor levels of intra- and inter-regional connectivity.

Indeed, countries in Central and South Asia fare poorly in the connectivity indexes that are being developed, lagging across all measures of global connectivity. In the 2016 McKinsey Global Institute Connectedness Index, which ranks 139 countries on total flows of goods, services, finance, people, and data and communication (based on their intensity and share of global total), India ranks 30th and Pakistan 62nd, although both rank poorly in the category of flow intensity.⁷ The latest DHL Global Connectedness Index, reflecting changes in 12 types of cross-border trade, capital, information, and people flows across 140 countries, ranks India at 71st while Pakistan is found towards the bottom of the table at place 114th.⁸

Harnessing Complementarities between Central and South Asia

Another characteristic of the early 21st century world order is the increasing importance of regional organizations in the development of economic corridors, which will reduce transportation costs across regions, improving regional and international market access and trade and investment flows. The positive correlation between infrastructure investment and regional cooperation has been well documented in the economic literature.⁹

The process of regional cooperation and integration is also gradually catching up in the Eurasian Heartland, with organizations such as the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), and the SCO, which have mushroomed following the collapse of the Soviet Union; many of which with a strong focus on the development of transport and communications infrastructure linking countries, although the implementation of projects has been poor due to limited financial resources.

Multilateral lending organizations have funded a number of projects such as CASAREM, the Central Asia-South Asia Regional Electricity Market (CASAREM) and its Central Asia South Asia (CASA)-1000 component to integrate the two markets. The Asian Development Bank initiated the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Programme in 1997, implementing over 100 projects in regional transport, trade facilitation, trade policy and energy. The six CAREC corridors link the region's key economic hubs to each other and connect landlocked CAREC countries to other Eurasian and global markets, with two of the corridors linking CARs with the Pakistani ports of Karachi and Gwadar. Other major initiatives include the TAPI pipeline, the Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) pipeline and the International North-South Trade Corridor initiated by Russia, India and Iran in 2000.

Despite these initiatives, today's trade between the two regions remains low. An institutional framework linking the regions of Central and South Asia has been lacking. South and Central Asia have not been able to reap benefits of geographical proximity, due to, among other reasons, poor overland connectivity, lack of transit facilities agreements, non-tariff barriers and inadequate cross-border infrastructure. A recent study by renowned economist Montague Lord estimates that inter-regional trade is only between 0.2 and 4 percent of total trade to all destinations. Intra-regional trade is less than 5 percent and that of South Asia is 1.5 percent of trade with all countries, a figure much lower than in ASEAN and other regional groupings.^{10 11} Empirical economic analyses reveal that the potential value of trade in the two regions is up to twice as large as the current level.

Above all, it is Central Asia's rich reserves in oil, gas and hydroelectricity together with energy-hungry South Asia that provides a solid base for an integrated South/Central Asian energy market. Given the rich human resource availability, industrial base, and thriving services sector, South Asia offers complementary economic structures conducive to inter-regional cooperation. South Asia furthermore sits above vital sea lines of communication along which a significant proportion of world trade circulates, with Pakistan offering critical overland routes connecting energy-rich Central Asia and the Middle East with booming East Asia and the resource-poor Indian subcontinent.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Origins, Evolution and Maturity

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization was founded in 2001 as a confidence-building forum to resolve border disputes existing following the disintegration of the USSR. The modus operandi of the SCO is akin to that of ASEAN (i.e. consensus building in order to generate trust among member states and avoiding a EU-style highly institutionalized and bureaucratized framework).

While during its early years of existence, the SCO was strictly devoted to security issues, it has gradually incorporated other issue-areas into its agenda, including, inter alia, the promotion of "promote trade and investment formalities for the progressive implementation of the movement of goods, capital, services, and technologies; for the effective use of available transportation and communication infrastructure; for improving the capacity of cross-border transport and for the development of the joint energy system", as stated in the SCO Charter.¹²

To provide for credit and funding for the execution of joint infrastructure projects, the Interbank Association was formed in 2005, followed by the creation one year later of a Business Council. This has been greatly facilitated by the greater engagement of the CARs with international and multilateral organizations, such as the recent accession by Afghanistan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan to the World Trade Organization (WTO).

At the Ufa Summit of 2015, the SCO Development Strategy 2025 was agreed upon, which importantly pledges increased cooperation in efforts to establish joint financial institutions, although several questions remain concerning the practical implementation of it, including the need to secure a steady flow of financial resources. This message was reiterated at this year's Tashkent Summit, where the 2016-2020 Action Plan, aimed at taking regional cooperation to a qualitatively new level, was signed. The SCO, it is hoped, will implement joint transportation infrastructure projects and facilitate a more integrated approach to improving transportation and logistics infrastructure.¹³

China has proposed in recent times the creation of a SCO Development Bank with little success to date in part due to Russian opposition. For its part, Russia has pushed ahead with the creation of a SCO Energy Club, a mechanism for the implementation of the various member states' energy policies and coordinate strategies of consumer, producer and transit countries.

A significant milestone in the evolution of the SCO came in 2014, when the moratorium on the accession of new members was lifted, paving the way for the accession of Pakistan and India, which had applied in 2006 and 2014, respectively. The admission of Pakistan and India at the SCO comes at a time when both countries are seeking greater engagement in the Eurasian Heartland through their participation in various inter-regional energy and trade initiative mentioned in the previous section. Furthermore, India and Pakistan's admission to the SCO is advantageous to Russia as sanctions imposed by the European Union (EU) compel Russia to procure (agricultural) supplies from new markets.

Despite being one of the world's largest organization in terms of population and land area covered (after the inclusion of India and Pakistan, the SCO covers half the world's population), "no other regional organization

is less consistently or objectively studies than the SCO". In American academic and policymaking circles, the SCO is often analyzed through an outdated, Cold War, zero-sum lens; often being labelled "NATO of the East" or "Warsaw Pact of the East".¹⁴ As for the European Union, no efforts have been made to substantially engage with the SCO beyond watered-down statements supporting the SCO, exemplified by a 2014 European Parliament Resolution on Pakistan's regional role and political relations with the EU, in which it welcomes "Pakistan's pursuit of full membership of the SCO as a sign of Pakistan's increasing involvement in multilateral initiatives".¹⁵

Concerns have been raised concerning the internal power of balance following the expansion of the SCO, and whether the weak state of bilateral relations between India and Pakistan will affect the effectiveness of the organization.¹⁶ While the accession might not bring a substantial shift to the bilateral relations, at the very least it will increase the high-level interaction between officials and lead to a reduction in the trust deficit, however small.

The following sections explore in greater detail the rationale behind the accession of India and Pakistan to the SCO.

Pakistan's Role and Interests in Central Asia

Pakistan's attempts to strategically engage with the Central Asian region date back to the mid-1980s, when it joined the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), a multilateral body founded in 1985 to promote cooperation in the fields of economy, culture, and others, among Muslim countries. Similarly to India, Pakistan's trade volume with CARs is minimal, accounting for approximately 0.06 percent of its total exports.¹⁷ Hence, there exists a solid geo-economic rationale for Pakistan to join the SCO.

A stress on transportation and energy linkages with Central Asia has taken prime place in Pakistan's grand strategy. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has outlined a vision of "shared prosperity through connectivity",¹⁸ with Pakistan serving as an energy and transport corridor linking both regions and offering the shortest route for landlocked CARs to the sea, and as a transit country for trade routes between Central Asia and Iran on the one hand, and the Indian subcontinent / Chinese markets on the other.

Aside from the much-discussed China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), widely considered a game changer for the region for extending China's economic reach to the Indian / Arabian Seas, thereby bypassing the problematic chokepoint of the Strait of Malacca, SCO membership could accelerate the completion of the TAPI gas pipeline, CASA-1000 electricity transmission project and other inter-regional connectivity projects, to which high-levels have been devoted, most recently in 2015 when Prime Minister Sharif visited Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

The beginning of the construction of the TAPI gas pipeline in December 2015, a project that has been plagued by uncertainty for many years, represents a hopeful new momentum. Construction has also begun on CASA-1000 electricity transmission project, allowing Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to sell surplus hydropower to Afghanistan and Pakistan, a project supported by the World Bank, International Finance Corporation and Islamic Development Bank. Furthermore, Pakistan and Tajikistan have reached an agreement on the price of electricity to be supplied by Tajikistan.¹⁹ The recent accession of Pakistan to the Customs Convention on International Transport of Goods (TIR Convention) in January 2016 will allow more efficient and swift transportation of goods across borders.²⁰

India's Looking North Policy

In recent decades, India's strategic focus has laid on expanding eastwards – with a formulation of a Look East, followed by an Act East policy, for a stronger engagement with the Southeast Asian region. This has come at the expense of India's relations with Central Asia; indeed, India's geostrategic foothold in the Central Asian region in the post-Cold war era is negligible and until its accession to the SCO, India was not part of any regional security or economic arrangements with Central Asian countries. Trade between Central Asia and India has been minimal, complicated by the lack of land borders and overland transit routes with the Central Asian Republics (CARs), as well as the absence of high level visits in recent times.

Nevertheless, India and Central Asia share strong geo-cultural links dating back to ancient times, and the conditions are ripe for these to be revived. With India keen to be connected to the great Eurasian land bridge, integration prospects within SAARC generally poor, and energy security becoming a top priority in Indian

foreign policy, India is coming to terms with the economic and strategic added value of the Central Asian region. On the energy front, India depends upon 70 percent of its foreign oil and this is estimated to rise to 85 percent by 2020, by the middle of the century India is likely to be the world's largest imported oil.²¹ This requires a diversification of energy sources away from instability-plagued Middle East and the Maghreb. On a broader geo-strategic level, it is in India's interest to prevent the CARs from falling exclusively into the spheres of influence of Russia and/or China.

To this end, India's 'Connect Central Asia' policy was launched in 2012 during the first India-Central Asia dialogue (a Track II initiative) held in Kyrgyzstan.²² In 2014, India applied for membership to the SCO and a year later, in 2015, President Narendra Modi visited all five CARs adding new momentum to the rapprochement between India and the Central Asian region in the post-Cold War period. This was the first comprehensive visit by an Indian Prime Minister in two decades, since Narasimha Rao toured the region in 1993 and 1995. The visit resulted in concrete deals such as uranium deal with Kazakhstan, and several MoUs in others fields where India enjoys a comparative advantage, such as SMEs, IT and pharmaceuticals. Modi's visit to Turkmenistan was of particular importance in the context of the TAPI pipeline, which is believed to meet up a substantial percentage of India's gas demand.²³

For Central Asia, India is seen as a key export market and source of technology and investment. Kazakhstan, for instance, has shown interest in building a terminal at the Mundra power in Western India to facilitate and develop freight traffic across the Arabian Sea to Iran and then by rail northward to Kazakhstan via the Iran-Turkmenistan-Kazakhstan railway line, already operational. To this end, a MoU was signed in 2015 between Kazakhstan's national railway company Kazakhstan Temir Zholy (KTZ) and India's Ministry of Railways signed.²⁴

Speaking at the 2015 SCO Summit in Ufa (Russia), President Modi outlined his strategic vision for Central Asia emphasizing the need to "create a vast network of physical and digital connectivity that extends from Eurasia's Northern corner to Asia's Southern shores"²⁵, while not discounting the quixotic (at least, at first glance) possibility of "restoring the traditional route to Central Asia through Pakistan and Afghanistan", as he remarked in a lecture given at the Nazarbayev University in Kazakhstan.²⁶

Conclusion

In a short span of time, the SCO has grown into one of the most influential regional organizations across the Eurasian landmass and a pillar of Eurasian stability, as well as a mechanism for sustained regional cooperation. The SCO framework will greatly facilitate the realization of the complementary economic synergies existing between Central and South Asia, bringing the existing connectivity initiatives under one collective, multilateral framework, backed by the creation of a well-integrated energy market which received a boost following the creation of the SCO Energy Club.

The accession of India and Pakistan to the SCO opens new perspectives to reap the benefits of the energy and trade corridors that have been described in this paper. For the Central Asian member states of the SCO, India and Pakistan, together making up one fifth of the world population, are sources of technology and investment; and major export markets offering access to the sea. The accession of India and Pakistan is, then, a win-win scenario for both regions, as South Asia looks for sources to palliate its energy crisis, and Central Asian countries seek to diversify their foreign policies beyond the immediate post-Soviet space in order to reach world markets. A lack of clarity regarding financing has been the cause of concern for many existing connectivity projects; India can be an important source of financing and its accession potentially accelerate the establishment of a SCO Development Bank.

Furthermore, the Iran nuclear deal and the removal of financial sanctions on the country, paves the way for the future accession of Iran to the SCO, and the realization of a handful of inter-regional projects (most notably IPI and TAPI), leaving the stabilization Afghanistan as the main source of concern for the SCO in the foreseeable future. The geopolitical environment is complex, but the power of connectivity should prevail if long-term economic pragmatism prevails among the region's leaders.

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SOUTH ASIA - CENTRAL ASIA INTERFACE: GEOSTRATEGIC AND GEOECONOMIC PROSPECTS FOR COOPERATION

Mahesh Raj Bhatta*

Abstract: *The Central Asian States have profound cultural, religious and economic ties with South Asian Countries, particularly with Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. These two regions have centuries old common historical legacy that is well heeled and includes cultural, religious and economic ties. Although the Central Asian States are very affluent in natural resources yet, they have not been able to utilize their assets to the maximum. One of the key reasons of their inadequate economic condition is their physical location. Center Asia is a land-locked region and it doesn't have direct physical access and prospect to the outer world. South Asia on other hand enjoys the best geographical position having a large coastal area and well developed coasts. If both the regions join hands and enlarge their economic relations they can surmount their economic crisis with the help of each other. This paper aspires to focus on the issues of cooperation between South Asia and Central Asia. The scope of this paper outlines the commonalities between the two regions and largely the issues and prospects of cooperation in a geo-strategic and geo-economic perspective.*

Keywords: South Asia, Central Asia, natural resources, peace and cooperation.

Introduction

Central Asia and South Asia together form a region of high strategic significance. These two regions have geographical continuity and compactness and can provide vast scope for South-South cooperation. The legacies of trade and socio-cultural linkages, economic complementarities and potentials for mutual cooperation, threats of external interference and the constraints of globalization are shared by the countries of South Asia and Central Asia. Moreover, both have to seriously take into consideration the challenges of terrorism, extremism and arms trafficking.

Apart from the role of India and Pakistan, the political situation in Afghanistan plays a vital role in the cooperation between these two regions. Furthermore, China too is an important factor as China has geographical proximity with Central Asia and also has a dominant position in Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The extension of SCO to all South Asian countries and a possible understanding between SCO and SAARC and SAARC and Commonwealth of Central Asian Republics (CCAR) would be an encouraging development.

Emergence of Central Asia

Central Asian region, comprising of five sovereign states- Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, is relatively a new geopolitical creation which emerged after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. This region with its ideal geo-strategic position and affluent natural resources has an important strategic role to play in the twenty-first century. Being located in the middle of the Eurasian Continent, the region has all the potential to be one of the well-situated routes of transit. All these factors particularly, its strategically located geography and rich energy resources attracts many global and regional powers towards it. International relation experts presume that, Central Asia will become an important region in the decades to come. However, as a consumer market it still remains to be exploited. Being located in the middle of three esteemed civilizations-the Islamic, the Christian and the Buddhist make the region even more significant. Moreover, it is located at the intersection of different regions, comprising different civilizations (Persian, Indian, Chinese, European, Turkic and Arabian). The geostrategic location of the Central Asian states has made this region extremely pivotal. CARs (Center Asian Republics) lie at the crossroads of Russia, the Middle East, South Asia and the Far East. Any geopolitical changes in the region inevitably extend their impact on several states in the neighborhood.

The Collapse of Soviet Union and the consequent emergence of independent CARs have changed the geo-strategic environment of the region. Various problems of political, economic, social, demographic and military have been coupled with these independent republics in the initial stage of political transformation. The

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international community in general and neighboring states in particular, cannot remain aloof from these developments. A competition has begun among the South West Asian States by evolving a wide range of policies in strategic political, economic, religious and cultural dimensions both at bilateral and multilateral levels toward various Central Asian Republics. Interestingly it is not merely that the global powers like United States, Russia and China are engaged in expanding their area of influence in Central Asia but the neighboring countries like Pakistan, Turkey, Iran and India also have their politico-strategic and economic interests in the region. This big power, small power syndrome has generated complex situations in Central Asia.² On the other hand, despite of having immense economic potentials and trade hub the region is at serious threats and risk from Islamic fundamentalism of extreme nature and terrorist activities. These factors have become a cause of concern for global and regional powers, particularly after 9/11 terrorist attack on the United States and consequent drive against Talibanians in Afghanistan. Being a landlocked region, the states of Central Asia seek and enjoy the sea transit route from the neighboring states; Russia, Turkey, Iran and China. The Central Asian countries have plural societies. Divided on the basis of religion language and ethnicity; the Central Asian countries have the distinctive characteristic of plural societies. Nonetheless, as a backlash there are majoritarian and minority conflicts too. Therefore, there are numerous challenges of state and nation-building.

As part of the Soviet Union, to large extent, a geo-political order was maintained in the Central Asian region. This order in a way saved the constituent states of this region from a variety of onslaughts. Now that geo-political order has been broken down, it has resulted in uncertainty and ambiguity in the region.³ The independence has thrown them in the vortex of international politics. It is indeed a fact that the emergence of predominantly Muslims but multi-structured countries of Central Asia have added a new dimension to the geo-politics of this region. Despite of having great opportunities there are immense challenges for these states. To come out of the ambiguity and uncertainty the countries of the region have been trying to streamline their socio-economic and political order, whereas the big powers have been trying to take gain from the existing situation in order to promote their own interests. The rich civilization and its historical importance make Central Asia distinctive on its own. The region has been viewed unique not only for its landlocked nature and the richest oil and gas deposits, but also for combining the rich traditions of Islamic culture and the experiences of socialist policy planning during the era of Soviet Union.⁴

The Geostrategic Imperatives

The emergence of Central Asia has been a significant development from the politico-strategic point of view.⁵ Central Asia faced considerable political, social, cultural changes in the 20th century. The beginning 21st century brought the geopolitical changes and dynamics of international relations in Central Asia. There are many factors, which make Central Asia an important region in the world arena. Among them is firstly, the availability of rich energy resources in Central Asia and the Caspian region, secondly, geopolitical location of Central Asia among such regional powers as Russia, China, India, Iran and highly interest of US, the EU and other major international actors and thirdly, issue of Afghanistan, can also be regarded as a source of possible threats to neighboring countries and other countries of the world because of the terrorism, illegal drug production and trafficking.⁶

These factors including others have encouraged regional and global players for to compete in Central Asia in the post-Cold War era. As a result, post-Soviet Central Asia becomes an important region for the geopolitical interests of the externals; global and regional powers and major international organizations and institutions- the UN, the EU, NATO, OSCE etc. From a strategic perspective, the Western countries have been attaching an increased importance to Central Asia's central location at the crossroads of Eurasia. According to some experts analysis it is retuning the Great Game of 19th century, but with the new players. It is well known that Central Asia historically was in the center or important aspects of interest different emperies and we could say that region was more or less in Great Game all the time.

Central Asia and South Asia together form a region of high strategic significance. These two regions are in a position to influence each other because of their geographical continuity and compactness. The presence of United States of America and NATO forces in Afghanistan, in the post-Taliban phase and political instability and chaos in that country is also a very important factor. Essentially Afghanistan plays the vital role to be the geo-political linkages between Central Asia and South Asia. The infiltration of terrorism in Central Asia can be checked to a large extent with peace, stability and democracy in Afghanistan. The presence of terrorism in Afghanistan also threatens the entire region which naturally disturbs both Central Asia and South Asia. Pakistan

too has a strategic importance in the region and perhaps for that matter it has been a country of big power attraction. Without doubt, the United States of America has vital strategic and economic interests in the region.

Similarly, China is closely linked with countries of Central Asia through Xinxiang province and it perceives Xinxiang as a trade hub keeping her long term economic interests in Central Asia. Like other major powers, China is also concerned for its future energy needs and Central Asia has been its one of the key backup sources for the oil and natural gas resources. In order to secure its future energy demands, China has been developing its healthy relations with the states of Central Asia through its diplomatic relations and economic assistance including massive infrastructure development in the region. Furthermore, China is closely linked with Pakistan through Karakoram highway and through Pakistan it has access to Indian Ocean. Thus from the Chinese point of view the region has immense strategic and security importance. Russia has old stakes in Central Asia and it still carries importance in forging a strategic balance in the region. India, as an emerging power has security and economic interest in Central Asia. Kashmir is an important factor between the two regions, which adds to the strategic importance of the region from India perspective.⁷ Any strategic developments in the north obviously have implications for the Kashmir region and beyond. The presence of big powers in Central Asia has renewed the great game in the region in the post 1991 phase. In that way Central Asia has the potential to influence power balance in South Asia. In fact, major power interest in Central Asia and the geo-strategic linkages between the two regions has been an important factor behind increasing US and Chinese interest in South Asia.

Prospects for Cooperation

The Regions of South Asia and Central Asia have centuries old common historical legacy that is very well heeled and includes cultural, religious and economic ties and both India and Pakistan, the most momentous countries of South Asia are highly conscious of their common heritage with Central Asia. Rich in minerals, natural as well as human resources, the Central Asian states have a huge economic potential. Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, the two significant Central Asian states are Eurasia's 'treasure house' of natural resources in terms of hydroelectric power hydrocarbon, agronomical products and minerals.⁸

Central Asia and South Asia have strong geo-strategic and geo-economic inter linkages which provide vast scope for South-South cooperation. The legacies of trade and socio-cultural linkages, economic complementarities and potentials for mutual cooperation, challenges of social consolidation, democratic order terrorism and extremism, threats of external interference and the constraints of globalization and liberalization are shared by the countries of South Asia and Central Asia. In fact both have to seriously take into consideration the challenges of terrorism, extremism and arms trafficking, etc. Apart from economic cooperation it is also possible to learn from each other's experiences in dealing with the issues of social consolidation and democratization. However, there is a vast scope of cooperation but there are serious obstacles too. Afghanistan which forms critical link between the two regions is passing through a phase of political uncertainty and chaos. It is a matter of concern for both the regions. Moreover, the conflicting relation between India and Pakistan is a big stumbling block.

There is no doubt that the countries of South Asia need energy resources and Central Asia can provide it. The South Asian economies are growing, which creates a thirst for energy. India now enjoys the strongest economic growth rate among the major emerging markets, around 7.5 percent by the end of FY 2016. That will contribute to an expected annual increase of 2.6 percent in India's energy consumption. Meanwhile, Pakistan is undergoing a gradual recovery to around four percent economic growth by the end of FY 2016, along with a low inflation rate, fiscal consolidation, and plans to rebuild its external position. That means both of South Asian powers must provide a sufficient amount of energy for their economies.

The Central and South Asia region is rapidly changing. The region's countries have taken up many initiatives for integrating of the two markets, which has led to an emerging strategic framework for linking the energy sectors and economies of the countries in the region. There are some significant regional connectivity projects: the Five Nations Railway corridor (linking China to Iran via Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan) and most importantly the regional energy integration projects, including the CASA-1000 electricity transmission project, the TAPI (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India) natural gas pipeline, and the TUTAP (Turkmenistan-Uzbekistan-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan) electricity transmission line. All these initiatives foreshadow significant geo-economic shifts in the near future. TAPI is a pivotal project for Afghanistan and at the same time a priority for the region's countries. The Central Asia Regional Economic

Cooperation's (CAREC) Strategy for Regional Cooperation in the Energy Sector identifies TAPI as one of the links in the energy relationship among CAREC countries. The aims of TAPI are strategically aligned with CAREC's objectives of ensuring (i) energy security through balanced development of regional infrastructure and institutions, (ii) stronger integration of markets, and (iii) economic growth through enhanced energy trading.

Furthermore, in June 2012, India launched a new 'Connect Central Asia' policy. This signaled that India would seek to build stronger political relations and strengthen strategic and security cooperation with Central Asian states. It proposed to step up India's engagement in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the establishment of a new Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement to integrate its markets with those of Central Asia. In practical terms it promised a cross-regional energy infrastructure, new flight connections with Central Asian states, and the development of IT, banking, and pharmaceutical industries in order to strengthen economic links.⁹ Meanwhile, these projects will benefit the GDP of all countries in Eurasia, particularly the Central Asian countries and Afghanistan. A report from the United Nations estimates that regional trade and construction of the energy transmission market will increase the GDP of Central Asian countries and Afghanistan by 50 percent within a decade. For Afghanistan, these projects will increase the annual GDP growth from 8.8 percent to 12.7 percent.¹⁰

Conclusion

The Central Asian states are full with excellent natural resources, massive fossil fuel reserves along with minerals and metal deposits. It is the enormous manufacturer of gold reserves and oil and natural gas. It also abounds in energy resources and the developed economies like American, Chinese and Western as well as rising economies like Indian along with developing economies like Pakistan and other South Asian countries are in dire need of these resources to accelerate and develop their economies. The big powers America, Russia China, and the European Union eyes upon the natural resources of Central Asia. It is also ideal for Japan, Iran and the rising economy of India. Central Asia is a geo-political struggle over resources and it is 'Great Gain' for the world. Each and every country wants to have an access and get hold on these resources and the world particularly big powers are competing for the resources of Central Asia. In future the world will be in severe need of energy challenges but the region is land locked and South Asia is the ideal way to have an access to these resources. That is why the great game is being played in the region especially in Afghanistan. However, if peace and security is ensured in the region and a well-developed infrastructure is contrasted there, it will be in the benefit of the world and particularly both the regions of Central Asia and South Asia.

South Asia and Central Asia has significant magnitude and value in today's global politics, therefore, there is a strong scope for these two regions to grow and prosperous together. However, the existing challenges in both the regions have been the bottleneck in the process of growth. The strong political commitment for collective growth and the confidence among each other from the member states in the South Asian and Central Asian region will be a strong force to accelerate the tremendous regional growth in near future. South Asia is home to well over one fifth of the world's population, making it both the most populous and most densely populated geographical region in the world. This clearly indicates that this region has a huge market as well as need of energy and fuels. For instance, rapidly rising economy of India requires new markets for their products and energy resources for their massive industry where as Central Asian states which are rich in their energy resources can fulfill her energy requirements and become a useful market for Indian products. Central Asia being a closer regional neighbor with socio-cultural ties and economic prospect should explore the potential market in South Asia. The mutual cooperation between these two regions will prosper the lives of common people of both the regions and eventually contribute to the global peace and development.

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CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF REGIONAL COOPERATION BETWEEN SOUTH ASIA AND CENTRAL ASIA THROUGH SCO

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Abstract: Regionalism has attained a significant role in contemporary world politics. Building mutually beneficial cooperative relationship within a particular region helps in achieving socio economic and political interdependence, which in turn leads to minimization of threats and advancement of shared interests and values altogether. Thus, the qualitative technique of content analysis is adopted to understand the theoretical and practical parameters of regional cooperation between Central Asia and South Asia and to highlight the internal and external challenges that hinder the successful application of inter-regional projects along with identification of the prospective areas of cooperation. The major powers namely USA, China and Russia and regional players including Pakistan, Iran, and India are all becoming part of a strategic rivalry which is termed as the “New Great Game” in Central Asia. The results verify that it is imperative for South Asian states to forge cooperative relations with Central Asian countries. India and Pakistan are both building cross border socio economic and political ties with CARs. India’s “Connect to Central Asia” policy and Pakistan’s desire to work on energy projects with CARs is an indication of emerging geo-economic and geo-strategic dynamics between two regions. Implementation of China’s OBOR project requires supportive relations between South Asia and Central Asia. The presence of terrorism, separatism, hostility between states, prevalent authoritarianism and inadequate infrastructure along with unstable neighborhood i.e. Afghanistan poses difficulty in achieving regional cooperation. The platform of SCO headed by China has raised new opportunities for inter-regional cooperation. The conclusion states that multilateral cooperation in the presence of visionary leadership and political will provide a reputable status to these regions in world politics in future.

Keyword: Regionalism, SCO, New Great Game, OBOR, Central Asia, South Asia

Regionalism and Central Asia

Regionalism has attained a significant role in contemporary world politics. Irrespective of the debate that whether it’s a manifestation of the process of globalization itself or a refutation of the trends towards globalization; regional political and economic integration is desired primarily for the development and progress of the individual states but through collective actions. Many regional organizations have been formed across the globe for the same purpose like European Union (EU), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA), Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Organization of American States (OAS), BRICS and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) etc. The functionality of all these organizations varies depending upon the different developmental dynamics of the respective regions. However, European Union remains the epitome of all the regional organizations due to its supranational character emphasizing compromised sovereignty of European states and complex coordinated systems¹. In case of European integrations two factors played an important part in the success of deep rooted political and economic European integration i.e.

- ✓ Visionary Leadership which adopted a problem solving approach resulting into a win- win situation for the European states and;
- ✓ Presence of political will to share sovereignty through institutionalization replacing the previously dominated principle of balance of power with rule of law in Europe.

This willingness to share sovereignty came from the two most hostile countries of Europe i.e. France and Germany. The experience of two world wars urged these two states in particular and the entire continent in general to abandon the old rivalries and look forward towards a peaceful future. Thus, the conflicts between nations like that of Alsace- Lorraine which remained bone of contention between France and Germany from 1870 to 1945 was resolved and dissolved naturally as an outcome of a better relationship between the two countries after the neo-functional process of integration was started. Today, the forces of nationalism of a nation

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state are submerged into the regional European identity while Brexit remains an exception. Conflict avoidance procedural approach along with neo-functionalism was adopted by the European states to achieve regional integration and peace in the region.

Nevertheless, inter-governmental organizations different in their organizational structure and operational mechanisms from the European Union are also making progress in the world in terms of political and economic advantages. Shanghai Cooperation Organization is one such nascent organization that can reap potential benefits for the member states in contemporary and future global politics of regional integration. The organization is comprised of Central Asian and significant South Asian countries including India and Pakistan as acceding member states of 2016 along with Asian powers like China and Russia. It can be considered as a modern version of the old Silk Route which was the great source of intra and inter regional trade between Asia and Europe through the Central Asian region before the Russian annexation of the region.

Throughout nineteenth century, the Central Asian region including present-day five states and Afghanistan was dominated by the rivalry between British Empire and Russian Empire known as the Great Game. The Great Empires of its time aspired to create a buffer zone in the region. Russia wanted to extend its influence over the region to expand its empire and in order to fulfill its desire of finding warm waters. The British agenda was to halt Russian advance from Central Asia to its Indian colony. This competition for domination and supremacy ended in the beginning of twentieth century when a peace treaty was signed between the two. The new Great Game is considered to be an extension of the old Great Game as the ultimate objective of new actors is the same i.e. to dominate the region². However, the interests of new actors are different from that of the old actors as it is the game of resources now.

The disintegration of USSR resulted in the emergence of five independent Central Asian states including Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The importance of the region has been renewed since 1991 due to the presence of huge amount of natural gas and oil resources in the region. Moreover, absence of direct Russian control enabled Central Asian states to look for new friends in international arena to materialize maximum benefit out of the new realities of the region. This is the major reason for the existence of multiple regional arrangements in contemporary Central Asia. Such regional arrangements include Collective Treaty Security Organization, Eurasian Economic Community, Special Program for the Economies of Central Asia, Economic Cooperation Organization, Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation, Economic Cooperation Organization, Common Wealth of Independent States and Shanghai Cooperation Organization³. Among all these, SCO remains relatively successful due to the fact that it was created on the initiative of China and presently viewed as a growing eastern rival bloc of western NATO. However, the productivity and functioning of these regional arrangements is critically low so far.

Brief History of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

The organization was created in 1996 as a Shanghai Forum in order to meet the security concerns of the region primarily on the behalf of China. The regional security consideration of the decade of 1990s included border disputes between China and Central Asian states, the spillover effect of militant separatist movements of Xingjian and Chechnya and the international security concern included the growing unilateralism of USA in the world politics. Keeping these regional and international imperatives in mind, China took an initiative to introduce a platform that could act as a balancing counterpart to all these problems in future. Shanghai Forum initially included Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and China.

The inclusion of Russia in the organization was a natural outcome of the fact that Russia ruled over Central Asian region for more than three centuries. In the post-Soviet breakup era, Russia was determined to maintain its influence over the Central Asian republics in order to facilitate the process of strengthening independence while preserving its interests in the region intact⁴.

In 2001, in Shanghai, it was declared that the forum would now exist as a complete organization with the name of SCO including the previous members and Uzbekistan. Turkmenistan remains the only Central Asian Republic that decided not to become part of this organization due to its policy of isolation. In 2016, the inclusion of India and Pakistan as acceding members from South Asian region was also confirmed after the unanimous decision⁵. The interests of all the member states of the organization vary but at the same time overlap with one another particularly in the realm of economic prosperity. It represents a great deal of potential for China, Central

Asian states and both India and Pakistan to foster mutually beneficial relationships that could last long in the region.

As far as the performance of SCO is concerned, the continuous existence of SCO is a success in itself considering that different dynamics and challenges the countries involved have to face in forging common alliance in the region. However, the organization has achieved success in the realm of border security so far. The initial agenda was to settle border disputes between states and this task has been completed. The other agendas of the organization include fighting separatism, extremism and terrorism since the Farghana valley divided between three Central Asian states including Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan is considered as the breeding ground for terrorism⁶. Moreover, the volatile security situation in the neighboring Afghanistan adds to the predicament. At economic front, the Economic Cooperation Framework outlines the future for the member states aiming at establishing free trade zone in the region. Nonetheless, the current performance of the organization remains limited in this regard.

SCO: A Bridge between South Asia and Central Asia

SAARC is the sole representative regional body of South Asian countries. However, its performance remains insignificant due to the constant rivalry between India and Pakistan. Moreover, India's hegemonic designs play a critical role in making SAARC dysfunctional. So far, the economic and political outcomes of SAARC remain low. SAPTA and SAFTA were short lived achievements of the organizations⁷. SCO, on the other hand, enjoys a better status in relative terms to SAARC.

Pakistan's recent inclusion in the SCO along with India brings many opportunities and challenges for both South Asian countries and the organization⁸. It offers a broader regional cooperative framework for fostering better economic, political and security arrangements between the member states. Central Asian states are rich in natural resources including oil and gas. The discovery of large reserves of natural gas and oil in these states and adjoining Caspian Sea has renewed the significance of these republics. Recent visits of Pakistani political leadership to Central Asia are a part of an effort to solidify Pakistan's communication links with CARS. India has also developed its own "Connect to Central Asia Policy" in order to strengthen its influence with CARS⁹.

Collectively, SCO provides a better platform for South Asian and Central Asian states to work together for the same cause. Under the leadership of China, states could cooperate in a comprehensive manner to benefits from the shares of economic integration equally. The chances that India and Pakistan would try to make this platform dysfunctional are less because the objective realities of SCO are different than that of SAARC. It would not be in the interest of both these countries to undermine the strength of SCO by discussing their own regional problems at a trans-regional forum.

Moreover, the execution of China's One Belt One Road (OBOR) project requires good relations with all the South Asian and Central Asian states. Thus, Chinese leadership can play a decisive role in bringing all the states on the same page for better future. All states of SCO see OBOR as a huge economic opportunity due to Chinese investments in building infrastructure and creating job employments for the local people¹⁰.

Challenges to SCO

The presence of both internal and external challenges could hinder the development of SCO. The internal instability of the Central Asian republics is a key challenge to the integration process. Considering the fact that these states got independence in 1991, the development dynamics in the region remain low. The current infrastructure is inadequate to support the economic integration in the region. All the oil and gas pipelines go through Russia that still ensures the dependency of Central Asian Republics over Russia. The proposed alternate routes are either under process or yet to be developed¹¹. The energy and transportation sector remains underdeveloped so far. States are often labeled as the "club of authoritarianism" as authoritarianism prevails in all Central Asian states where the pretext of secularism is also used to curb anti-government activities. Terrorist and separatist activities are also going on in the region. Xinjiang region bordering with Tajikistan is a source of concern for both China and Tajikistan in this regard. Overcoming these challenges is crucial to regional economic integration because states cannot perform well at regional level if their domestic condition is not supportive of the integrative realities. Political stability is a key to better performance of the states at all three levels i.e. state, regional and international level¹².

In the wake of diametrically opposite interests of actors involved in the organization including development of CPEC vis-à-vis Iranian and Indian pledging to form Chahbhar port; the conversion of states in forging cooperative relations with one another remains a challenging task. Moreover, China's border disputes with India over Tibet and Aksai Chin remains a constant state of worry. In this scenario, Indian cooperation with China in SCO remains dubious.

External challenges are also present in the region that could act as a hindrance to the effective performance of the organization. China's One Belt One Road (OBOR) project has raised several apprehensions in the West. USA's continuous support to India manifested in the form of US Indo nuclear deal is an indication that USA is taking counter measures to balance the growing power of China in the world. USA's nuclear deal with de facto nuclear India is also for the same purpose¹³. The unstable nature of relations between India and Pakistan also add up to this functional dilemma of SCO.

Prospects of SCO

Creation of free trade area is a first building block in achieving greater economic interdependence and it requires institutional framework to be implemented. The organizational structure of SCO is well developed and could be supportive in the establishment of free trade zone in the region. Economic Cooperation Framework, Observers' Regulation, Dialogue Partnership Ordinance, New Membership Reception Regulation remain important instruments in this regard that provide comprehensive framework to the member states to follow the desired path¹⁴.

Chinese investment and economic aid to Central Asian republics is another hope for the organization to become useful as it would strengthen the disparities that exist between the economic developments of different countries in the region. In 2012, China's investment with five Central Asian states reached 46 billion dollars making it 100 fold since 1992¹⁵.

The SCO Network University was inaugurated in 2010 as a new platform to achieve deeper cooperation in education and cultural people-to-people exchanges. Such initiatives are productive in fastening the process of regionalism in the region. Member states have signed multiple comprehensive agreements in SCO to fight terrorism, separatism, illegal drug trafficking, illegal migration and other criminal activities¹⁶.

SCO is the way forward for achieving greater political and economic integration in Central Asia. Once the process is initiated, it could lead towards the establishment of free trade area, custom union and preferential trade agreements. It would yield better outcome for all member states as far as access to world market is concerned. Moreover, the interdependency of security would be created if states are politically and economically interconnected. The same conflict avoidance approach long with neo-functionalism adopted by European Union states could be employed by the member states of SCO in order to make progress as it helped the European states to transform themselves into market oriented states for achieving greater integration and resolution of political disputes.

Conclusion

The regional trade agreements help to reinforce broader reforms in domestic policy; they can be designed to contribute to a political environment that is more conducive to stability, investment and growth. Presently, bilateral trade agreements dominate the regional trade and trade policies of individual countries are shaped more by political considerations than economic factors. Realizing the potential of free trade agreements, the states within the region have to strengthen the framework of regional economic cooperation so as to provide a solid foundation for enhanced economic ties among South Asian countries. The framework, however, is already present in the form of SCO particularly the Economic Cooperation Framework of SCO provides guidelines to practical implementation for the creation of free trade zone in the region.

Moreover, the initiatives like that of CAREC i.e. Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation that includes Central Asian states, Afghanistan, Mongolia and Pakistan, Azerbaijan and China also helps in fastening the ties between the concerned states aiming to achieve greater regional stability.¹⁷

However, all this cannot be done without a pragmatic and visionary leadership who can actualize this great potential. China and member states of SCO bear a special responsibility to bolster SCO. China's on going peaceful hegemonic rise is conditioned with South Asia-Central Asia connectivity. It has to move forward with a hope of becoming part of a dynamic and rising Asian century.

The challenge for every SCO state also lies at home and unless domestic problems are tackled, the region will not progress. Rightful intentions and commitments adopted by member states can help the organization in playing a pivotal role in establishing peace, trade, and economic development within the region. At present, there is more rhetoric than action and this situation can only be reversed if the states prioritize regional cooperation as an integral part of their national interests¹⁸.

The first step that should be taken by countries particularly India and Pakistan is the trust and confidence building. Bilateral disputes between the two countries forms the basis of unsuccessful functioning of the SAARC. If both countries follow the same pattern, they would make the platform of SCO non-functional too. Thus, it is important for India and Pakistan to avoid confrontations at SCO for collective good.

The current situation of the region needs to be transformed and the SCO remains the viable option for changing the situation. However, the present shortcomings of the organization should be removed first to advance the process of regional development and cooperation. The process of economic development and the welfare of people in the region cannot be achieved if not supplemented by continuous bilateral Confidence Building Measures between countries at bilateral level. It is important for states to engage in the process of continuous discussions and negotiations to facilitate the process of multilateral integration at the forum of SCO.

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GEOSTRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE OF AFGHANISTAN BEYOND A TRANSIT STATE: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY OF CENTRAL ASIA AND SOUTH ASIA

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***Abstract:** Regional integration of the landlocked Central Asia with the warm water gate way of South Asia are heavily dependent upon the peace and stability. Geo-strategically, it is inevitable to realize the significance of Afghanistan as an important factor in this scenario. Afghanistan's geography has the potential to unlock the prosperity of not only two economically viable regions but also connect the Middle East and East Asia through the Wakhan Corridor. Its strategic location and the wealth of untapped resources has allowed Afghanistan to become a major actor in Asian geopolitics with regional and international actors struggling to gain influence. The Central Asian and South Asian region is faced with several socio-political issues such as terrorism, narcotics and migration influx originating mainly from Afghanistan. Therefore, it is significant to assess the role of Afghanistan as it should not be treated merely as a transit state or a land bridge, because she needs to own this regional connectivity in order for it to materialize. The qualitative analysis of literature shows that Afghanistan has emerged as one of the most important states in the region, as it rises out of the ashes of war. The equation of regional integration will be balanced only if Afghanistan becomes a full-fledged partner. Consequently, the recognition of Afghanistan's own need to integrate with its region is a major driving factor as the Istanbul process has emphasized. The international and domestic political will to integrate Afghanistan with its region has also escalated making regional connectivity a priority thus creating an opportunity for Afghanistan to seize something.*

Keywords: Afghanistan, landlocked, transit trade, regional connectivity

Introduction

Afghanistan is a landlocked state in a significant region of the world, a state raved by constant conflicts and wars with a unique history of violence and bloodshed instigated either by the internal and/or external force. The current position of Afghanistan is that of a nascent state, although reemerging from a torn up past, in pursuit of a prosperous future. It is that time in history when internal and external stakeholders agree that Afghanistan needs to embrace a proactive regional economic role to come out of the vicious cycle of conflict. Geographically, Afghanistan is placed at such a strategic position that it has the advantage of being connected, to the richest regions of the world and to one of the most conflicted zones of the world. This leads to Afghanistan wanting to achieve the advantageous the region as to offer but there are hurdles to that. The relations of neighboring states with Afghanistan have largely been transformed along with the regional power politics since Operation Enduring Freedom 2001 by the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to oust the Taliban regime. However, the situation of Afghanistan even afterwards remained turbulent and unstable due to non-state actors and insurgents fighting the ISAF. It is only after more than a decade that the state of Afghanistan has started to rise from the ashes while the process is still ongoing there are several forces keen on bring this state up from the ground. This reincarnation of Afghanistan has been a facilitated process with the help of stakeholders interested in the revival of this country namely being Russia, China, USA, Pakistan, Iran, India and Central Asian states. These states have played a significant role since 2001 to stabilize Afghanistan, the fruits of these effort however are slowly unfolding.

Strategically, it was very rightly stated that historian Arnold Toynbee who referred to Afghanistan as the 'roundabout of the ancient world' that as this state is a bridge connecting vital regions¹. This fact is one being realized by the neighbors of Afghanistan through encouragement and motivation directed towards the rehabilitation of this states. It is widely believed that the regional partners have to integrate Afghanistan into this region so that the dream of shared prosperity can come to life.

While Afghanistan has been a war zone since 2001 the two neighboring regions of Afghanistan have progressed and entered into the 21st century. Both Central Asia and South Asia have established stronger links

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to the outside world and within –wherever cooperation was beneficial – and have emerged as economically stable regions. While some states like Pakistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan- have borne the burden of chaos in Afghanistan- along with Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives on the other side remain economically challenged. However, the regional statistics correspond the overall development, various regional organizations, and external actors like Russia and China have significantly contributed towards the infrastructural, economic and institutional development of the two regions Central Asia and South Asia respectively. This is not to say that such efforts were not made by USA towards the region but they have been mostly Afghan centric and focused on key regional players like India. As far as Afghanistan is concerned, unfortunately these efforts have not had the desired results and achieved very little due to the continuous disturbance caused by terrorist organization functioning in Afghanistan throughout the past 15 years. In any case the role of ISAF is commended to provide security to Afghanistan against the insurgent and terrorist threat.

However now the wind has shifted the USA the key provider of security is wanting to opt of this war and shift its focus towards her other foreign policy concerns and so Afghanistan looks more positively towards making all possible efforts to completely invest itself in the region's economic activities. "A reconnected Afghanistan via enhanced trade and transit would bring as much as \$606 million to the country's economy, and an estimated \$2 billion worth of growth to the region as a whole". Additionally; Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan would also profit from the increased intraregional trade that currently accounts for 6.2 percent ². "The normalizing and reconstruction of Afghanistan must be based on enhanced security , improved governance and greater economic and social development"³. Therefore the integration of Afghanistan would be a golden opportunity for the region if the right steps are taken to utilize the potential of this state.

Re-emergence of Afghanistan

The effort to reintegrate Afghanistan and to provide it with the appropriate platforms for cooperation among states had been an ongoing process since 2002. Richard Boucher, the US Assistant Secretary of the State for South and Central Asia, noted that US has been involved in making Afghanistan as an 'opportunity' rather than a 'problem'⁴. At the Kabul Conference 2010 the Afghan President Hamid Karzai stated "it is time to concentrate our efforts on a limited number of national programs and projects to transform the lives of our people reinforce the social compact between state and citizen and create mechanism of mutual accountability between the states and our international partners"⁵. Highlighting that fact that Afghanistan's position can be used for positive advantage through the promotion of regional trade.

As the process was on going for several years now it was as early as 2002 when it was decided that the customs laws would be removed to boost trade among the neighboring states of Afghanistan⁶. For this purpose, Afghanistan's neighbors have been involved in numerous dialogues since the International Conference on Reconstruction and Assistance to Afghanistan in Tokyo in 2002. Even though encouraging the regional states was not prioritized by the United States until 2011 when it became inevitable for her to announce an exit strategy to leave by 2014, that has been under way since, however further reduction of troops will be decided by the new US President, currently a residual force resides in Afghanistan numbered more than 8000 troops⁷. "It is only in the past three or four years, that calls for the region to take greater collective responsibility for Afghanistan have intensified. This has been accompanied by warnings of the impact that chaos in the country would have on its neighbors"⁸. Therefore, the regional players have become aware that once the US exits completely or significantly reduces its force Afghanistan is going to need massive help form regional allies. with the realizing of this fact the security and military assistance however will come from major regional players like Russia and China with the means to play a prominent role, it will be cooperative effort for collective regional security.

Consequently, there have been several forums that have promoted the cause of regional integration with Afghanistan these include the "Heart of Asia" process or the Istanbul Process, South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Unfortunately, such forums have not been able to create the impact that was intended. This call for regional integration was also 'enthusiastically' endorsed at by Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA) and the United Nations Special Program for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) with participants including the Central Asian and South Asians states. Later on these forums were not able to deliver on the promises made by partner states and there were no follow up meetings. Evidently, as many as 1500 International and domestic companies are interested to invest in Afghanistan. Mostly because of the 300 types of minerals deposits found

in Afghanistan coal and copper being among them. Along with \$ 95 million barrels of oil and five trillion cubic tons of gas⁹. Afghanistan also provides favorable work force statistics with a youth bulge of 45% below the age of 15 years¹⁰.

Afghanistan is in much need of this investment to rebuild the states and the society so that the economy may stand on its feet. At the conference in Istanbul 2010 Afghan Foreign Minister Zalmay Rassoul stated that it is time to contribute towards stability of Afghanistan to allow it to resume its natural role as a land bridge between the central Asia, south Asia, middle east and far east. For that purpose, the revival of the silk route is an important step towards establishing this link. According to the Asian Development Bank trade flows between South Asia, East Asia and European Union have tripled between 1997 and 2007. Although the realities of Afghanistan have not allowed it to become as such a promising factor as it would want as its inadequate road and railway infrastructure is a major hurdle in the process, with no pipelines infrastructure for transfer of CARs gas or petroleum. An embryonic network of high voltage electrical transmission and inadequate aviation system.

The challenge Afghanistan is facing is many fold of which its neighbor's rivalry is among the most troubling, regional states do not have cordial relations as such the territorial, strategic and economic competition is common among them. Therefore, their interest in the region are frequently in conflict with each other. The reintegration of Afghanistan will be made possible only when these regional players also show willingness to integrate and cooperate with each other. Beyond a bilateral approach and towards a multilateral approach. The trust deficit between Afghanistan and its region, and among the regional players of South Asia and Central Asia will be a major hurdle to cross. Without the resolution of bilateral issues like the Kashmir dispute and the Aral Sea disputes, the pursuit of regional integration will be a futile effort.

There are three fundamental challenges to regional integration for Afghanistan firstly, the stability of Afghanistan is not a priority to neighboring states even though it will benefit them. Pakistan, for example, instinctively looks at Afghanistan through the prism of relation with India, Iran vis a vis, USA and Central Asia vis a vis Russia and vice versa. Therefore, the other issues faced by neighboring states make Afghanistan minor in importance. Secondly, the security issues faced by the neighboring countries renders the issue of tightening border controls inevitable as soon as the situation in Afghanistan goes slightly off balance, intervention will not be seen as an option. Thirdly most importantly is the settlement of disputes among the Taliban and Afghan government to reach an amiable political solution to stabilize the situation. Therefore 'the regional engagement must be understood not only as a route to stability in Afghanistan, but as a product of it. The importance of regional actors in forging the right balance of a political solution in Afghanistan will be able to ensure the future regional prosperity¹¹. Hence the international support required to integrate the south and central Asia will be divided among stabilizing the economic, social and political landscape of Afghanistan. The stabilization of Afghanistan alone will promise the economic integration being aimed at by the stakeholders along with ideal level of regional cooperation.

States like Russia has always had an interest in Afghanistan since the 20th century a time which a Rudyard Kipling referred to as the Great Game between Britain and Russia for establishing influence in Central Asia or what is now being termed as the New Great Game. Historically the significance of Afghanistan to provide passes through the Hindu Kush, Pamir and Himalayan Mountains as major connectivity point is not forgotten. Additionally, the central Asian countries are tightly knitted with Russia economically, militarily and culturally with involvement as economically through the customs union (Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus), militarily by a common air defense (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan)¹². Russia has taken several initiatives towards Central Asia and Afghanistan as well such as 2001 Eurasian economic community (EAEC) –using influence through infrastructure and policy coordination for geopolitical aims. Russia has shown greater interest in infrastructure development of former USSR through the strategic enterprise and strategic stock companies list retained by the government. North-South initiative directed towards Central Asia and Caucasus, playing an 'unpublicized role' with military involvement of Russia. The establishment of geographic connections have been on the Russian agenda, rail lines, shipping, electric grids and hydroelectric stations oil and gas pipelines and other industries have been constructed in central Asia with Russia assistance¹³.

The institutional framework is also present organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and other Central Asian organization are also working to integrate the region socially culturally, economically and to provide support for security purposes. The SCO members make up a group of highly resourceful states but susceptible to the

terrorist threat eminent in all states. The involvement of China in the connectivity of South Asia and Central Asia is a major catalyst because of the large scale investment and support that only a state like China can provide. The Chinese support to this region comes in many forms as bilateral, multilateral and regional projects. The use of regional platforms such as the SCO is a part of the strategy that works for to establish smooth relations among states and to counter threats to integration. The role of China through regional organizations like the SCO allows the involvement of other shareholders to become a part of the process ensuring their constant support. “the geographical borders of central Asia is a core element of strategic consideration of the SCO as current terrorist and other illicit activities are threatening the security of the entire region”¹⁴. The future of the SCO member states thus depends on the situation on Afghanistan and Pakistan borderlands as terrorist take undue advantage of the porous border. The SCO’s work is a description of “good neighborliness” being practiced by China. Consequently, Russia and China both have the will to cooperate under the SCO frame work and the Collective Security Treaty Organization of Central Asia (CSTO). On the South Asian Side, China has expressed interest in SAARC as a platform to increase economic linkages with states of this region, this organization is also seen as a platform by which the influence of USA can be countered in South Asia, by doing business namely with India. China officially pursues a Four No’s policy that entails “no hegemony, no power politics, no alliances and no arms”¹⁵. Such a policy allows China to increase her influence through peaceful means and provides China the grounds to be involved in states for economic and developmental projects.

Therefore, as recently as February 2016 China has shown commitment towards militarily helping the Afghan government in order to fight against the regional threat of terrorism. General Fang of China member of China’s central military commission allocated 480 million yens to Afghan security forces. He also proposed quadrilateral cooperation against terrorism that could undermine projects like the China Pakistan Economic Corridor and One Belt One Road Initiative. The Afghan government also requested the supply of military equipment needed to conduct operations against terrorist threats. “Beijing vowed to deepen security and defense relations with Afghanistan- to deepen cooperation with the Afghan military in the areas of counterterrorism intelligence, joint exercises, and personnel training” in order to “jointly protect regional peace, stability, and development”¹⁶.

Regionally other initiatives have also been under taken, stake holder like Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan signed a MoU in 2002 to proceed with the feasibility study of a 1460 km long gas pipeline to meet the growing needs with a cost of US \$3.5 billion officially known as TAPI gas pipeline project. However, the ADB determined in 2005 that the said gas reserves would not be enough to align with future needs. In the same time period the Iran- Pakistan gas pipeline was also gaining momentum¹⁷. The Pak-Turkmenistan gas pipeline through Afghanistan is estimated to generate \$ 200 million in transit money¹⁸. Recently the TAPI pipeline project has entered in to feasibility checks with 85% shareholder being Turkmenistan and 5 % shareholders each being Pakistan, Afghanistan and India¹⁹. Among many projects that are under way the CASA 1000 (Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan) is also scheduled to be completed by 2018.

Afghanistan has also proposed the infrastructural construction of Wakhan corridor to act as a bridge connecting the North, South, East and West. The narrow strip of land is a promising region where grounds or the base of the future may lie. Before the British invasion of the subcontinent the Grand Silk Road was used to travel across great distances for trade purposes however after the political division of states this route became unavailable. The revival of this old route combined with the OBOR initiative will allow the access to vital economic hubs for the promotion of trade of goods and services. “The October 2015 International Monetary Fund (IMF) Regional Economic Outlook report on Middle East and Central Asia estimates that China is committed to \$100 million in OBOR investments in Afghanistan — \$100 million out of a planned \$890 billion”. This report also highlights the large sums of Money China is investing around Afghanistan rather than in Afghanistan but the comparison falls short of Afghanistan neighbors as China’s commitment within Afghanistan amounts to a 100 Million²⁰. Currently as the CPEC construction is on way the rebuilding of the old Silk Route and the infrastructure development in the Wakhan corridor would allow Afghanistan to trade with China and also benefit from the Gwadar port. Connectivity should not be looked at as novel process for Afghanistan. History has witness to the fact that this particular country has been in important trade route and a strategically significant political entity.

In reality connectivity is constantly being practiced by Afghanistan according to Johnathan Mendal, the fact that some theorists state that the reason why Afghanistan is a failed state is because of its isolation from international trade and politics or what Thomas Barnett termed the “Non- integrating gap” such analysis fails to

take into account the role of unconventional forces active in Afghanistan. The author defines these unconventional forces as arms trade, insurgency and illicit trade stating that although such factors as consciously excluded for analysis but they are in fact a part and parcel of globalization as it's a dynamic process but there is no denying that connectivity is a characteristic feature of globalization. "the globalization network of the opiate trade constitute a significant and at the moment perhaps indispensable part of Afghanistan economy"²¹. Afghanistan produces 90 % opiates; it was estimated that in 2010 Russian federation confiscated 49 tons of narcotics drugs. It amounted to a \$15 billion industry²². According to a UN report, in 2010 opium was being planted on 131 hectares of land in Afghanistan, which is a 71 % increase over the years. It was increased by 61% from 36 tons in 2011. Afghanistan must counter the three evils that are terrorism, separatism and extremism. In Afghanistan an estimated 35% of GDP is from the Opium economy, which means that 80 – 90 % of the economic activity in Afghanistan is through illicit economy²³. For opium trade to be discouraged and reduced, it is important to create job opportunities or alternative livelihood of the farmers. It is also important to understand that the problem is rooted in the basic issues facing Afghanistan at the time that are lower levels of education, poor technology, infrastructures and low levels of income. Some researchers have blamed ethnic and racial discrimination as a reason why people find it difficult to earn a livelihood in cities like Kabul, it is because they lack the capacity (such as the inability to speak English) to provide the services ²⁴. Such analysis is though flawed because a number of Nongovernmental organization (NGOs) have been active in Afghanistan for quite a long time , trying to provide people with basic skills with which they can earn a living .

Afghanistan alone cannot come out of the ravages of war, it is a states still living in the previous century or may be farther than that. The afghan government doesn't have the capacity to create job opportunities and provide a decent livelihood to all people with the limited access of financial resources it has. The fact is that Afghanistan has become a regional problem and it will require a regional solution. In isolation Afghanistan is bound to spiral back into the vicious cycle of terrorism that will definitely impact the region as a whole. Over the past decade it has become a general realization that even though platforms bilateral and multilateral have existed Afghanistan has still remained a dwindling economy standing only with the help of development assistance and USAID. It is high time that the central and south Asian states realize that Afghanistan as a problem cannot be eliminated from the region, it has to be transformed into an opportunity because such a potential exists. Its terrain, population, natural resources and the sheer willingness to cooperate with others, can be utilized to bring about a positive change. Regional economic development is important because it will create job opportunities and will allow people to look at the bigger picture a prosperous Afghanistan. keeping this in mind the domestic issues of opium trade and terrorism need to be addressed the illicit economy has to be eradicated entirely and with the complete control state territory, free from the insurgents as one cannot be achieved without the other. With this a multilateral effort for Confidence Building Measure will also be need to among the states to fulfill the trust deficit among these players. The region can only prosper if CBMs started to work effectively. Also resolution of bilateral issues needs to sought to ensure higher level of cooperation with the threat of retaliation, miscommunication and conflict of interest.

Conclusion

Consequently, the recognition of Afghanistan's own need to integrate with its region is a major driving factor. The international and domestic political will to integrate Afghanistan with its region has also escalated making regional connectivity a priority thus creating an opportunity for Afghanistan to seize. The equation of regional integration will be balanced only if Afghanistan becomes a full-fledged partner. However, that fact remains that the challenges faced by Afghanistan outweigh the opportunities but these challenges are not impossible to overcome. Also these are shared challenges as the threat of terrorism is found creeping in all states of the region and the opium trade that although originates largely from Afghanistan is also a regional problem that has to be addressed on a regional forum to end this illicit trade. The opportunities provided by Afghanistan come in all forms and faces, regional players now need to identify the potential of these opportunities that would change the image of Afghanistan from a failing problematic states to responsible state in regional economic activities. Such approach will allow the regional integration of South Asia and Central Asia.

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Academic Session: 9

South Asia's Energy Security vis-à-vis Central Asia

Session Chair: Prof. Marvin G. Weinbaum

PIPELINISTAN AND GEOPOLITICS OF ENERGY SECURITY: SOUTH ASIA'S PERIPHERAL OPTION

Muhammad Manzoor Elahi*

Abstract: *This research entails within its purview policy of interdependence between sisterly regions i.e. South and Central Asia in connection with energy security. 21st century is the century of Asia and home to growing economies of the world. South Asia is the most populated region and its energy reserves are not synchronized with its rampantly growing population. On the flip side, Central Asia is the least populated region of Asia and its energy reserves are strategic assets for its peripheral regions, particularly for East and South Asia. The research revolves around Pepe-Escobar's theoretical discourse of 'Pipelinistan' and focuses on building of energy corridors –pipelines- from Central Asia to South Asia. It also analyses the contemporary significance of on-going energy project between the said regions i.e. TAPI gas pipeline. It addition, the research chalks out a comparative analyses of peripheral energy options for South Asia and divulges that energy reserves of Central Asia are cost-effective and do-able for energy stricken South Asia.*

Keywords: Geoenergy, energy security, pipelinistan, geopolitics, hydro-carbon reserves.

Introduction

In Asia, rampantly growing demand for oil and gas to fuel industrial growth, transportation, power generation and urbanization have increased the demand for energy resources. Michael Klare candidly remarked that competition for energy will be “a pivotal, if not central, feature of world affairs for the remainder of the century.”¹ Pepe Escobar also sheds light upon the vitality of energy means in contemporary global politics and foresees that, “the Liquid -or Viscous- Wars of 21st Century geopolitics will be predominantly related to oil and gas”. He coined the term ‘Pipelinistan’, wherein Afghanistan is the core.² Oil and gas are the lifelines of global economy. Although petroleum is still the world's largest trade commodity³ but, as foreseen by International Energy Agency (IEA), gas will supersede oil because of its growing demand and fast relative progression of 2.3 % annually than oil 1.6% and carbon 1.5% or nuclear power 0.4%.⁴ Asia's position as a ‘ground zero’ in global energy market is posing new challenges. For instance, International Energy Agency envisages that China and India both will account for more than 50% of total world's energy demand, 60% of world oil demand, 20% of natural gas demand and 85% of world coal demand.⁵

A factual survey reveals that Middle East possesses more oil and natural gas reserves than Central Asia. But latter's natural energy reserves are more easily accessible to China, India and Pakistan, which are the world's first, second and sixth densely populated states respectively and which are competing in global and regional power race. In the quantitative perspective, there is no comparison between oil and natural gas reserves of Middle East and Central Asia, but the latter's reserves are strategically important. As Middle East pacifies burgeoning oil demands of the world and accounts for 56% oil reserves of the world⁶. However, Middle East's oil will remain the predominant source to meet the world's oil demand. In this scenario search for alternative oil and natural gas reserves are indispensable to realize future energy demands.

It is, therefore, the need of the time to diversify energy resources and to dig out alternate energy reserves. The control of strategic chock-points of the world by self-preponderant states, exploration of Central Asia's oil and gas reserves, volatility of oil reserves of West Asia as well as the economic boom of China are the main factors which motivate to consider alternate reserves. Central Asia evidently possesses abundant oil and natural gas reserves⁹. But its demography does not synchronize to its resources. On the flip side, South Asia, in contrast, is the most populated region of the world. Its rampantly growing energy thirst can be pacified by building energy corridors from Central Asia down to this region. India in South Asia is the most energy-stricken state. India's population growth rate is 1.34%¹⁰. Accordingly, the Indian population is expected to touch the figures of 1.36 billion by 2020 and 1.57 billion by 2030. India has to maintain the balance between energy demand and energy supply. Perhaps for the same reason, World Energy Outlook foresees an alarming energy crisis in India because

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of rampant increase in its population and its dependence on the import of oil will soar up to 91.6 % by the year 2020.¹¹ In addition, India is also a growing world economy. Its dream to play the role of a regional power can only be materialized if it secures energy supply in future.

Strategically speaking, South Asia encompasses, approximately, 55 trillion cubic feet (Tcf) of proven reserves of natural gas, which accounts for about 1% of the world's total. The region consumes around 1.8 Tcf of gas annually. Around 44% of this is accounted for by India, 39% by Pakistan, and remaining 17% by Bangladesh. If long-term aforementioned projections are correct, then South Asia shall have to import significant quantities of gas.¹² The region by itself contains only 5.1 billion barrels of oil, which is around 0.5% of the world's total. Most South Asian crude oil imports come from Middle East, and this is likely to remain the case for years to come. South Asia's oil imports are expected to grow sharply as production remains about flat while demands are soaring. By 2020, therefore, the region would be importing as much as 5.2 million b/d of oil, more than triple today's import volume.¹³

Table 1: Proved Oil and Natural Gas Reserves in Central Asia

Central Asian Republics	Oil Reserves		Gas Reserves	
	Billion Barrel	World Share	Trillion Cubic Feet	World Share
Kazakhstan	39.8	2.9 %	65.2	1.0%
Kyrgyzstan	Modest endowment	0	Modest endowment	0
Tajikistan	Modest endowment	0	Modest endowment	0
Turkmenistan	0.6	Less than 0.05%	283.6	4.3%
Uzbekistan	0.6	Less than 0.05%	55.1	0.8%
Total	41	3%	403.9	6.1%

Source: BP Statistical Review or World Energy June 2011. Retrieved from <www.bp.com/statisticalreview>

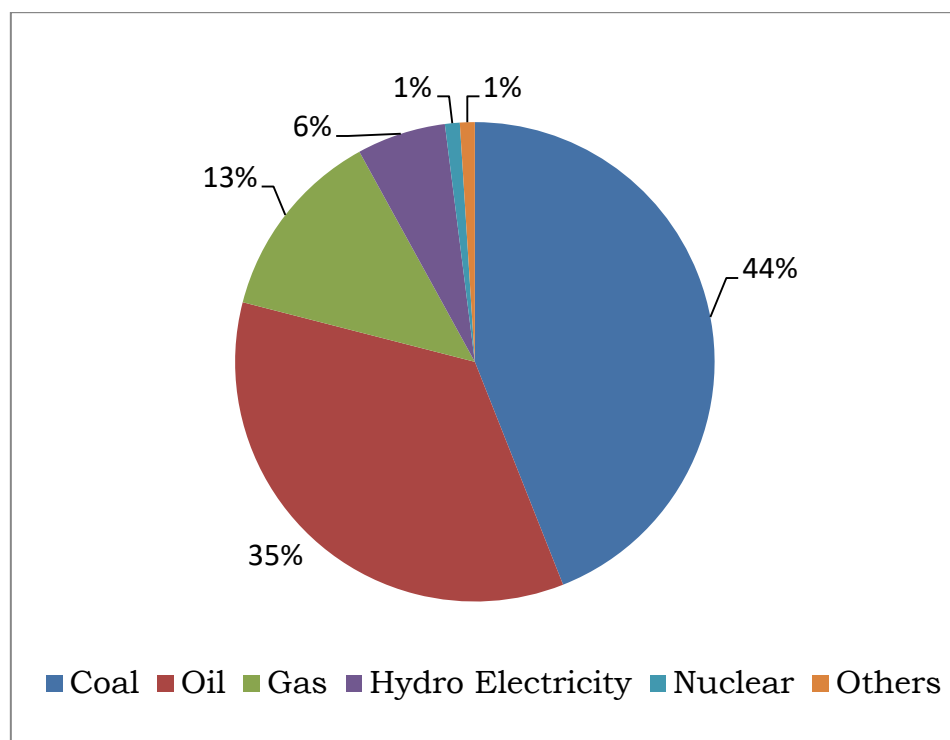
In this scenario, South Asia's oil and gas reserves are not sufficient enough to meet the energy demands. In the region three most populated states Bangladesh, India and Pakistan are facing energy crisis. Most of their energy demands are fulfilled by the oil of the Gulf region. Currently, the Indian commercial energy pool is constituted by coal 51%, oil 36%, gas 9%, nuclear 2% and hydroelectricity 2%. India imports 75% oil from international market.¹⁴ Pakistan is second largest populated state of South Asia (in the world-ranking, Pakistan is the 6th in number) and also facing energy crisis. Pakistan's commercial energy pool is covered by natural gas 51%, oil 29%, coal 8%, hydro-electricity 11% and nuclear 1%. If we look at Bangladesh, the third largest populated state of South Asia (in the world ranking Bangladesh is on 7th number). Bangladesh's commercial energy pool is constituted by 68% natural gas, 30% oil and 2% hydroelectricity¹⁵. In this perspective, the Central Asian oil and gas reserves are panacea for energy crisis in South Asia. Apart from this, excessive hydroelectricity in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are also source of special attraction for this southern region.

Table 2: Proved Oil and Natural Gas Reserves in South Asia

South Asian States	Oil Reserves	Gas Reserves
Afghanistan	0	49.55 million cu m
Bangladesh	28 million bbl	195.4 billion cu m
Bhutan	0	0
India	5.682 billion bbl	1.074 trillion cu m
Maldives	0	0
Nepal	0	0
Pakistan	313 million bbl	840.2 billion cu m
Sri Lanka	0	0

Source: See the country profiles of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in, *CIA The World Fact Book*, retrieved from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook>.

Figure 1: Energy Resources in South Asia



Source: Modified by the researcher, vide, Langdon D. Clough, "Energy Profile of South Asia", in, Cutler J. Cleveland (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Earth*, (Washington D.C.: Environmental Information Coalition, National Council for Science and the Environment, 2007), retrieved from, http://www.eoearth.org/article/Energy_profile_of_South_Asia.

Table 3: Commercial Energy in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan: Consumption and Demand Forecast

Energy Resources	Year	Unit	Bangladesh	India	Pakistan
Oil Consumption	2003-04	mtoe ¹⁸	3.71	116.0	15.20
	2010	mtoe	5.70 (54%)	150.2(29.4%)	29.72 (29.7%)
Oil Demand Forecast	2020	mtoe	11.6 (212%)	246.9 (112%)	30.94 (103%)
Gas Consumption	2002	mtoe	8.29	29.74	27.39
	2010	mtoe	15.51 (87%)	47.19 (58.7%)	39.21 (43.2%)
Gas Demand Forecast	2020	mtoe	44.03 (430%)	101.88 (243%)	72.75 (165%)
Coal Consumption	2003-04	mtoe	-----	169.9	3.30
	2010	mtoe	0.5	248.7 (46.4)	4.71 (42.7)
Coal Demand Forecast	2020	mtoe	0.9 (80%)	447.6 (163%)	13.9 (278%)

Source: Regional Energy Security for South Asia, Regional Report, *SARI*, retrieved from, <www.sari-energy.org/ProjectReport/RegionalEnergySecurity_RegionalReport_Complete.pdf>

Luckily, being in geographical proximity as well, Central Asia is the nearest and cheapest source of energy supply especially for the growing economies and industrial planning of Pakistan and India. Relatively, Pakistan is more in advantage because it is also a communicational hub in the entire region. In the year of 2000, Pervaiz Musharraf, the then President of Pakistan, and his foreign minister Abdul Satar visited Turkmenistan

and Kazakhstan. During their visit they expressed Islamabad's tilt towards inter-regional energy pipelines and showed interest in becoming a "part of the arrangements for gas from Turkmenistan and oil from Kazakhstan"¹⁹. Similarly, in 2007, Pranab Mukherjee, the then Indian Minister of Foreign Affairs streamlined the priorities of Indian foreign policy, wherein he accentuated on the culmination of inter-regional web of strategic energy security between energy Eldorado (Central Asia) and energy stricken states in South Asia.²⁰ In addition South Asia's growing interest has been welcomed by the Central Asian Republics. It is worth recalling that Bulat Sultanov, the leader of Kazakh Institute of World Economy and Policy, urged to strengthen ties and emphasized that "stability in our region is based on Russia in the north, the US and European Union in the west, China in the east, and India in the south". He further emphasized, "it is thus very important for us to have close relations with India. Why can't we think of a pipeline from Kazakhstan to India through Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan?"²¹

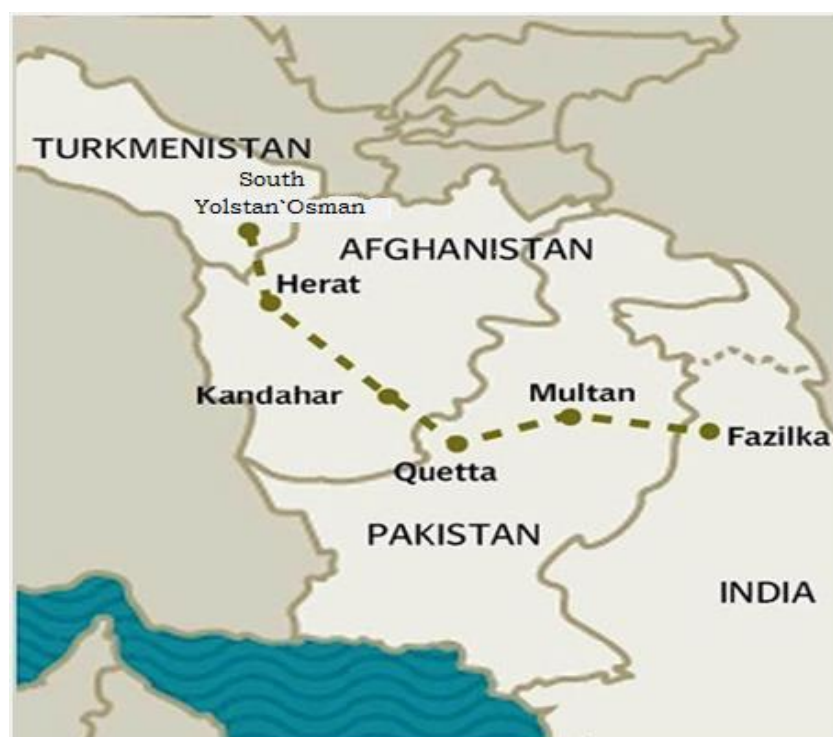
According to International Energy Outlook 2011, the world's complete reserves of gas are 6.675 trillion cubic feet. Out of this, the massive repository is possessed by Russia with 1.680 tcf or 25.4 % of overall world reserves, followed by Iran with 1.046 tcf or 15.8 % of the world reserves. Then Qatar with 899 having world share of 13.6 percent, Saudi Arabia possesses 263 tcf, 4.1 % of world share then followed by Turkmenistan with 265 tcf, giving 4% share to world gas reserves.²² Thus, South Asia's peripheral orbit is enriched with natural gas reserves. The region is adjacent to Iran, Qatar and Turkmenistan which are three of the top five largest gas repository states and to ensure supply from these states, Pakistan is a corridor from west to east and from north to south. Now the question is which source would be more pragmatic, cost-effective and viable. (see Table 4 for detailed analysis)

Table 4: Trans-regional Gas Pipeline Projects for South Asia: A Comparative Analysis

Inter-Regional Energy Synchronization	Participating States	Length km	Estimated Cost \$ Billion	Supply Capacity	Status
West Asia to South Asia	Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI)	2,775	7.5	750 Mcf/d To 1 Bcf/d	Now IP only
	Qatar-Pakistan-India (QPI) ²³	1,830	3.2 (estimated in 2005)	1.6 Bcf/d	Pipedream
	Qatar-Pakistan (QP) ²⁴	1,620	2.7	2 Bcf/d	Pipedream
	Qatar-Oman-India (QOI) ²⁵	2,000	10	1.1 Bcf/d	Pipedream
East Asia to South Asia	Myanmar-Bangladesh-India (MBI) ²⁶	900	1-3	500 Mcf/d	Pipedream
	Myanmar-India ²⁷	1,573	10-15	-----	Pipedream
Central Asia to South Asia	Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI)	1,670	7.6	3.2 Bcf/d	Mutually signed
	Termez-Kabul-Peshawar-India (TKPI) ²⁸	1,000	---	----	Expected

The pipedream from Central Asia was materialized in 2002 under the auspices of the Asian Development Bank (ADB). Initially, the gas pipeline project encompassed three states e.g. Turkmenistan-Afghanistan and Pakistan. But later on, the proposed pipedream was extended to eastern periphery of Pakistan up to India. In May 2006, India accepted the invitation of trans-regional gas pipeline²⁹. On 25 April, 2008 India became full fledged member of TAPI and signed Gas Pipeline Framework Agreement (GPFA). Accordingly, construction was planned to start in 2010 and supply of gas till 2015.³⁰ Thus, TAPI pipeline spans total distance of 1,680 km originating from South Yolstan`Osman gas field of Turkmenistan and reaching up to India via Herat-Kandahar (Afghanistan) and Quetta-Multan (Pakistan) to Fazilka (India)³¹. Finally, after umpteen fits and starts, the Gas Sales Purchase Agreement (GSPA) was finalized in January 2012³². Accordingly, gas pipeline will supply 3.2 billion cubic feet natural gas per day (Bcf/d) to buyer states.³³ It is hopefully assumed that TAPI has the potentials to contribute in the stability and progress of South Asia. Not surprisingly, therefore, TAPI being a quadrilateral pipeline project, does have the potentials to ignite a new era of cooperation and economic interdependence between Central Asia and South Asia. TAPI gas pipeline venture is not a beacon for inter-regional cooperation alone. It can rather ebb away Indo-Pak trust deficit and herald an era of political stability and functional harmony in the region.

Figure 2: Central Asia-South Asia Pipeline Linkage: TAPI Gas Pipeline



(Modified by the researcher)

In contrast to TAPI, quadrilateral gas pipeline venture, there is also a trilateral gas pipeline endeavor on the scene between Iran-Pakistan-and India. The former is an epitome of energy and economic synergy between Central Asia and South Asia; whereas the latter is demand-oriented pipeline project between West Asia and South Asia. The mastermind of the Iranian pipedream was Malik Aftab Ahmed Khan, who in his article titled "Persian Pipeline" expounded the idea of Pak-Iran bilateral pipeline and also shed light upon the means of its protection. Then the proposal of building gas pipeline from South Pars Iranian gas field to South Asia was first mooted upon in 1989 between Rajendra Pachauri, Director General of Tata Energy Research Institute of India and Ali Shamas Ardakani, the then Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister. In 1993, Iran and Pakistan formally signed an agreement for the construction of this pipeline. Furthermore Iran proposed to extend pipeline diplomacy to the gates of India. In February 1999, initial agreement was signed between India and Iran.³⁴ Thus bilateral pipeline turned into trilateral pipeline encompassing Iran-Pakistan-India. This pipeline is also known as a 'Peace Pipeline'³⁵.

The 2775 km³⁶ long pipeline emanates from South Yolstan`Osman gas field passes through Iranian territory Assluyeh, Bandar-Abbas and Iranshahar to Pakistan's Khuzdar and Sui to Multan and then to Delhi in

India. The overall estimated cost of trilateral gas pipeline venture is US \$ 7.5 billion. According to Gas Sale Purchase Agreement between Pakistan and Iran, the gas pipeline will supply 750 Mcf/d to India and Pakistan with the provision to enhance gas supply to 1 Bcf/d.

Figure 3: Comparison of IPI and TAPI Gas Pipelines



(Modified by the researcher)

In the 2000s, progress on IPI gas pipedream was in an initial stage. Unfortunately, the incident of 9/11 hampered progress on IPI gas pipeline which lingered on till 2007 when India and Pakistan agreed to pay \$ 4.3 million each to Iran. But its clauses are yet to be finalized. However, in 2008, Iran iterated to extend pipedream from Pakistan to China because of the Indian energy pipeline apathy. In fact, the Indian reluctance to finalize IPI gas pipeline project has been the major stumbling block. Its reservations stem from unsettled gas pricing issues and security concerns because the pipeline has to pass from Pakistan's volatile province of Baluchistan. On such grounds India abounded the project in 2009. Another factor was the Indo-US civil nuclear deal in 2008 which instigated the Indian decision to discard it.³⁷

Apart from India's reluctance, the US presence in the region is also contaminating the project of IPI. The US has been wielding its influence on Pakistan and India. The former is US strategic ally in the war on terrorism; whereas the latter is all-weather strategic ally of the US in South Asia. In this environment, the US in January 2010 vowed to provide financial and technical assistance to Pakistan for natural gas terminal and showed its interest to give financial support to import electricity from Tajikistan via Afghanistan's Wakhan Corridor, if Pakistan abandons gas pipeline deal with Iran---a hard-core nuclear budding state. Nevertheless, all such alternate incentives from the US could not halt Pakistan to relinquish IP pipeline project. Consequently, both, Iran and Pakistan signed an agreement on March 15, 2010 regarding gas pipeline. It was followed by the Iranian proclamation in July 2011 that Iran had completed the construction of pipeline on its side.

Apart from oil and natural gas reserves, Central Asia also has the potential to pacify the unbridled demand of electricity in South Asia. If Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan have abundant natural oil and gas reserves, then Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan possess hydro-electric power. Both have potential of 26,000 MW and 40,000 MW of hydropower electricity respectively.³⁸ Pakistan has been facing severe electricity outages since couple of years. During the peak working hours electricity shortfall reaches up to 7000 MW. Pakistan's electricity demand is expected to soar up around 7% to 8% per year, which means 20,000 MW by year 2010 to approximately 44,700 MW by 2020³⁹. In November 2007, on the platform of Central Asia-South Asia Regional Electricity Market (CASAREM), Pakistan and Afghanistan signed Central Asia-South Asia (CASA-1000) electricity agreement with Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to interlink four countries in web of energy cooperation in order to import electricity from Central Asia. Accordingly, in the first stage, the project would transfer around 1,300 megawatts of electricity from Kyrgyzstan to Tajikistan via 477 km transmission line and

from Tajikistan to Pakistan passing through Afghanistan via 750 km transmission line.⁴⁰ An estimated cost of the project is \$ 953 million⁴¹. To accelerate the working of this project an Inter-Governmental Council was also formulated with its Secretariat at Kabul. The project is likely to be completed in 2013 with the financial assistance of Asian Development Bank and Islamic Development Bank. Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, the then Pakistan's Minister of Water and Power, accentuated on the vitality of this project in these words,

"the project is a landmark as it fosters regional electricity market and brings together countries of Central and South Asia and also opens new vistas of trade and energy among energy rich and energy deficit countries,"⁴²

To conclude, a comparative analysis of energy options in the peripheral orbit of South Asia reveals that the Central Asian energy reserves are strategic energy assets for energy stricken South Asia. The interplay of energy between the 'sister regions' of Asia is need of the hour. They could get more through cooperative mechanism of connectivity. It will also open up avenues of trade and commerce in order to strengthen sustainable economic growth of the regions. The TAPI gas pipeline and CASA-1000 electricity project are win-win initiatives.

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ENERGY COOPERATION BETWEEN CENTRAL ASIAN STATES AND PAKISTAN: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract: *The pursuit of acquiring energy resources is at peak to fulfil the development agenda. Pakistan is an energy shortage country, while Central Asian Republics (CRSs) are enriched with huge natural resources. The location of Pakistan provides the shortest route for oil and gas transportation from Central Asia, which has five major energy reserves basins; North Caspian, South Caspian, Amu- Darya Basin, Mangyshlak and North Usturt. A visible boost occurred in oil sector after independence of Central Asian States in 1991 and several companies rush for investment. Pakistan is also among those countries, which are making attempts to avail this opportunity through TAPI, CASA-1000 and such other projects. The paper is to explore the prospects for energy relations between Pakistan and Central Asia. It has also discussed the factors, which are hindering the smooth transportation of energy resources.*

Keywords: Energy, trade, pipeline, routes, landlocked, CARs.

Introduction

In the modern world of increased interdependence under the tide of globalization, no country is in the position to achieve its goal of economic development without the assistance and cooperation of other countries. South Asia is facing a demographic explosion, which has enhanced its need of resources either those are agricultural or mineral like oil and gas. Central Asia is a resource-rich region with untapped reserves of oil and gas. It consists of five states; Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. These Central Asian Republics (CRSs) have huge energy resources but are geographically landlocked therefore routes for transportation and trade of this natural wealth to other regions are desperately needed. South Asian countries have colossal potential for this trade and can also provide for the much-necessitated routes. Therefore, both regions are in the position to get the benefit if connected.

Pakistan is an energy deficit country, while CARs have surplus amount of natural resources required for energy production. Pakistan and Central Asia have friendly relations deeply rooted in history and culture. The location of Pakistan provides the shortest route for oil and gas transportation from the Arabian Sea to the other regions. Juxtaposition of Pakistan and Central Asia are helpful to build a strong strategy for the trade and transit of oil and gas. Mutual cooperation can help out Pakistan to meet its energy needs, reducing its shortfall and also accelerating the urge of CARs to explore and exploit more and more reserves.

Energy Resources of Central Asian Republics

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the oil and gas reserves enhanced the importance of the region both geographically and economically. The Central Asia became lucrative for the states, facing the energy crisis to fulfil their industrial and domestic needs. According to one estimation, 15 to 30 billion barrels oil resources are proven discovered while 230 to 360 trillion cubic feet of gas reserves are still lying there, which are 2.7 percent and seven percent of the total reserves of the world respectively.¹ There are five major energy-reserve basins named North Caspian, South Caspian, which is extended to several states, Amu-Darya Basin in Uzbekistan, Mangyshlak and North Usturt, both are located mainly in Kazakhstan.² Caspian basin is enriched with developed and undeveloped reserves. Its southern shelf, located in Turkmenistan is still undrilled, having approximately 22 billion barrels oil reserves.³ The North Caspian Basin is on Kazakhstan's side with huge proved energy reserves, but still undiscovered. Amu Darya and North Usturt occupy the huge gas and oil reserves. Keeping in view the potential of the energy reserves, it is estimated that about 800-900,000 barrels of oil can be imported from the region to the international market on a daily basis. A report of CSIS pointed out that Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan moved to peak in 2014, exporting 1.69 million barrel per day

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(bbl/day), 840,000 bbl/day and 280,000 bbl/d respectively.⁴ The quality of the oil and gas is the attraction factor along the huge reserves in this zone.⁵

Oil reserves were first discovered in the present-day territory of Kazakhstan in Atyrau province in 1899, however, the oil and gas industry began to grow rapidly only after exploration of Zhetybai Field in 1961.⁶ After independence in 1991, further boost came in the oil sector and several foreign companies moved to investment. In 2014, the statistics showed that Kazakhstan has 30 billion barrels proven oil reserves and stands at 12th number in the world ranking. In terms of oil extraction (1.632 million bbl/d), Kazakhstan is the second highest country among the former Soviet republics while the first is Russia and world ranking is 20 among oil-producing countries. Its gas production is 20.4 billion cubic meters and proven reserves are 2.407 trillion cubic meters ranking it on 15 number.⁷

Turkmenistan has the world's fourth-largest gas reserves, which are estimated 17.5 trillion cubic meters. Its production is 84.8 billion cubic meters with world ranking at 10th. Its volume of gas export is 41.1 billion cubic meters per day. Proved oil reserves are estimated at 600 million barrels and crude oil production is 242.900 bbl./d, ranking as 35th largest oil producer country.⁸ The landlocked country and poor infrastructure are hurdling the exportation. Most of the oil fields are located in the South Caspian Sea, which is a disputed area and other issue is the Russian policies, which are hurdling expansion of pipeline.

Uzbekistan is owner of 594 million bbl oil reserves and its production is about 64,810 bbl per day, ranking at 48th number. The proved gas reserves of Uzbekistan are estimated at 1.841 trillion cubic meters, which ranked it at 20th position in the world. Its production is estimated about 59.63 billion cubic meters, which ranked it at 16 number in the world gas production.⁹

According to CIA fact book (2016), Tajikistan has 5.663 billion cubic meters proven gas reserves and production is 13 million cubic meters, while the proven oil resources in Tajikistan are 12 million barrels and production is about 206 barrels per day. About Kyrgyzstan, it is stated that it has 1,000 bbl per day oil production and the proven reserves are 40 million bbl. The proved gas resources of Kyrgyzstan are 5.663 billion cubic meters, while the production is 32 million cubic meters.¹⁰

Access to Central Asian Energy

In the aftermath of the Soviet fall, the idea of constructing a 'north-south' energy corridor in Central Asia surfaced in December 1991 and eastern Caspian Sea basin occupied the centre place in the world's energy geography. It also changed the political map of the region. Subsequently, a new energy "rush" occurred in the region as the first "rush" was seen in the western Caspian Sea basin in the Baku region of Azerbaijan. In 1870s, Russia leased oilfields to the Noble Brothers, who designed the world's first oil-tanker Zoroaster and built a network of crude oil pipelines. At the end of nineteenth century, the Baku oilfields were producing more than a half of world's oil.¹¹ Since that time, Central Asia has become the hub of the geopolitics of energy security. The Caspian Sea region is playing a pivotal role in trading and transporting energy through pipelines, which has transferred Eurasian regions into energy markets for Europe and Asia.

A network of oil and gas pipelines is in process. Iran built a pipeline, through a deal with Turkmenistan and also shipped oil from Kazakhstan. Russia constructed a pipeline from the Black Seaport of Novorossiysk, maintaining its dominion particularly in comparison to Kazakhstan. The US and Turkey also constructed an oil pipeline from Baku to Ceyhan (TBC pipeline) along the Mediterranean Sea shores. Its purpose was to erode Russian monopoly in the energy sector. China has built two pipelines.

Pakistan and Central Asian Cooperation

The US Energy Information Administration (2007) warned Pakistan that its natural gas reserves would last for 20 years as existing quantity is about 28,000 billion cubic feet.¹² This was alarming as the country has to search other energy resources instead of reliance on existing one, which are going to be exhausted sooner. There were other estimations, indicating exhaustion of indigenous gas reserves by 2020.¹³

Keeping in view this horrible prediction, Pakistan joined the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) program in 2010 in pursuit of energy security. This program was planned in 1997 for improving the economy of the region with a partnership of ten countries – Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The major funding was provided by the Asian Development Bank. In its vision of 2030, the CAREC stressed on

construction of roads and development of transport links for regional connectivity including Pakistan. This program was assisted by six multilateral entities, to enhance collaboration among the regional actors in four priority areas: Energy, Trade, Trade Facilitation and Transport.¹⁴

In July 2012, Tajikistan was included in the Afghanistan-Pakistan Trade Transit Agreement (APTTA), which opened the new avenues towards North-South Trade Corridor. The other important projects under CAREC are Regional Improving of Border Services Project (2012), National Trade Corridor Highway Investment Program, Tranche 3 (2014) and Trade & Transport Facilitation II (2009). These projects are to improve the economic activity, of the region.

Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India Pipeline (TAPI)

Central Asia is an “energy corridor” for both regional and global markets. Turkmenistan has the world’s fourth largest natural gas reserves. Transporting of its fuel to other regions is equally beneficent for exporter and importer. In South Asian perspective, it would promote energy security and sustainable development in the region. TAPI (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) is a potential project for fulfilling the energy needs of Pakistan and other regional countries.

TAPI gas pipeline project is also known as Trans Afghanistan Pakistan and India. The first and basic plan for gas project was from Turkmenistan to southward, linking it with Pakistan. The supply line for transportation of gas from Turkmenistan was designed to pass through Afghanistan to Pakistan and India. Eight percent of revenue of the pipeline was fixed for Afghanistan. Initial MOU (memorandum of understanding) was signed between Pakistan and Turkmenistan in 1995.¹⁵ Meanwhile, the retaliation of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 brought American bombing in Afghanistan, dismantling the Taliban regime, giving a fillip to the TAP. After getting American signal, Pakistan initiated the gas pipeline project and General Pervez Musharraf, Chief Executive of Pakistan made a visit to Kabul to talk President Hamid Karzai on this project. In February 2002, both leaders agreed to follow the project in their areas. On March 2002, President Karzai held a meeting with Turkmen President Niyazov in Ashgabat to discuss the prospects of revisiting the gas project and “framework” agreement was signed in May 2002. Construction of oil pipeline was also included in the accord. A “steering committee” was designed to actuate the project. In 2005, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) submitted the final version of feasibility. Later in 2008, India joined the project and it was framed as TAPI. Under the agreement, it is expected that Pakistan and India will receive 1.365 billion cubic feet of gas per day (bcfd), while Afghanistan shall get 0.5 bcfd.¹⁶

The Asian Development Bank is providing funding for the project. In the beginning, the estimated cost of project was \$7.8 billion whereas later it was calculated \$10 billion. The length of the pipeline is about 1,800 kilometres, to transport 30 billion cubic meters of gas per year from Turkmenistan’s Dauletabad gas fields to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and probably to India.¹⁷ By 2017, the project would be fully functional. The pipeline is passing from Herat to Kandahar (Afghanistan), then Quetta to Multan (Pakistan) and finally in Indian border town Fazilka.¹⁸ The USA is the greatest admirer of this project as Russia is not involved anywhere. TAPI has the following five phases:

- ✓ Phase-1, 2010: Outline of the structure.
- ✓ Phase-2, 2012: Agreement for the gas sales and purchase.
- ✓ Phase-3, 2014: Selection of a commercial entity.
- ✓ Phase-4, 2015: Finalization of the financial agreements for the project.
- ✓ Phase-5, 2017: The first shipment of gas.¹⁹

The pipeline project has the significance for whole region. In a visit to Turkmenistan in 2015, prime minister of Pakistan, Nawaz Sharif pushed for speeding up the project and showed his desire to “intensify work on the TAPI project that would bring advantages to the entire region.”²⁰

Central Asia - South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project (CASA-1000)

CASA-1000 is the electricity project, which initiated in 2006. CASA-1000 would transmit 1300 MW electricity from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to Pakistan (1000 MW) and Afghanistan (300 MW). Electricity is cheaper in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan in comparison to these countries. The preliminary year of the project is 2014 and is likely to be finalized within five years. Its estimated cost would \$ 873 million.²¹ The salient features of this project are:

- ✓ To cover energy shortfall in Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- ✓ To use the excess energy of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan in summer season.
- ✓ To provide economic benefits to both sides.

The World Bank, the US Agency for International Development and the Islamic Development Bank are assuring to finance the project. CASA- 1000 is the first energy project of the CAREC. The CASA -1000 project includes a 500 KV AC line from Datka (Kyrgyzstan) to Khudjand, a 1300 megawatt AC-DC Converter Station at Sangtuda (Tajikistan), a 750 kilometer High Voltage DC line from Sangtuda to Kabul (Afghanistan) and Peshawar (Pakistan), a 300 megawatts Converter Station in Kabul having import-export capability and a 1300 megawatt DC-AC Converter Station in Peshawar.²²

Role of Regional Organizations

Increasing interdependence has brought the countries to joint platforms and forums, which are in the form of intergovernmental organizations. On one hand, these organizations provide opportunities to reap financial benefits, on the other they help in settling disputes and controversies among the member states. The UN (United Nations), EU (Europe Union), SCO Shanghai Cooperation Organization), OIC (Organization of Islamic Conference), ECO (Economic Cooperation Organization) and many others are such examples.

The SCO, OIC and ECO are joint forums for the Central Asia and Pakistan. The goal of SCO is to strengthen the relationship, promotion of the economic and trade relations, increasing mutual trust between all the participating countries. The SCO has provided opportunity to Pakistan and CARs to build strong relation. India and Pakistan are also in the position to solve the minor issues under its umbrella of SCO, which may later help them in resolving the major issues. SCO has the plan of infrastructural and telecommunication development.²³

Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) is the transformed shape of RCD (Regional Cooperation Development), which was established by Pakistan, Iran and Turkey in 1964. RCD did not work effectively, but ECO is active and increasing cooperation among the member-states. In 1992, seven new members, including CARs, Afghanistan and Iran joined it and changed its condition impressively. ECO Trade Agreement in 2003 has expanded and enhanced the trade activity, providing a maximum of 15 percent slash tariff rate in the next eight years. ECO has the platform for lowering the duties and increasing the trade linkages. Pakistan has the golden breakthrough opportunity to use the forum for Central Asian trade relations.²⁴

Barriers and Challenges to Trade and Transit of Energy Resources

Energy security, trade and long term economic relations are feasible among the states in an appropriate environment, but the regional unrest and turbulent environment within the borders never allow the smooth flow of economic activity. The pipeline projects are victim to security issues and mutual animosities despite the huge potential and benefits of developing energy efficiency and increasing the share of renewable energy. There are still national and regional obstacles, which are hindering the access to these assets. The major concern is the security perspective as the two regions face a host of security challenges ranging from internal situation of Afghanistan to militancy, terrorism, border security and flow of opiates. All these are transnational in their nature.

The first barrier is low investment, which is linked with the security to some extent. The poor economy of the regional states and security situation do not allow them to invest a heavy amount in oil and gas fields because the monetary benefits of such projects take long time to be materialized. There is also lack of knowledge regarding specific technologies applicable in the field. The official policies are often discouraging to business community and nominal incentives reduce attraction of private sector for participation. Above it, the security concerns impede the involvement of the investors in the energy trade.

Afghan Situation is the major source of regional instability as it has been hotbed of conflicts for the past three decades. NATO troops remained in Afghanistan for one and half decade, but peace is still elusive and the foreseeable future is dismal. Viewing the possibility of gas-pipe, it seems that continued Afghan war has made the country a “spectacularly unsuitable as a transit country.” The writ of the Afghan government is under siege and mounting influence of the Taliban is working as serious barrier for the developmental projects. Afghan warlords are interested in getting their share in toll tax not in gas-supply. The anarchic situation of the country is obliging for poppy cultivation and drug-trafficking, reaping huge amount of money. Construction of a pipeline

through south-eastern Afghanistan is a tough task, the planned area of the pipeline route lies in Helmand province, which is under Taliban's control. In case, a pipeline is erected, frequent disruptions would make maintenance of the pipeline a hard task with huge cost. Security and protecting the energy transmission infrastructure would cause a strategic exhaustion at the part of the Afghan National Security Forces and Police as well as remaining troops of coalition troops.

The situation in Baluchistan is also a source of concern for the success of TAPI and other projects. The Baloch nationalists raised their voices against these projects. To them, these projects and supply routes will not bring prosperity to the region, as federal government along with civil and military bureaucracy will be beneficiary and the share of the local people will be nominal. The sense of victimization is also fuelled by the previous policies of the military and intelligence agencies, which deprived them of their due rightful share, strengthening the feelings of marginalization. Therefore, instability in Baluchistan has the enough potential to sabotage the energy corridors as they are already opposing China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Gwadar Seaport project. The separatist insurgency and the military action have worsened the situation, raising question about construction of the pipeline peacefully.

India-Pakistan's prospective partnership for TAPI is not free of doubts. Apparently, Indian is depending on Pakistan or taking it co-dependency, yet it is doubtful about this relationship. It can be engender a monopoly control of Islamabad, a stranglehold over its economy. India never fully engaged with pipeline diplomacy, showing its doubts concerning Pakistan. To New Delhi, Islamabad has been bulwarking Indian access to its 'extended' neighbourhood in Western and Central Asia, barring its connectivity the energy-rich regions. Strategically, both have been engaging each other, pursuing benign policies, but 'malignant containment.' Events of Mumbai attack 2008, terrorist attacks of Pathankot 2016 and recent Indian allegation of killing 17 soldiers by Pakistan in Uri attack on September 18, 2016 and claims of surgical strikes in retaliation, are sufficient to inflict a blow to pipeline project. Pakistan's longstanding resolve to keep Kashmir high on agenda and India's repeated allegations of terrorist infiltration from Pakistan, keeps the two nations at odds and resultantly the development, whether economic or political, is on reversal. An analyst commented, "India is pursuing one-step forward, two-step backward approach towards the project."

Internal Dynamics of CARs are also impeding the regional connectivity. The authoritarian legacy of the Soviet Union, violent ethnic disputes, religious conflicts, sectarian issues and challenges of multifaceted transition in social, political and economic fields are creating massive difficulties in making headway towards trade. Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan have suffered from border disputes, curtailing the incentives to work together on solution strategy. Like the other Muslim countries, the environment of the Central Asia is also receiving influence from the rise of Islamist forces, working in the Middle East in the post-Arab-Spring situation. Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are among those countries, which are violating the fundamental freedoms, and the waves of the revolts in the Arab world are being realized here.

Militant organizations in South and Central Asian regions pose a critical threat to the national and regional security. The militant groups have displayed their capacity of changing target from one hotspot to another. Initially, a few radical Islamist groups were active in Central Asia, particularly in the Ferghana Valley, which runs through the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Radical Islamic groups moved here due to counter-terrorism operations of NATO forces in Afghanistan. The main organizations carrying out militant activities in Ferghana Valley are the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and an offshoot called the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU). Hizb-ut-Tahrir¹ is also the main militant group in Central Asia. It has the many waves of radicalism which has affected the region badly. These groups remained underground during the Soviet regime. However, the Gorbachev's period brought them to surface adding further new blood. All have different methods and strategies to destabilize the region to gain their goals including formation of an Islamic state.²⁵

Apart from these major challenges, there are other issues like ethnicity, nexus between militant organizations and felonious gangs, smuggling and drug-trafficking. Regional actors like Russia, China, Iran and Turkey all have their own designs, pursuing trade policies and transit routes, suitable to them. In this back ground, the TAPI and other projects will take a long a period (about 15 years). Russia is also delaying if not entirely rolling back the project; apparently it took U-turn in late 2010 on its TAPI policy and publicly started advocating its support for and interest in the project and engaged with the leadership of four participating countries. However, Turkmenistan, the main supplier of the gas, is doubtful due to its bitter experiences with

Russia and is strongly insisting Gazprom's participation in TAPI. Gazprom is a global energy company, running a vast pipeline network in Russia.²⁶

Conclusion

The transfer of energy from Central Asia to Pakistan is crucial for impoverished economy of the country. The gas pipelines are not only the projects for energy supply, but also sources of bridging the gulf of mistrust and tension among the countries. These projects are designed to congregate huge amount of energy, which will promote industry and agriculture, providing cheaper fuel. This development will make the region a trading hub and these projects are to enhance economic activity, providing opportunities to all parties. The construction of TAPI is an imperative measure and a step forward in reducing hostility and enhancing cooperation between India and Pakistan as well as Afghanistan and Pakistan. Even Iran and China will also be beneficiary of CARs' resources and flow of energy from this route. Generally, energy corridors open new avenues of trade and business for the whole region. These projects will enhance regional interdependence, liberalizing the regional economies from external constraints of tariff, taxes and monetary policies. All this activity is conditioned with the peaceful environment of the region. Security analysis of Afghanistan, the main area for laying gas pipeline for multi-country project, unfolds a grim picture of volatility and instability. Peaceful Afghanistan and specially Helmand Province are crucial for the success of the project and transportation of the energy resources. Ongoing bilateral conflicts among the South Asian countries are also affecting the regional stability and hampering the creation of favourable atmosphere towards building collaboration with Central Asia.

The internal situation in Central Asia is not much encouraging. In order to avoid the deterioration of situation, there is also need to circumvent the political collapse and outbreak of violence in the region. Issues of militant organizations and extremism jeopardize the economic activity therefore an integrated response is needed to prevent adverse outcomes. To combat the different trans-national threats, collective measures like intelligence sharing, cross-border monitoring system, joint investigation mechanisms and extradition treaties are required. All these steps will secure huge oil and gas reserves, making the region a transportation hub for energy pipelines and communication corridors, especially connecting Pakistan and other South Asian countries to Central Asian neighbours.

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VIABILITY OF TAPI FOR ENERGY SECURITY OF PAKISTAN: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

Maryam Ahmad*

Abstract: *Energy security is vital for national security of any country because sustainable socioeconomic development is directly linked with uninterrupted supply of energy at reasonable prices. Pakistan is an energy starved country. Energy crisis has damaged economic development of Pakistan gravely. Therefore, it is required to explore new avenues of energy for meeting the demands of the country. These avenues can be explored from the surrounding region because regional interdependence is imperative for prosperity in this globalized world. Turkmenistan has huge natural gas reserves and she has initiated to supply natural gas to other countries of the region. Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline project is an example of this fact. TAPI has dreamt of regional connectivity by taking on board four major countries of the region. It is basically an integration of Central Asia and South Asia by sharing natural resource within these four countries through an agreement. If this project would materialize it can ensure the energy security of the member countries. Pakistan is one of the main stakeholders of this project and it is essential to assess the feasibility and viability of TAPI for Pakistan which has dealt in this research paper. It is a qualitative study in terms of its methodology whereas the secondary source of data collection has been used for this research study. The content analysis of existing body of literature has been conducted for evaluating the significance of this project for Pakistan. This research study has explored the challenges and benefits of TAPI for Pakistan which has helped to devise practical recommendations for policy makers to get genuine benefits from this complex project for the socioeconomic development of the country.*

Keywords: Energy security, Pakistan, TAPI, regional inter-dependence, energy crisis

Introduction

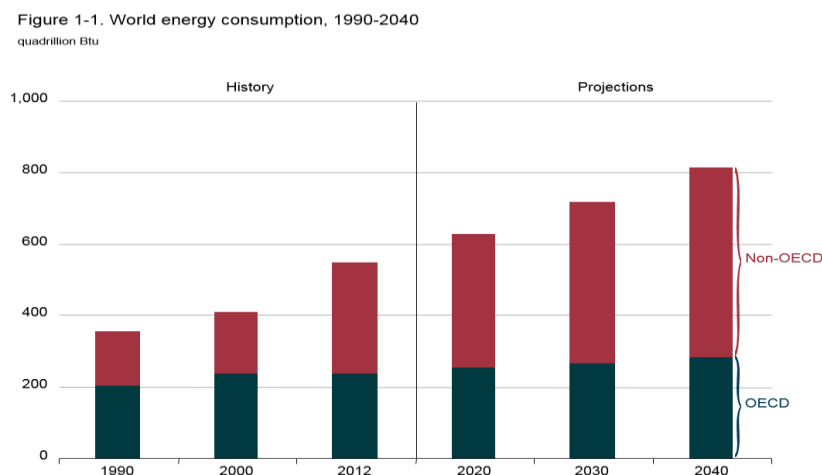
Energy is imperative for this modern industrialized world. Industrialization has increased the dependence of humans on machines and it has enhanced the importance of energy manifold for the prosperity and development in this era. The increasing world population and sturdy economic growth have amplified the demand of energy especially in developing countries.¹ According to International Energy Outlook Report (2016), major economic development is led by developing countries which are outside the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) due to which the energy demand in non-OECD countries is increasing day by day. Figure: 01 shows the comparison of energy demand of OECD and non-OECD countries from 1990-2040. This figure shows that energy demand increases by 71% from 2012-2040 in non-OECD countries whereas it increases by 18% from 2012-2040.²

This situation shows the energy demand in whole world in recent years and also projected future estimations. Therefore, energy security is a major area of concern in this modern world.³ It will govern international politics in coming years⁴ as energy is directly linked with economic and social development of the region.⁵ The uninterrupted supply of energy at reasonable cost is necessary for sustainable development of any region of the world.⁶ Pakistan is an energy scarce country and energy security is a core area to address for dependable and sustainable economic development of the country⁷ which leads towards quality oriented standard of living and socioeconomic development. Pakistan is using multiple resources for energy production like hydro, gas, oil and coal but these are insufficient in fulfilling the current demands of the country due to expanding population and increased industrialization in the country.⁸ Thus, energy security planning of Pakistan is required to explore multiple options and sources for meeting the demand of the country. The import of the energy from international energy market can be one of the options.⁹ Pakistan is working on this option in recent years as Iran, Pakistan and India (IPI) and Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline projects are examples of this fact. These projects will not only satisfy the increasing energy demands of the country but will also serve the concept of regional integration and inter-regional connectivity which is necessary for the stable, peaceful and prosperous world. Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline project will promote regional cooperation between Central Asia and South Asia via Afghanistan.¹⁰ TAPI is 1800

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kilometre long gas pipeline project in which Turkmenistan will produce and supply natural gas to other member countries of this agreement i.e. Afghanistan, Pakistan and India¹¹. The question arises now that how much this project is feasible and viable for Pakistan which is central area of study of this research paper.

Figure 1: World Energy Consumption 1990-2040



Source: International Energy Outlook Report (2016).

Significance

Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline project is an aspiring project of energy security between four member countries. It will produce 33 billion cubic meters of natural gas annually from Turkmenistan to Afghanistan, Pakistan and India.²¹ Thus, it is necessary to appraise the project with reference to Pakistan in terms of its benefits for the country. This research study has explored the benefits and associated problems of this project for Pakistan which has helped to concoct practical recommendations for policy makers of Pakistan for developing sound policy to deal with this intricate project effectively and efficiently.

Methodology

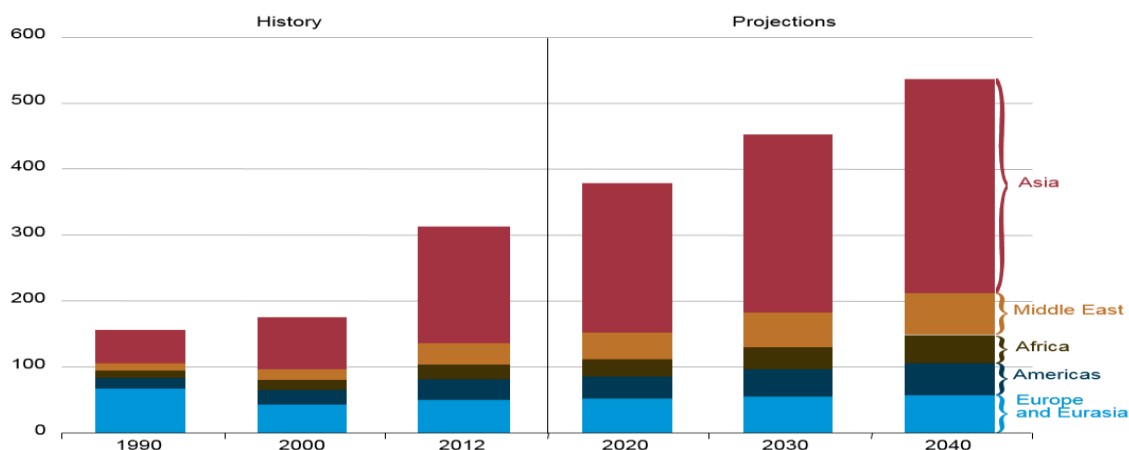
This is qualitative study in terms of its methodology. This research study is based on secondary source of data collection. Different research articles, books and published reports on the chosen topic have been consulted for writing this research paper. The content analysis of existing body of literature has been done for exploring the feasibility and viability of Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) for Pakistan.

Literature Review

Energy is a salvation of economic development of any country.²² The increasing demand of energy in modern world leads towards scarcity and shortage of energy. Therefore, shortage of energy is an important challenge of today's world. Different regions of the world have different energy requirements. Figure02 charts the demand of energy in various regions.

Figure 02 explains the energy demand from 1990-2012 and it also shows the projections for 2020-2040 in terms of requirement of energy in different regions. The data history from 1990-2012 as well as projections from 2020-2040 shows the expanding demand of energy of Asia which is higher than the actual energy reserves of the region. This is a serious threat to the energy security of Asia which has fast pace economic development in recent years. According to researchers and analysts, energy can be source of war in coming years.²³ Thus, it is required to work on collaborated projects for ensuring the energy security of different regions of the world to avoid conflict and confrontation due to deficient energy resources.

Figure 2: Region-wise Energy Consumption

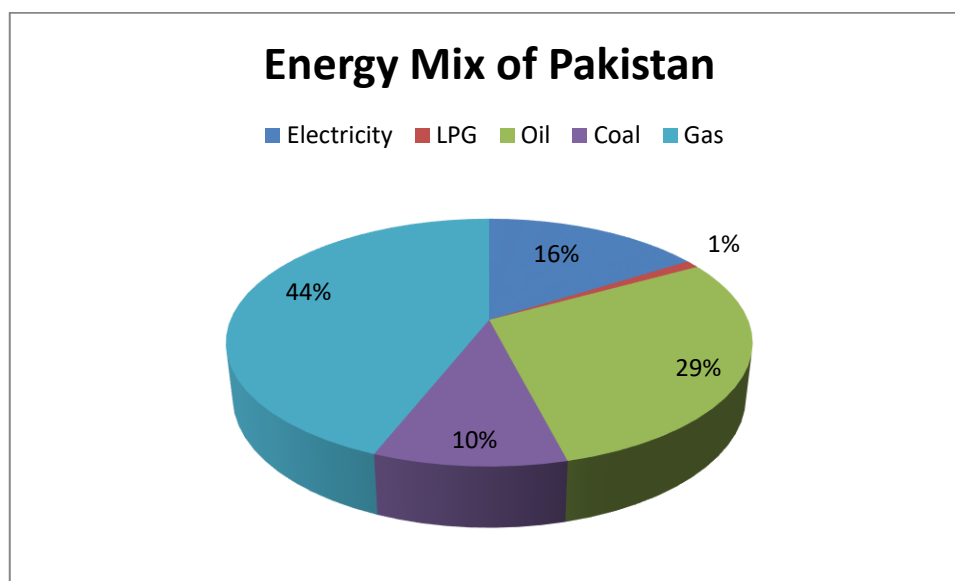


Source: International Energy Outlook Report (2016)

Pakistan and Energy

Pakistan is an energy scarce country and is facing severe energy crisis for past many years. According to Economic Survey of Pakistan 2014-15, the total energy consumption is 39.8 Million Tons of Oil equivalent (MTOE) in 2014 as compared to 17 Million Tons of Oil equivalent (MTOE) in 1991 which is more than double.²⁵ The transport and power sectors were the main consumers of energy in 1991 but with industrial development in Pakistan in recent years, it has become another sector of high energy consumption along with domestic feeding of energy.²⁶ As concerned to power sector of Pakistan, it is using one third of energy resources of the country for electricity generation.²⁷ The installed generation capacity of Pakistan was 22, 104 Mega Watt (MW) in 2014²⁸ whereas the demand is increasing gradually than the production capacity. Resultantly, the peak electricity shortfall was more than 6000 MW in May, 2016²⁹ which has affected economy of the country adversely. This shows that the demand of energy has increased manifold in the country than the production capacity and the government has opted different sources of energy for meeting the increased demand. Following figure explains how Pakistan's energy demands are met with a mix of many sources.

Figure 3: Energy Mix of Pakistan



Source: Economic Survey of Pakistan 2014-15

Natural gas, the above chart shows, is the commodity in highest demand and use for energy production. As high as 44% of total energy is produced through natural gas. Different sectors of Pakistan are using natural gas as a source of energy production. The following figure: 04 shows the sectors wise natural gas consumption from 2014 to first quarter of 2016.

Table 1: Sector wise Natural Gas Consumption of Pakistan

Sectors	2014-15 (MMCFD)	Q1 2015-16 (MMCFD)
Domestic	967	1,159
Commercial	741	59
Transport (CNG)	96	92
Cement	184	152
Fertilizer	2	2
General Industry	606	647
Captive Power	325	337
	318	321
	3,238	3,302

Source: Monitoring and Evaluation Report, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Resource (2015)

Although Pakistan is rich in natural gas reservoirs but high consumption and mismanagement reveal that natural gas is but a scarce resource in Pakistan. Due to ever depleting reservoirs of the natural gas, domestic and industrial consumers face acute shortage in winter season of high demand. The government of Pakistan is trying to search different options for improving the situation. The import of natural gas from other natural gas rich countries like Iran and Turkmenistan is one of the options. The government of Pakistan has made agreements with Iran and Turkmenistan for importing natural gas and these projects are Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) gas pipeline and Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline.

Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) Gas Pipeline Project

The original idea to build gas pipeline between Central Asia and South Asia through Afghanistan was conceived by United Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) in 1980s³⁰ but it was not materialized due to war in Afghanistan.³¹ It was revitalized in 1993 but did not happen due to US military campaign in Afghanistan in 2001.³² Finally the agreement was signed between Turkmenistan, Pakistan and Afghanistan's President of that time, Mr. Hamid Karzai in 2002 and India was not the part of this project at that time.³³ The feasibility studies showed that this project would not be rewarding without India³⁴ but the conditions of Afghanistan put this project on hold. Later on, in 2005, Asian Development Bank (ADB) had started this project of Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) by including India in it.³⁵ This project intends to export 33 billion cubic meters of natural gas from Turkmenistan to Afghanistan, Pakistan and India through proposed pipeline of 1800 Kilometre long.³⁶ Turkmenistan has huge natural gas reserves as it has sixth largest natural gas reservoirs in the world. This project has estimated cost of \$7.6 billion in 2008³⁷ but now the cost of this project has raised to \$ 10 billion according to ADB due to delay in its implementation.³⁸ TAPI will be managed and operated by the special purpose consortium company.³⁹ The agreements between all four countries have been signed in December 2010 along with the agreement of price between Pakistan and Turkmenistan.⁴⁰ According to these agreements, TAPI will be operationalized in 2016 which is still a dream and now new completion date of TAPI is 2019.⁴¹ In 2012, Afghanistan had drawn herself out from this project which was a great setback for TAPI but later she was agreed on transit fee of gas pipeline.⁴²

Viability of Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) Gas Pipeline Project for Pakistan

Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) is a feasible and viable project for an energy starved country like Pakistan. The energy scarcity has affected different sectors of the country seriously. Likewise, it has adverse impact on electricity generation which is resulted in interrupted power supply and long electricity outages in the country. It has influenced the industrial sector of the country damagingly which has led towards low GDP and poor economic development. Pakistan's electricity requirements will triple from current demand in 2050⁴⁵ and uninterrupted power supply is imperative for economic development of the country in this

globalized and industrialized world. Therefore, diverse energy sources are required for fulfilling the increasing energy requirements of the country. The energy deficiency is impacting the overall economy of Pakistan gravely. Hence, TAPI is a feasible option for ensuring and enhancing the energy security of the country. There are many benefits of TAPI for Pakistan which have been discussed in detail in following section.

Benefits of TAPI for Pakistan

The multiple benefits of TAPI for Pakistan as natural gas pipeline project are as follows;

- ✓ TAPI will meet the expanding energy demands of the country which will ensure the energy security of Pakistan. Resultantly, it will contribute in the economic development and prosperity of the country.
- ✓ The surplus natural gas can be exported to other countries which will bring financial benefit to country.
- ✓ TAPI will help Pakistan to become energy corridor in the region which will enhance the geostrategic position of the country. It will make its position more significant in the region.
- ✓ TAPI will support Pakistan to develop infrastructure as well institutions within the country. It will also develop regional institutions and infrastructure between all four member countries.
- ✓ Government of Pakistan can involve private sector in this project through Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode for financing and developing infrastructure as well as for the operation and maintenance of this project. It will involve more stakeholders in this project which will increase the success ratio of this project within the country.
- ✓ TAPI will help Pakistan to develop regional integration and cooperation with member countries (Afghanistan, India and Turkmenistan) which will enhance the mutual prosperity of the region. It will help to connect and integrate Pakistan with regional markets as well.
- ✓ TAPI will aid Pakistan to improve the cooperation as well as relationship with India through this project of mutual development. It will promote stability and peace in South Asia and will reduce tension between both countries.
- ✓ TAPI will provide cheap natural gas to Pakistan. The availability of gas at affordable price will boost the industrial sector of the country which will lead towards economic development of the country.

Challenges of TAPI for Pakistan

There are multiple challenges for Pakistan in the successful completion of TAPI in the country. Turkmenistan has recently started work on this project within its own country after long delay⁴⁶ but other member countries including Pakistan have not started work on this project yet. The following problems have caused delays in the commencement and initiation of TAPI in three member countries including Pakistan.

- ✓ Security is the main challenge in the completion of TAPI successfully. The current prevailing situation in Afghanistan is a matter of serious concern in this project. Afghanistan will cover 735 Km pipeline.⁴⁷ Thus, protection of pipeline and stable operation within Afghanistan is an important challenge of this project to tackle. On the other hand the security conditions of Pakistan especially Baluchistan which is a main entering point of this gas pipeline is a major impediment in the accomplishment of this project. It hinders the investment opportunities and investors hesitate to invest in this project in Pakistan.
- ✓ Investment is another challenge for Pakistan. It is now \$ 10 billion project and only \$ 4 billion has been collected yet for this project⁴⁸ whereas road shows will be started in November 2016 for ceasing the finances for this project⁴⁹ but still there is a long way to go in this regard.
- ✓ Governance of this project is another serious challenge for Pakistan. Pakistan has not good experience with governance as it is shown by the poor service delivery in the country. Correspondingly, it is important and imperative for effective and efficient completion and operation of TAPI in the country.
- ✓ Transparency is vital for any project. It is also required for the success of TAPI. Transparency is a matter of serious concern in Pakistan as well as in Turkmenistan⁵⁰ which is main producer of natural gas in this project. Therefore, it is major challenge for Pakistan to ensure transparency in this project within the county as well as in dealings with Turkmenistan.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Energy deficiency in Pakistan has hindered the economic development in the country and the problem is only worsened in recent years. This situation requires multiple energy sources for fulfilling the expanding energy demands of the country and for enhancing the energy security of the country. Turkmenistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan–India (TAPI) is a project of importing natural gas from Turkmenistan to Pakistan via Afghanistan. This project is on the priority list of Government of Pakistan for addressing the dearth of energy in the country. It is a viable and feasible project for the energy security of Pakistan as it will reduce the energy shortfall of the country if the prevailing challenges are tackled effectively. There are some recommendations and suggestions which can help policy makers to deal with this project effectively in Pakistan. These recommendations are as follows;

- ✓ Government of Pakistan is required to form an independent and autonomous energy authority for all energy projects including TAPI.
- ✓ Government is required to adopt Market Governance Model while dealing with TAPI. This model will involve all stakeholders in the different activities of project along with defining the responsibilities clearly for all actors of the project. This model will increase the stakes and participation of all stakeholders in this project which will create ownership among them and will finally enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of TAPI.
- ✓ Government of Pakistan is required to develop framework for ensuring transparency in the project within the country as well as dealing with Turkmenistan for the success of the project and also for the efficient service delivery to general public through this project.
- ✓ Monitoring is an effective tool for the success of any project. Constant monitoring is required for timely completion and smooth operation of this project. The independent energy authority should monitor the project constantly for its timely completion and successful operation.
- ✓ Government is required to advertise this project effectively in private sector for arranging finances for this project which is a major hindrance in the initiation of TAPI. The involvement of private sector for financing this project via Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode will be an effective tool of investment in Pakistan.
- ✓ Strong political will along with political and policy stability is required for the success of TAPI. Government of Pakistan is required to show strong political will and to ensure political and policy stability for attracting the investors for this project.

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ENERGY COOPERATION: A LONG TERM FRAMEWORK OF INTER-REGIONAL COOPERATION BETWEEN CENTRAL ASIA AND SOUTH ASIA

Zainab Ahmed*

Abstract: *Central Asia occupies a piece of Earth holding immense strategic importance for centuries. The landlocked region connecting Asia and Europe always caught attention of global powers and was on Silk Route. After disintegration of Soviet Union this region once again emerged on global landscape with huge energy potential catching interest and attention of great powers. With about 2.3-2.5 billion barrels of proven and possible oil reserves and 38.55-39.7 trillion cubic feet of gas reserves this region is a unique stimulus to energy hungry world. Today, any nation's security cannot be secured without energy security. South Asia is another most important region owing to its unique political, economic and security landscape. This region inhabiting about one quarter of global population with myriad economic and political problems faces critical energy deprivation. It is evident that nations are unable to deal with energy crises independently. Energy security is ensured with uninterrupted energy supply at affordable prices. Central Asia and South Asia, two neighboring regions have myriad opportunities and obstacles. Both regions have economic, social, political and security problems which are common too. Energy cooperation presents a unique framework of bilateral engagement where inter-regional connectivity and peacebuilding can be ushered. TAPI and CASA-1000 are important initiatives but are hindered by various obstacles which need to be handled at priority.*

Keywords: Energy cooperation, inter-regional cooperation, framework, energy security, regional energy integration.

Introduction

This paper endeavors to analyze the avenues of cooperation and long term engagement through energy integration. The paper will address few fundamental questions;

- ✓ What are the prospects of energy cooperation between Central Asia and South Asia?
- ✓ How can energy cooperation and integration lead to long term inter-regional engagement?
- ✓ How can a framework be developed exemplifying regional energy integration?

This study will be qualitative with deductive approach, endeavoring to extract a theoretical framework. Central Asia is the Heartland of world politics according to geopolitics theory of Mackinder. Rudyard Kipling and Arthur Conolly termed the imperial rivalry between Tsarist Russia and Great Britain in this region as 'Great Game'. Bolshevik revolution in Tsarist Russia which changed it to Soviet Union did not transform the policy of gaining influence in this region. Manipulating local politics and gaining influence has been cornerstone of world powers' policies of domination. The region lying at a strategic choke point joining South Asia, Eastern Europe, Middle East and a way to far East offers a unique opportunity to enhance regional domination and eventually grabbing strategic advantage in global politics. Central Asia's strategic significance has augmented manifold with the dawn of twenty first century. After getting independence from Soviet Union, five independent republics have emerged as a new stimulus with rich energy resources. This has ushered an era of New Great Game.¹

Disintegration of Soviet Union paved way for independence of five Central Asian states; Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Sir Hartford Mackinder considered Uzbekistan's independence integral to the independence of Central Asia as it is under the least influence and pressure of Russia. Resource rich Kazakhstan has emerged as linchpin of energy politics of Central Asia. This region remained on global chessboard for centuries but envisaged two principles; geopolitical pluralism and multiculturalism.² In twenty first century, this region has emerged as a major stimulus owing to the discovery of its hydro-carbon resources, transportation hub of various oil and gas pipelines and a junction point of energy and economic corridors connecting China, Russia, Caucasus, Trans-Caspian region and Indian Ocean Region.³

Kazakhstan is geographically and economically very important with huge proven oil and gas reserves having 10-12 billion barrels of established crude oil reserves and 53-83 trillion cubic feet of gas. Turkmenistan has even more gas resources with proven reserve of 95-115 trillion cubic feet. Uzbekistan does not have oil

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reserve but it is too rich in gas having reserves of 70-105 trillion cubic feet. This region has about 2.7% of global oil reserves and 7% of gas reserves ⁴.

South Asia is one of the most important regions of the world geographically, politically, demographically and strategically. With the tilt of global politics towards Asia, this region is the focal point of emerging security, economic and political landscape. This region inhabits about 1.7 billion people with dominantly developing economies. Afghanistan, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Maldives form this region. Pakistan and Afghanistan join this region with West Asia, Central Asia and Middle East. The region can be said to have extended to Southeast Asia because of India's possession of Andaman and Nicobar Island in Indian Ocean ⁵. South Asia is not religiously and ethnically unified region. Whole region is divided sharply even they do not share a language. Within the countries there is a sharp contrast and divisions on the basis of religions, sects, linguistics, and cultures. The borders of South Asia were drawn by British Empire as from 1849-1947 almost whole of this region had been under its control. Britain could not control Afghanistan directly but there had been much influence on foreign and defense policies⁶. The region is not only divided rather there are important ethnic overlapping. Importance of this region increases manifold with the increasing involvement of China. With rising economic benefits and needs, China's political and security involvement has also increased. China requires immediate and safe access to Indian Ocean which can also be ensured through South Asian region's safe transit route.

South Asia is the one of the fastest growing region in the world with an average 6% Gross domestic Product (GDP) growth rate. It was projected in 2013, that this rate would reach 6.4% in 2016 possessing the second fastest growth position according to World Bank. But the growth of the region does not complement to cater to the demands of the growing population of the region. In 2010, about 41.9% of world's poor were in this region which depicts that 439 million people survived on less than US\$ 1.25 per day. There is also variation in population density as it varied 20 person/square Kilometer, in Bhutan, to 1,150 persons/ square kilometer in Maldives, in 2013. Except Sri Lanka all South Asian countries lag behind the Human Development Index of global average of 0.702 (UNDP 2014). Electricity shortage is one of the leading problems as in 2010, 26% people were still not connected to grid. Energy supply and security are two main obstacles to the road to development in South Asia⁷. Many South Asian countries depend more than 50% on a single source to generate electricity which is not sustainable. Bangladesh depends on oil to produce about 91.5% of its electricity. Sri Lanka generates more than 50.2% from oil. India relies on coal to produce 67.9% of its electricity. Nepal depended on hydropower on more than 99.9%. In all these countries less than 5% of energy is generated from renewable sources⁸.

Table 1: Access of Population to Electricity

Countries	% of Population-2010
Afghanistan	41
Bangladesh	55
Bhutan	72
India	75
Maldives	100
Nepal	76
Pakistan	91
Sri Lanka	85

Source: Portale and Di Wilt 2014; [https://sdpi.org/publications/files/Sustainable-Energy-for-All-in-South-Asia-Potential-Challenges-and-Solutions\(W-151\).pdf](https://sdpi.org/publications/files/Sustainable-Energy-for-All-in-South-Asia-Potential-Challenges-and-Solutions(W-151).pdf)

With the passage of time, the demand of South Asian countries is expected to rise rapidly. According to the report of Asian Development Bank, 2013 the share of fossil fuels is set to increase manifold;

- ✓ In Afghanistan, energy mix will reach 73.3% by 2035, almost double than in 2010.
- ✓ Nepal's dependence on oil will reach 12.4%.
- ✓ In Pakistan by 2035, Pakistan's major dependence will remain on oil which will surge to 43.8%. But indigenous production of gas will decline from 38.4 billion cubic meters to 13 billion cubic meters.
- ✓ Maldives energy mix will remain sustainable with a slight low to 97.6%.

- ✓ In Sri Lanka, major dominance will remain of oil as it will remain 42.9% of total energy mix. Coal dependence will reach 4.9mtoe.
- ✓ In India, coal will remain largest contributor to energy mix followed by oil at 24.4% and natural gas at 11.7%. Net import ratio of oil is projected to be above 90% and net import of natural gas will rise from 19.5% in 2010 to 36.1% in 2035.
- ✓ Bangladesh's dependence on oil will reduce to 35.5% while share of coal will rise to 24.2%.

South Asian countries have limited natural gas reserves which curtails this region to export its gas reserves. Thus, the reliance remains on imported gas through gas pipelines being joint initiative of various nations. But this region has a huge potential of renewable energy resources. South Asia has an economic power potential of 190,000 MW with share of India of about 84,400 MW, Pakistan 40,000MW, Nepal 43,000MW, Bhutan 23,760 MW⁹. Rapid population growth, urbanization and industrialization have put immense pressure on South Asia's energy mix which is now immensely in need of huge energy resources.

CASA-1000

CASA is the electricity transmission line where CA stands for Central Asia and SA for South Asia where 1000 stands for 1000 MW of electricity. From this project Pakistan will receive 1000MW of electricity through Afghanistan which will get 300MW. The project initiates from Tajikistan and Kyrgyz Republic. MoU was signed among four nations in November 2007. The project was to be funded by World Bank, Asian Development Bank and International Development Bank. Asian Development Bank has pulled out its 40% investment¹⁰. The project is based on the idea that Tajikistan and Kyrgystan have surplus electricity during summers which would go waste if not sold. Pakistan and Afghanistan face energy shortage. The operational project will have 1,200 KM long transmission line with associated sub-stations. The cost of the project was estimated at US\$ 1.17 billion. This project falls under Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation aimed at enhancing cooperation among Central Asian states and its neighbors. The project is the initiative of its electricity market plan¹¹.

TAPI

Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India gas pipeline is a great initiative of inter-region gas supply and energy cooperation even by taking a conflict ridden state, Afghanistan into the project. The 56 diameter gas pipeline will have a length of 1,068 KM having a capacity of supplying 3.2 billion cubic meters. The gas will be supplied from Gylkynish gas field. Inter-government agreement was signed in December in 2010. In 2014, all four governments signed the agreement¹². Asian Development Bank is interested in investing the project.

Figure 1: Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) Gas Pipeline



Source: <http://www.isgs.pk/images/projects/turkmenistan-afghanistan-pakistan-india-gas-pipeline-tapi-887.jpg>

Four nations inked the initial investment agreement of \$10 billion in 2016¹³. The project has a great potential of connecting two regions and divergent states in one region. Energy hungry India and Pakistan have

also joined hands for the project owing to their pressing energy requirements. It has highlighted Afghanistan's importance. The project just not supplies gas rather it has the potential of joining disconnected region and has the potential to curb conflicts. This project also was major step by Turkmenistan to reduced dependence on Russia and China. As Russia reduced Turk gas import, China remains only investor in China¹⁴. However, the project has security and finances hurdles. As the conflict in Afghanistan can hinder smooth running of the project, so many foreign companies also showed interest in investing in the project but Turkmenistan does not allow international companies to invest in its gas projects¹⁵.

Regional Economic Integration-Energy Integration

The current era is of more liberalized markets and is market driven then being institution led. The process of regional integration is partly explained by progress in economic liberalization. It is also complemented by market-oriented policy frameworks¹⁶. Economic advantages derive the states to enter into economic bonds without sacrificing state identity and state centralism. In South Asia regional integration was also endeavored to be reached through intra-regional trade and economic cooperation. But security concerns and inter-state conflicts marred economic development. Quest for security has been a bigger goal in the region. India-Pakistan conflict and Afghanistan's security are defining features of this region. India has territorial disputes with all its neighbors even having cordial relations with Nepal¹⁷. Central Asia's Economic resources provide a huge gambit of opportunities to curb regional tension in South Asia. Central Asian Republics have lack of infrastructural and financial resources to develop its natural resources. Energy hungry South Asia has a huge market to offer to its regional neighbors.

Energy requirements and economic agenda today, dictate politics and geography. South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation could not be a success as it was anticipated. Pakistan believes this goal could not achieve due to influence of India in the region and its security and territorial disputes. Pakistan even is anticipating greater South Asia by redefining SAARC. Iran, China and Central Asia can be part of this region to set a new precedent of regional redetermination. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has given a new impetus to regional integration. This route offers Central Asia with a huge opportunity to reach out to the world through Indian Ocean¹⁸ Regional political strife can be washed away in long term to develop an economic relationship.

Conclusion

Regional Economic Integration provides a framework to reduce states' isolation and enhance inter regional and intra-regional cooperation. With growing population, industrialization and urbanization energy needs have soared a lot. In particular in developing regions energy requirements are foremost priorities of nations. South Asia is one of the fastest growing regions with one quarter of global population. With high energy requirements and less developed energy infrastructure and resources all states in the region are in pursuit of adequate energy supply. Energy security is currently foremost national security constituent. South Asia looks towards its next door energy rich neighbor Central Asia. The projects have been hindered over last two decades due to various political obstacles but the current scenario requires their speedy completion. Energy supply lines do not only provide energy resources they ensure peace in long term due to shared economic and industrial stake.

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Concluding Session

CHAIRPERSON'S SPEECH

Prof. Dr. Khalid Manzoor Butt

Chairperson, Department of Political Science
Director, Centre of Excellence China Studies
GC University Lahore, Pakistan.

With permission of VC, Prof. Dr. Hassan Amir Shah.

Chief Guest, Khawaja Saad Rafique, Federal Minister for Railways - a seasoned politician and wonderful human being - Faculty members, Delegates, Students, Ladies & Gentlemen. *Assalam-o-Alaikum*.

On behalf of the Department of Political Science and Centre of Excellence China Studies and on my personal behalf it is indeed a pleasure to make a few remarks on the closing ceremony of this conference.

First of all, I would like to extend my highest respect and most sincere gratitude to all the paper presenters, especially the ones who've travelled thousands of miles to be with us at this conference. A conference becomes a success only if participants arrive as they are the lifeblood for a conference. It is our great honor to spend the past two days with very fine academicians from around the world.

In nine academic sessions and a Policy Dialogue of the conference, deliberations have outlined diverse perspectives on Inter-regional connectivity between South and Central Asia. The participants have highlighted multiple prospects and challenges in the way of economic, political, strategic, and social linkages among the countries of the two regions. We have also heard about a number of already-established connectivity initiatives in the two regions and elsewhere in the world highlighting the ways for strengthening connectivity. They have also identified hurdles among these are historical rivalries, political inertia, cultural differences, and the lack of investment in cross-border infrastructure. A number of very useful mechanisms to promote regional connectivity were also suggested by the participants and it could be food of thought for policy makers and decision makers. This is the role that academicians and intellectuals can play.

Dr. Sinderpal's paper on physical connectivity and regional sovereignty analyzed the traditional discourse of connectivity and re-conceptualized national security and cross border linkages. While Prof. Marvin emphasized reconciliation in South Asia as a prerequisite for inter-regional connectivity, Dr. Rashid Ahmed Khan, Mr. Hashmat Khan, and Mr. Usman Siddiqi's papers expressed that stability in Afghanistan would be the main factor for regional security of South Asia and is necessary for advancing our shared economic objectives for inter-regional connectivity. Mr. Faiq Sadiq and Mr. Ahmed Nazir Warraich's papers highlighted the need of economic dependency for political linkages and peace in the regions.

While the papers presented in academic sessions and deliberations in Policy Dialogue have noted the need for inter-regional connectivity and same time they have suggested guide lines. Actually they have sensitized government officials and policy makers for the purpose. Now there is a growing need to align national policies for economic dependency, peace collective security, and political linkages for enhanced inter-regional connectivity between the two regions.

In my opinion CPEC get the center stage and will become the on-rolling economic cooperation between Pakistan, China, and other regional countries and is arguably the biggest ever collaborative effort in this regard. It is rightly said as game-changer and tool of transformational change in the economic profile of the entire region. For maximum dividends, we should adopt inclusive approach regarding CPEC to make it a hub of economic activity for countries of South Asia and Central Asia. I, therefore, suggest the policy-makers to reform laws, include other regional stakeholders, and also involve private sector in the promotion of connectivity and development. It would certainly minimize opposition of CPEC and make it a productive and progressive project. I see that CPEC should serve the interests of the people of this region. All the regional countries stand to reap a substantial peace dividend if they can lower mistrust for a better future of this part of Asia.

I wish and pray that these recommendations would pave the way to make concrete policies for the prosperous future of the two regions.

In the end I would like to thank Vice Chancellor for his great support. I would also appreciate organizing committee, especially focal person Mr. Manzoor Elahi for their efforts to make this conference a success. I appreciate to our students who have not only maintained the decor butt took enthusiastic part in question answers session. A big round of applause for Mr. Manzoor Elahi and wonderful students.

I am also grateful to Khawaja Sahib who has spared time from his very busy schedule for my personal request. Thank you Khawaja Sahib.

Thank you very much Ladies & Gentlemen.

CHIEF GUEST'S ADDRESS

Khawaja Saad Rafique

Federal Minister for Railways
Government of Pakistan.

Bismillah Hir Rahman Nir Raheem

Prof. Dr. Hassan Amir Shah, Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Khalid Manzoor Butt, Chairperson, Foreign and National scholars, and Ladies and Gentlemen *Assalam-o-Alaikum* and good evening.

I congratulate GC University, Lahore, and especially Department of Political Science and Centre of Excellence China Studies for organizing a very successful conference at this high time. It is the greater recognition of regional cooperation to ensure sustainable economic growth and political development.

Ladies and Gentlemen, connectivity is a cornerstone of regional economic cooperation and integration, and it should become a top priority for Pakistan and other countries of the region including China, Afghanistan, India, Iran, Turkey and the Central Asian Republics, especially in the context of efforts to find new drives of regional economic growth.

In my opinion, a broader perspective on connectivity is key to regional peace and stability. This kind of connectivity should not be considered sector by sector but rather as a part of integrated networks of industrial zones, trade, rail, roads, energy, culture, people and technology.

The upgradation of Pakistan Railways' existing network and its connectivity to the railways of the region would usher in a new era of development and prosperity for Pakistan and other countries of the region through trans-border movement of trains within next 10 to 15 years by capitalizing on the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) which is a partnership of 10 countries working together to promote development cooperation, leading accelerated growth besides envisioning implementation of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

We must also acknowledge that geostrategic location of Pakistan provides numerous opportunities for regional cooperation as it is situated at the crossroads of Central Asia, South Asia and Middle Eastern regions, We have prepared a master plan to upgrade railways' three main arteries,

- ✓ Main Line One (ML-1) from Karachi to Torkham,
- ✓ ML-2 from Kotri to Attock city.
- ✓ ML-3 Rori-Quetta-Taftan Section with its extension to Dera Ismail Khan via Western corridor through Bostan.

The framework agreement was being signed with the Chinese government for providing funding of \$5.7 billion for up-gradation of Lahore-Karachi segment of ML-1, while an understanding has been reached with the Asian Development Bank for providing financial support amounting \$2.5 billion for upgradation of Peshawar-Lahore section. With this up gradation, the speed of passenger train would be upgraded to 160Kph which is currently at 105Kph.

In addition, the feasibility studies of ML-2 from Hyderabad-Attack, ML-3 and Quetta-Gwadar, Abbottabad and Peshawar-Jalalabad railings have been awarded to renowned consultants.

The vision of the present government is to accomplish uninterrupted movement of goods and people from Pakistan to Europe via Iran and Turkey. In addition, we are also focusing on to connect tracks from Chaman to Spin Buldak, Khardar and onwards to Turkmenistan. The government of Pakistan would ensure the usage of Gwadar deep sea port in its full potential for transportation of goods to Afghanistan and landlocked Central Asian republics.

It is pertinent to note here that Gwadar port with Khunjerab via ML-2 and Western Corridor via D. I. Khan would provide the shortest access to Chinese goods to warm waters reducing the transportation distance 1,600 KMs. This project is already part of Phase-II of CPEC.

In the end, let me express, once again, my deepest and sincere gratitude to all the delegates for participating in this conference. I also express my profound regards to the organizers of this conference who invited me to Chair this important session.

Thank you very much.