

An analysis of Pak-Russia relations in the evolving new regional order: 2013-2022

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Abstract

As regional political order has been shifting, Pakistan is faced with the withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan and its aftereffects, Indian inference in the region political paradigm, the building of new trilateral cooperative blocs in the regional context, and the threat of fifth-generation and hybrid warfare. Therefore, the study is designed to interpret and evaluate Pakistan-Russian foreign policy achievements and their futuristic consequences. The occurrence of multiple political events like hybrid warfare from a geo-strategic perspective has signalled major geopolitical and socio-economic competition in the global market; for which Pakistan and Russia are gearing up. Given existing geopolitical compulsions like Moscow's quest for playing a decisive role in Afghanistan's security calculus, Pakistan's pursuit of coming out of the US straitjacket and finding alternative regional partners offer the reasons, challenges, and outlook for reshaping ties. Pakistan and Russia require a balanced strategic plan to counter the regional threats after the departure of NATO forces from Afghan soil. This article also discusses the core socio-economic strategies between Pakistan and Russia for diluting their gaps. The main point which can play a vital role in creating a close bilateral nexus between both states is the decisive foreign policy initiative from both ends.

Keywords: CPEC, NATO, SCO, Jihad, geo-strategic relations, regional order, regional security, socio-economic strategies, decisive foreign policy.

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1. Introduction

The study has been carried out to highlight and evaluate the problem statement in light of its past and recent history. In addition, it further explores the bilateral relationship between Pakistan and the Soviet Union on behalf of their success and failures. It also describes the foreign policy on which Pakistan and Russia are trying to eliminate mistrust and reconstruct their bilateral diplomatic relations and for that, both states can get more benefits by clearing their way towards success. The emergence of trilateral bloc among Pakistan, China and Russia, the peace-building procedures in Afghanistan, and regional stability are discovered here. At last, the purpose of the research, objectives, research questions, significance, and limitations of study are mentioned. Moscow and Islamabad underwent a transition to say bye to the past and develop a strong and stable relationship on mutual benefits. Both states are building their relations in the perspective of geopolitical, geo-economics, regional and global changes since 2013. This also sheds light on the regional and global forces behind the closer linking and bringing of Moscow and Islamabad. On the other side U.S and India strategic cooperation and the pangs of Afghanistan's unsteadiness play a crucial role in this regard? Strong relationship of Russia with Pakistan does not mean a hostile relationship with India as the later was the cornerstone of Moscow policy in South Asia and historical ally throughout the Cold War. Moscow can play a vital role in easing the tension between the two rival states of South Asia through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Multi-polarity Movement. Pakistan-Russia mutual relations in the existing geostrategic milieu are still fragile and but the initiative has been taken and the ice has thawed. Countless opportunities lie ahead for both Pakistan and Russia to improve economic collaboration by escalating the joint trade and commencing the gas pipelines scheme (Mian, 2015).

Having talked about the political and diplomatic facades, both countries have reached a point of understanding on regional security issues i.e., the presence of ISIS in Afghanistan. According to the theory of social constructivism, states represent multiple identities which is based on social network of interactions. Ideas are farmed by identities which is based on national interests. As states are the key actors in the political world. As the interaction increases between states, their national interest also starts to highlight. Man is a social animal, the term, social represents basic requirement of life. Similarly, states do possess some needs which is based on their respective interests. By keeping in view Pak-Russian relations since 2013, the regional political diversion demand to alter political behaviour for the regional powers. In this context both Pakistan and Russia started to become closer. The defence cooperation agreement is a commendable project in defence sector but a great deal of further commitment with each other is required in the fields of technology and cooperative military endeavours if both of them are desirous of to changing their relationship into a strategic partnership in the future. It's advisable for both countries to be cooperating with each other recurrently in all spheres to enlarge the mutual relations (Siddiq, 2021). In addition, Pakistan and Russia can mutually work under the sponsorship of the Shanghai Co-operation Organization for solidity in the region. Since both countries share mutual interests, the further fortification of their reciprocal relations in the future is highly probable.

Pakistan took part in a multi-nation military exercise named as Peace Mission 2018 held in Russia. Moscow through her assistance can help in resolving the territorial disputes between India and Pakistan relations and maybe this balancing of Russia with India and Pakistan can further decrease the tension between India and Pakistan too in the long term. One of the most

influential partners of Russia and India's adversary i.e., of Pakistan is China. Having a better bond with Pakistan is momentous for Russia to enhance its influence in the area (Dagia, 2021). The future cooperation of both the states can help in curtailing the emergent radical entities and terrorism which have seriously intimidated the regional peace and solidity as well as economic growth predominantly since Afghanistan's clash commenced which both the regions enclose on all sides. Prospects of fortifying the liaison through business, investment and partnership in energy and defence sectors are enormous, provided Pakistan and Russia disregard their resentful past (Janjua, 2021). Therefore, it is the need of the hour for Russia and Pakistan both to have cooperation for their own and region's integration by keeping in mind the evolving regional political dynamics since 2013. Given China's expanding economic footprint and influence in South and Central Asia, Pakistan and Russia will likely desire to lessen their economic dependency on China. Thus, it is in their best interests to strengthen bilateral economic cooperation. With its abundant natural and human resources, Russia possesses huge potential to grow economically. Beyond South and Central Asia, Moscow has taken its eastward pivot actively by pursuing FTAs with Southeast Asia such as Vietnam (2016) and Singapore (2019). As Russia's economic footprint in Asia is still relatively low, Pakistan can capitalize on this opportunity to expand cooperation and attract Russian investments (Rashid & Tahir, 2021).

1.1. Convergence in security slant

For Mearsheimer (2001), major powers in particular and other states in common struggle for the maximization of power and security, respectively. Pakistan being a non-major power is struggling for both the maximization of security and power in the region. Pakistan and Russia have moved a long way in warming up to each other, and in the past decade or so, they have reduced their trust deficit significantly. As highlighted earlier, there are sufficient grounds for alignments in respective security thinking; yet there are many areas where potential disagreements have existed and may continue to exist for a long time. This section discusses the convergence in the mutual relations between the two countries. There are six major areas where broad convergence between Russian and Pakistani policy interests might have some potential: the future of Afghanistan; strategic balance in the South Asia; nuclear doctrinal similarities; integration of conventional and nuclear deterrence; changing character of war; hybrid war and its counter; and the Pakistan's quest for Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) membership along with its energy needs.

1.2. Dynamics of regional political order

Every region of the world is representing its own characteristics and features. The nature of politics in the region of South Asia is little complicated. Its diverting nature demands the regional states to review their policies by time to time. Infact when political changes it also brings multiple dimensions with it. Within the context of Pak-Russian relations, the picture is quite clear. Since 2013 as the withdrawal of NATO forces started to develop their mind set to leave from Afghanistan, Pakistani administration revisited her foreign policy based on national interests in the region. There are miscellaneous factors which evident the close bilateral diplomatic nexus between Pakistan and the Russian Federation, e.g. American withdrawal from Afghanistan and its after myths, India as strategic ally of US and involvement in vacillating actions in the regional context, ambivalent mind set of America towards Iran, At the same time disputed region of Ladakh between China India, the uprising of fifth generation hybrid warfare,

multiple conventional and non-conventional military/civil doctrine etc means from all means since 2013 the regional order started to change under these circumstances. Pakistan feels to meet her security and economic requirements. On the other side Russia already marked herself in this region to join Pakistan as Russia knows its significance based on mutual interests (Mohan, 2021).

Second to maintain peace and regional stability Pakistan and Russia are jointly started work together by introducing theoretical amendments at their foreign policy. Both shaped their common mutual regional interests which has to be achieved short- and long-term grounds. With increasing geopolitical importance, however, especially after China's BRI featured the CPEC as its flagship project, Pakistan's geophysical location found new geo-economic significance. With the United States imposing sanctions on Russia in the wake of the Crimea and East Ukraine crises, Moscow has reached out to Beijing and expanded its interests to Southwest and South Asia. Russia is now involved the delicate balancing of relations with South Asian countries. From the Russian standpoint, the future of Afghanistan has important bearing on Russian security interests in Russia's southern vector. Russia has also found a significant market for defence cooperation and sales in South Asia. Secondly in this regard, the role of regional independent institutions will also be the part of this research thesis. To highlight the possible cooperation between Pakistan and Russia, the theory of liberal institutionalism will be studied. To analyze the bilateral nexus between Pakistan and the Russian Federation Liberalism institutionalism can be consider. The hostile relations with the state of India Realism can be consulted. To study the behaviour of regional and international organizations like SCO and UNO liberal institutionalism can be adopted to interpret (Khan, 2021).

2. Theoretical framework

This paper consults three theoretical perspectives, in terms of Liberal Institutionalism, Structural or Neo-Realism and Social Constructivism. Literature about Liberal Institutionalism has been reviewed for the purpose only to develop clarity and to base the research study on the most appropriate theoretical understanding. To epitomize, this study is based on the wedlock of Neo-realism and Social Constructivism while Liberal Institutionalism has been reviewed for solid argumentation. As discussed above, in this research, the root metaphors of these three theories have been used to analyze Pak-Russian relations. Furthermore, after having a deep analysis, the basic idea of these theories can sort out the most relevant lens for gauging relations between the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Russian Federation.

2.1. Neo realism

As states are rational actors, for the sake of survival and to secure national interest they try to adopt the policy of bilateralism. As in this political system anything could be occur so, under the dimension of this theory the paper will discuss that how Pakistan and Russia will facilitate each other at the regional and international stage to full fill their basic requirements based on futuristic approaches. Within the framework of the research topic this theory will further evaluate its directions like, for the state of Pakistan ultimate security along with the economic support is essentially required while for the Russian Federation power and influence is the key instrument. In this this paradigm this theory will also discuss the offensive and defensive criteria for future.

2.2. Liberal institutionalism

Furthermore, theory of Liberal institutionalism will further evaluate the research thesis and to bring more clarity towards the research topic. Under this theory Pak-Russian cooperation through the policy of bilateralism will be discussed. Secondly in this regard, the role of regional independent institutions will also be the part of this paper. To highlight the possible cooperation between Pakistan and Russia, the theory of liberal institutionalism will be studied. To analyze the bilateral nexus between Pakistan and the Russian Federation Liberalism institutionalism can be consider. The hostile relations with the state of India Realism can be consulted. To study the behaviour of regional and international organizations like SCO and UNO liberal institutionalism can be adopted to interpret.

2.3. Social constructivism

According to this theory, states represent multiple identities which is based on social network of interactions as states are the key actors in the political world. As the interaction increases between states, their national interest also starts to highlight. Man is a social animal, the term, social represents basic requirement of life. Similarly, states do possess some needs which is based on their respected interests. By keeping in view Pak-Russian relations since 2013, the regional political diversion demand to alter political behaviour for the regional powers. In this context both Pakistan and Russia started to become closer.

2.4. Research gap

For Mearsheimer (2001), major powers in particular and other states in common struggle for the maximization of power and security, respectively. Most of the available literature also highlight this trend. However, findings suggest that Pakistan, a non-major state, is battling for both the greatest possible security and power in the region. This study also contends that Russia fights for both security and the expansion of its power. Although the available literature extensively highlights relations between Pakistan and Russia. However, the afore-mentioned particular aspect is either missed or seemingly blurred in the available literature. Secondly, the available literature fails to highlight that it is not hostility but regional/global ambitions and hegemonic intentions, which design the competitive behaviours of the regional actors, especially in the Asian context. Another important aspect, which this study highlights in particular is that it has primarily picked the era of 2013, which is not visible in the available literature clearly. Another essential aspect, which the available literature misses is that India is politically, diplomatically, militarily, economically, and strategically creating hurdles for Pakistan, not because of old traditional hostility but because of becoming an instrument for supporting and translating the Chinese and Russian ambitious dreams into reality. This interpretivist analytical and descriptive study has highlighted these main aspects of the Pakistan Russian relations in the changing geopolitical scenario since 2013.

3. Methodology

Research methodology is a way to provide a systematic and suitable solution to the topic. This paper is logical, systematic, and briefly descriptive in nature by the induction of the “qualitative method” and multiple theoretical approaches e.g., social constructivism, Liberal institutionalism, and Neo-realism. The study further adopts the interpretivist paradigm to study

the goals, beliefs and self-understanding of Pakistan and Russia. It has explored the nature of the Pakistan-Russian understandings, through discussing their territorial disputes, worldwide struggle for securing stable position in the regional political affairs. In compendium, it is qualitative research, which has explored, investigated, and described the natural behaviours of Islamabad and Moscow and the nature of their bilateral nexus.

3.1. Research design

As a qualitative study, this research work has used secondary sources of data collection, to explore and analyze “Pakistan Russian relations evolving regional order since 2013.” Efforts were made to gain the relevant information from well founded and authentic and valid sources and to sketch out conclusion by keeping the subject matter of this research study. Data from relevant/ valid and updated and finest books, journals, pertinent strategic and political reports, newspaper articles, relevant websites, cogent research articles and other research and literature works was gathered followed by the research questions and its core aims and objectives to show justification in the research findings and its main conclusion. Logically the design of research is based on three basic formats: The exploratory, hypothesis testing and descriptive. From exploratory analytical research study, it has explored and analyzed the topic, Pakistan Russian relations: Evolving regional order since 2013. Its timeframe is the ‘since 2013’ and its variables are the ‘Pakistan Russian relations’ (independent variable) and ‘evolving regional order’ (dependent variable). By the concept “evolving regional order since 2013” it means that it studies all those events which has been taken place and made serious impacts over the relations of Pakistan and Russia which has brought them together. This research has addressed “How” and “what” type of questions in logical way. Furthermore, this research took one-half year to collect the secondary data from multiple sources which is later on analyzed in descriptive manner.

3.2. Sources of data

The selection of comparative / relevant data is essential in the compilation of the research thesis, as it provides various opportunities to the research scholar to analyze the findings and conclusion of his research followed by research design and procedures. This research thesis has compiled the secondary data. Comparative and relevant books over the topics of Pakistan and Russia bilateral relations, by reading and covering their past activities and recent understandings, in in terms of their close cooperative and mutual developmental projects and moves have been taken in account within the framework of regional and international political paradigm. Data has also been gathered from multiple national and international news agencies including print and electronic media. Discussion under the observation and analysis of multiple think tanks, NGO’s, inter-governmental organizations, and magazines and their brief articles in multiple research journals have also been consulted. Furthermore, apart from the above-mentioned authentic sources of data collection legal websites, famous journals, magazines, and various research articles have also been utilized for the data collection process

4. Historical perceptive of Pakistan’s foreign policy

The state of Pakistan is located towards the northwest of the sub-continent region, which holds a special geographical significance in the South Asian region. Pakistan is the hub of various historical events, civilizations, traditions, and culture which represents the Islamic Ideology of

Muslims of the region of sub-continent. Geographically, Pakistan is having a brief history of gateways between Eurasia. This piece of land is enriched with multiple natural resources, most importantly the warm sea which is highly significant for Pakistan itself and for the landlocked states from economic point of view. After her independence in 1947, the state of Pakistan joined US backed military and economic alliance CENTO and SEATO in the year 1950's without knowing that the dream of having balanced relations will dissipate into the air. As after independence Pakistan was already in a zone of threat and challenges from its neighbour India, which was making the environment tough day by day for the newly born state of Pakistan. Pakistan was forced to join the military and economic alliance CENTO and SEATO to full fill western interest and in the favour of its security from the east. The action was taken seriously by the Russian administration. Various agreements were signed between Pakistan and the Russian regimes during February to December 1953, which resulted in the military and economic assistance to Pakistan. Till 1956 Pakistan was struggling to develop their sovereign constitution to decide the direction for the state of Pakistan. After the death of Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of the Islamic republic of Pakistan, his party Muslim league tried to navigate his aims further to its peak and to established smooth relations with the foreign states but soon they realized that it is complicated for a newly born state to prove herself at international level (Jalal, 1997).

After her independence in 1947, the state of Pakistan joined US backed military and economic alliance CENTO and SEATO in the year 1950's without knowing that the dream of having balanced relations will dissipate into the air. Pakistan was already in a zone of threat and challenge from its neighbour India following independence, which was making the situation difficult for the newly born state of Pakistan day by day. Pakistan was forced to join the CENTO and SEATO military and economic alliances in order to satisfy western interests and ensure its security from the east. The Russian government was taken aback by the action. Various agreements were negotiated between Pakistan and the Russian authorities between February and December 1953, resulting in Pakistan receiving military and economic aid. Till 1956 Pakistan was struggling to develop their sovereign constitution to decide the direction for the state of Pakistan. After the death of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, his party Muslim League tried to navigate his aims further to its peak and to establish smooth relations with the foreign states but soon they realized that it is complicated for a newly born state to prove herself at international level vis-à-vis the Cold War (Jalal, 1997).

This was the time when Pakistan was trying to adjust herself in the global arena. Field Marshal Muhammad Ayub khan was making his effective efforts to secure Pakistan's interest worldwide. Pakistan was searching for a partner to boast up its motives. During the President Nixon regime Pakistan tried to shut down maximum differences with United States of America and the People's Republic of China. During Mr Zulfiqar's Ali Bhutto's regime, foreign policies were reviewed as the administration of Jimmy carter was an anti-socialist and he did not favour Bhutto's administration. In General Zia era Pakistan shared balanced relations with the United States of America by supporting them against the Soviet Union in the jihad (*Holy war*) war in Afghanistan during 1980. During this era Pakistan got an aid of 3.8 billion dollars from United States and justify that Pakistan is not investing this aid for its nuclear development program. In May 1998, Pakistan tested her nuclear devices and became the seventh in the world and first in the Islamic world to have the nuclear capability. Before, this development, after the

disintegration of the Soviet Union Pakistan once again remind isolated state as United States of America left this region (Subohi, 2018).

5. Pak-Russia relations since 2013

5.1. Cooperation in military and defence sector

In recent years region of South Asia has faced multiple security challenges. It has been on record that the replacement of political actors and maneuvering regional politics of South Asia demands Russia and Pakistan to established close ties in military and defence. Multiple military exercises have been taken place between both states in the recent years. As the state of Pakistan have an experience of various military operations especially in the war against terror. Russia has acknowledged Pakistan's effort to combat against the non-state extremism. This counts a professional strategic nexus between them (Khan, 2019). In 2014, Russian ambassador Dedov said that *"Pakistan and the Russian federation is facing same threat criteria's having same in nature; therefore, we need to create clear agenda to develop a sense of understanding between both the states. He further says that Russia will support Pakistan from every corner like social, economic, military and so. Both the states have started to work under one umbrella having common agenda specially to bring peace in Afghanistan which is in the favour of both states"*. According to sources both states could sign 9 billion US dollars arms deal as a futuristic approach including multiple latest military equipment. Pakistan also producing its arms with the assistance of China as a joint venture (Gul, 2021).

5.2. Pak-Russia relations: Development through China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

CPEC has provided an opportunity for Russia to overcome her economic complications. To boost up her economic motives Russia was searching for an Asian market in this changing geopolitical frame. For Russia, Pakistan's geographical location is significant as Pakistan shares regional connectivity frontiers. While participation in CPEC, Russia and Pakistan can enjoy diplomatic ties by establishing understandings in various sectors, like defence, trade, economic uplift, and work for the betterment of their entire communities on both sides. In the recent times due to the issue of Crimea the Russian Federation have overviewed her foreign policy and shifted her interests from west to east to secure her economic and military goals. For that purposes Russia is searching for more strong Asian markets. Industrial and economical project of CPEC is rapidly proceeding on her way where Russia is taking keen interest to join as another partner after Saudi Arabia. In this way both Pakistan and the Russian federation will be able to exchange their mutual and bilateral interest. During the World War II Former Soviet Union suffered and paid a huge price in economic scenarios. Pakistan and the Russian has also signed an agreement in 2018 named as North-South gas pipeline which will start from Karachi to Lahore. Expense of this LNG (Liquefied Nature Gas) pipeline project was 1.7 billion US dollars. Length of this pipeline is 1122 km with a diameter of 42 inches which was going to be completed in year of 2020. This will further provide an opportunity to the Russian and Pakistani investors to invest in the other regional markets as well to boast up their relations with the other regional states. According to the sources Russian administrative staff visited KPOGCL (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Oil and Gas Company Limited) in January 2018 to locate an Oil refinery in Kohat which can purify 20,000 barrels of oil per day (Chia & Haiqi, 2021).

5.3. Pakistan-Russian Cooperation within the paradigm of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

The platform of SCO is too essential for Pakistan and Russia to settle down multiple disputes. Russia have supported Pakistan to become the permanent member of the SCO in 2011 while China was the next state who given her vote in the favour of Pakistan for the permanent membership. Russia have tackled the wave of terrorism by using the platform of SCO which was appreciated by Pakistan as Pakistan have already gone through during war on terror. In 2011, addressing to the head of government meeting under SCO the Russian head of the state Mr. Putin showed great interest in making the relation cleared between Pakistan and the Russian federation. In that meeting, he contently notified that Russian federation would facilitate Pakistan with 0.5 billion US dollars for encampment and rehabilitation of multiple mega projects in Pakistan. He also put stress over the projects of gas pipeline between Pakistan Afghanistan Turkmenistan and India. He further added that Russia will also provide assistance in expansion of the Pakistan steel mill Guddu and Muzaffargarh power plants. Talking to his counterpart the Pakistani Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani he said that Pakistan and Russia should need to develop bilateral ties each sector including economics trade and financial departments. On the other side Pakistani Prime Minister acknowledged and appreciated the support of the Russian President and aimed to create better futuristic grounds for the promotion of their relationship through the platform of SCO (Khan, 2019).

5.4. Pak-Russian partnership within the framework of geo strategic and geopolitical nexus in the regional context of South Asia promoting the concept of “Bilateralism”

As the politics of the South Asian region receipts in multiple patterns by depositing impacts on the state’s political culture which is further forcing the state to divert or re-think its regional and international policies. The region of South Asia is complex in nature. For the enhancement of bilateral ties between relations Pakistan and the Russian Federation need to overview the concept of regional bloc as well. Especially India and the United States of America, while Pakistan, China and Russia are the emerging socio economic, political bloc. In the modern times the Russian Federation is making its way clear to introduced new trends in its foreign policy as it’s the requirement of time. As a matter of fact, todays Russia is absolute different from the past. In past Soviet Union was having multiple nationalities but in today’s Russia 85 percent of its population is ethnic Russian loyal to its federation. And the way the state of Pakistan and Russia have showed their competency in promoting and regulating their bilateral interactions no doubt that in the coming future ahead both states have bright opportunities to take their relationship to achieve the mark of success. Russian federation has made its foreign policy in multiple dimensional directions by focusing various significant fields to enhance and uplift its economic and social sector to promote the living standards. Furthermore, both Pakistan and the Russian federation looking forward to maximizing their comprehensive bilateral relation by establishing trustworthy relations as they are trying to develop the concept of multilateralism at their relationship (Kaushiki, 2019).

Foreign policy analysts have been focusing a lot of time and effort on China's expanding influence in the Indo-Pacific region as well as Russia's role in weakening the United States in Europe and the Middle East. This has deflected attention from South and Central Asia, where Russia is successfully pursuing a strategy to isolate the United States in Afghanistan and reduce

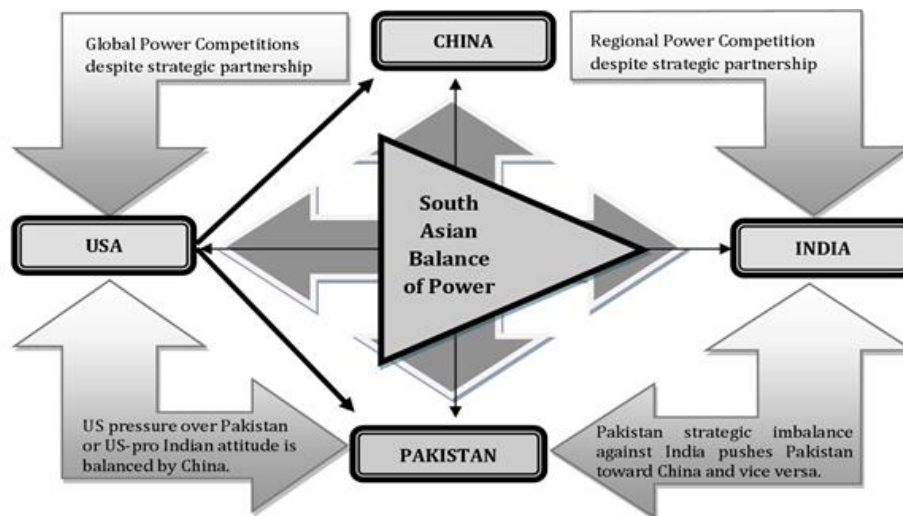
its influence in the area as a whole. The rise of ISIS in Afghanistan, the U.S. decision to pull out of the Iran nuclear agreement, Washington's changing relations with India and Pakistan, and Chinese investments in Central Asia under the Belt and Road Initiative are four events that have given Russia the chance to undermine U.S. interests (BRI). Initially wary of China's expanding influence in its neighbourhood, Russia has begun to carefully cooperate with Beijing as part of the Belt and Road Initiative to promote greater connectivity between the two nations through Central Asian nations like Kazakhstan.

At the SCO in April, Lavrov reaffirmed this viewpoint and stated that “Eurasian economic integration with China's Belt and Road Initiative” is being given special attention. Greater integration is anticipated to be advantageous for Russia as cargo travelling by train from China to Europe will pass through the country, bringing in money to Moscow in the form of transit fees. Russia can effectively encircle American soldiers in Afghanistan by aiding the Taliban and working with Iran and Pakistan. Russia has also acknowledged that while working with China yields economic and strategic benefits for both nations, BRI investments boost Chinese influence in Central Asia. Russia's initiatives, carried out at a time when American power is waning worldwide, have temporarily jeopardized American interests in South and Central Asia. It is unlikely that the Trump administration would be successful in countering rising Russian influence in South and Central Asia given its propensity to enrage U.S. friends and its incapacity to make deliberate foreign policy decisions (Younus, 2018).

Certain geopolitical and geostrategic shifts are occurring in modern world politics. We are living in a time when alliances are forming and breaking. The states and areas that were aligned in the 20th century are now heading in the opposite direction. National interest, according to realism and neo-realist perspectives, is the primary goal of the state and what governs state action. With this stated objective, there are no permanent allies and enemies in world politics; yesterday's adversary may turn out to be the finest partner of today. Growing ties between Russia and Pakistan are influenced not only by regional geopolitical and geostrategic developments but also by world politics. Both nations grew closer to one another as a result of the 9/11 incident, and Russia supported Pakistan's front-line ally status in the worldwide battle on terror. On the one hand, Pakistan is concerned about the strengthening connections between India and the US, while Russia is apprehensive about NATO expansion in its territory, the Ukraine, and its presence in Afghanistan and the CAR.

In all cases, the US is involved, and both Russia and Pakistan are concerned about these unilateral US plans and see them as a threat to their security, which would cause Russia-China-Pakistan to emerge as a force to counterbalance the west. This international agreement covers prospective China in addition to Pakistan and Russia. Since 2014, Russia has been implementing a “look east” policy and seeking out new allies or friends in the east, initially making contact with China. In the South China Sea dispute, Russia backed China's position, and both countries had the same outlook on the Syrian crisis. On the other side, CPEC, a project of the Russia-China nexus, is moving towards Pakistan. The same arrangements are being made on the western side as the US approaches India and seeks to make it a regional power, and a rising alliance between India, the US, and Israel is emerging on this front. This aspect of world politics also has an impact on the area, especially on South Asia. In their struggle for power balance, South Asia's two superpowers, Pakistan, and India, have formed the aforementioned alliances: Pakistan with China and Russia, and India with the United States and Israel (Dawn News, 2022).

Figure 1:



Source: Jahangir (2013)

5.5. Pak-Russian role in Peace building Afghanistan

Pakistan and the Russian Federation are well-wishers to have peace and stability in Afghanistan as this will bring peace in the entire region across the whole Asian region as well. After fighting against the war on terror Pakistan which have already lost about 80 lack of its innocent people which further provided a set back to its developing economy in this 16–17 years of war. Since 2013, as Pakistan and the Russian Federation jointly started their bilateral journey, both developed an understanding to make their dream development of socio, political and economic stance successful which demands peace and stability in the state of Afghanistan as well. In a session of (UNGA), delegations from Pakistan and Russia agreed to finalize their strategies regarding Afghanistan. both Pakistan and the Russian Federation have shared common interests' right in Afghanistan, Russia aimed to join the Eurasian economic union with the belt and road initiative to have an access towards the warm's waters through Pakistan. From Pakistan's perceptive it's essential to have stable workable scenario in Afghanistan as essential for the CPEC project between Pakistan and China keeping in mind the security unrest in shape of ISIS and Daesh. Stable Afghanistan will facilitate to have a long term diplomatic bilateral and economic ties between Pakistan and the Russian Federation (Idrees *et al.*, 2020).

In the 2012, Russian premier Vladimir Putin said in one of his articles "Russia and the changing world" that by shifting the Russian interests from the Western Europe towards the Southern region of the Asian continent, the state of Afghanistan should need to balance from all means. He further added that a peaceful strategic coexisting plan is required to contain various challenges which is affecting the Afghan land and its political affairs. For that Russia seems Pakistan as a regional alive strategic state which share its frontier towards the other regions as well and without the participation of Pakistan with the Russians, Russia would not be able to organize her dreams. To carry on with the diplomatic mission to develop a real image of bilateral ties between both the states both the states are now trying to overcome the security challenges which will be the key priority for both the states to deal with in the future nearby. For that reason, a joint task working force is shaping up to meet such realities on external and internal base (Topychkanov, 2014).

5.6. Concept of “Hybrid warfare” and “Cyber security”: Alarming threat for Pakistan and Russian in the restoration of bilateralism procedures

The phenomena of *Hybrid warfare* are one an emerging and rapidly developed concept in 21st century. Tools like TV news, social media, channel communication, proxies are some of the basic components of *Hybrid warfare*. Furthermore, it also includes. Political economic, social pressure and other related activities are some of its targeted angles through which a state can disturbed its opponent state by utilizing the course of disinformation as the main objective of using this *Hybrid warfare* concept is to misinform or misguide your competitor (Abbasi, 2020; Rashid et al. 2021).

Italian military general “Giulio Douhet (2014) has said that *Victory smiles upon those anticipate the changes in the character of war*¹.” The concept of hybrid warfare is a serious and disease like threat for the state of Pakistan. In the emerging bilateral relation between the state of Pakistan and the Russian Federation it’s desperately required to have a perfect mechanism to counter this emerging challenge by implementing multiple means. Hybrid warfare is basically used various strategies involving conventional and non-conventional military tactics like cyber-attacks, drone strikes as mentioned in the above paragraph in detail. First term “*Hybrid warfare*” was introduced during a series of fight between Hezbollah-Israel wars in 2005-2006. On the internal base its little bit easy to implement or to regulate the concept of hybrid war but for outside aggressor its take couple of time to make it ready its strategy followed the course of this warfare Pakistan, and the Russian Federation should need to observe the latest wave of hybrid warfare sensibly as both the states are facing common regional and international threats at every forum. Talk about the Indian state so since the time of independence India has created multiple obstructions for Pakistan involving their military, civil propaganda’s, cyber-attacks mean by utilizing each and every opportunity to weaken Pakistan’s image to present the world that the state of Pakistan have no more stances expect to spread terrorism in the region. Which Pakistan have denied and most of all the victory in the “*Kulbhushan Jadhav*”² Indian spy which Pakistani agencies have arrested from the province of Baluchistan Pakistan? He accepts that the means which he was utilizing against Pakistan for the purpose of spying for Indian agencies was based on the concept of hybrid warfare which is an alarming call for Pakistan to notices and prepared them by adopting futuristic approaches. Then taking into account the Afghan crisis which includes 1.4 million unregistered and 1 million. Both Pakistan and the Russian Federation are taking seriously and for that multiple particle efforts have been made and still under process (Husain *et al.*, 2022).

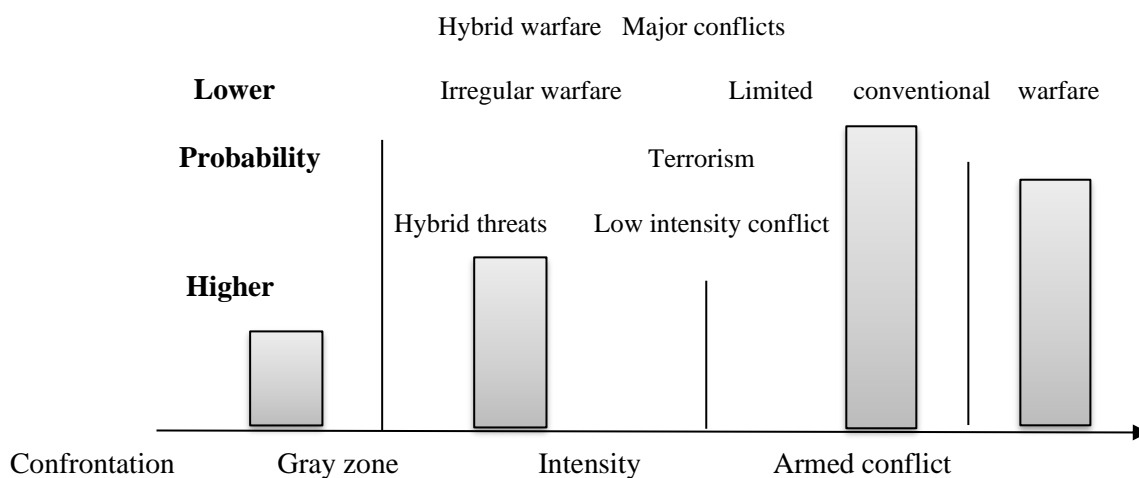
The state of Iran is also one of the factors which Pakistan and Russia considered as a significant value, ideologically Iran represents as a sectarian threat to the state of Pakistan as the port of Chabahar is going to lose attraction of regional and foreign investment especially after the launching of CPEC. Talking about the external factor especially United States of America, political history has been experienced the involvement and interests in the region of South Asia with the assistance of Pakistan in its specific time era. The state of Pakistan has accepted foreign pressure to secure its regional objectives, later on Pakistan refused to American “*Do more*” philosophy and made them cleared that now and onwards the state of Pakistan will make independent decisions without accepting foreign dictations as they deserve the right of self-determination. As a matter of fact, the above-mentioned factors are used on the base of hybrid warfare from various angles and that is why Pakistan, and the Russian federation is working to

secure their bilateral relation and to adopt certain energetic and fabulous pattern of diplomacy to contain the threat of hybrid warfare (Ammar, 2021).

The book “Art of war” written by a Chinese military strategist and philosopher “Sun Tzu” about 1500 – 2000 years ago in which he said, “*To fight and conquer in all battles is not supreme excellence consists in breaking one’s resistance without fight.*” This statement reflects the concept of the phenomena of hybrid warfare that Pakistan and Russia are still facing certain regional and international challenges under the shadow of hybrid warfare as this is an alarming call for both the states to put themselves alert to contain this threat by also take into account the status of emerging bilateral relation. According to “*Frank Hoffman*” the concept of hybrid warfare is listed in world’s famous warfare which is composed of state and non-states by using which opponent can get their results according to their desires by adopting various means which is based on modern code technological means. In short in the wake of this emerging bilateral interaction between Pakistan and the Russian federation both the administrations are taking this threat of hybrid warfare seriously to get prepare themselves to get futuristic goals. For that author further says that Pakistan needs to adopt ways and multiple patterns to use the concept of hybrid warfare without the disturbance of regional and foreign political affairs (Ammar, 2021).

The concept of hybrid warfare and the tactics and strategies to counter this threat in three main dimensions, firstly accept the reality what in a real sense is occurring in this contemporary world, second to have close interactions about various techniques that have been used in this conglomerate warfare and lastly how to react sensibly to capture gain your national motives. Same concept is also circulating in the region of South Asia which is important from security point of View. Here the Russian role will be crucial to contain this threat with the assistance of Pakistan. As Russia is having bilateral ties with many of the South Asian states. Now Since 2013 Russia and Pakistan became closer towards each other to promote their futuristic missions. Both States are busy at making their recent bilateral ties stronger for the promoting o their personal national interests. Where the state of Pakistan is struggling economically, this is the real opportunity for Pakistan to maintain its relations with the Russian Federation leaving behind all differences (Kuchins, 2014).

Figure: *Stages of Hybrid warfare*



Source: Prism (2019), 8(2), p. 87.

In the figure 2, Monaghan (2018), in his statement addressed the western states to adopt certain patterns to secure their interests but as a matter of fact his statements are too much beneficial for Pakistan and the Russian Federation to protect their bilateral interests on the same pattern after having deep intelligent analysis to counter the threat of hybrid warfare. As mentioned in the figure that it will be comfort for Pakistan and the Russian Federation to contain the negative wave of hybrid warfare because this type of war has various stages as it grew itself, it further converts itself into critical destructive phase which have the potential to disturb the bilateral nexus between Pakistan and Russia. In short Pakistan and Russia desperately required establishing various strategies and institutions to define their foreign policy for the containment of this concept of hybrid warfare. In this context, several strategies have been developed throughout the world for example, NATO launched “*Counter hybrid threat strategy*”.

Ashfaque Hasan Khan has described the concept of hybrid warfare with the economic warfare or economic instability. He argued that the basic aim of hybrid war is not to destroy or discard any state but infect just to disturb state’s economy which can create a huge impact over the entire society of that state. Additionally, he says the state of Pakistan have been a victim of hybrid war from the last many decades and that is why it’s significant for Pakistan to seek alternate options to get stabled economy. By presenting an example of Chinese greatest military strategist “*Sun Tzu*” in which he explains the concept of indirect warfare that it’s the simplest way of winning the war against your adversary without declaring a regular conventional war. Khan says that the state of Pakistan have already experienced tough time during the war on terror and now this is the time to regain its lost economic by making her relations strong with the Russian federation containing all sort of threats, need to avoid economic sabotage, converting dream into realities, and to charged their bilateral relationship by having deep analysis of hybrid warfare and finally try to brought solid steps in this context. Moreover, Khan said that by economic deficit through which the state of Pakistan has suffered especially during 1990-2014, now in the emerging new phase of bilateral relations Pakistan can put serious efforts to gain benefit from the new strategic partner Russia to sum up this crisis (Ammar, 2021).

5.7. Recent trends in Pak-Russian diplomatic policies furtherance: opportunities and augmentation of bilateral Liaison

In the modern times, the Russian Federation is making its way clear to introduced new trends in its foreign policy as it’s the requirement of time. As a matter of fact, today’s Russia is absolute different from the past. In past Soviet Union was having multiple nationalities but in today’s Russia 85 percent of its population is ethnic Russian loyal to its federation. And the way the state of Pakistan and Russia have showed their competency in promoting and regulating their bilateral interactions no doubt that in the coming future ahead both states have bright opportunities to take their relationship to achieve the mark of success. Russian federation has made its foreign policy in multiple dimensional directions by focusing various significant fields to enhance and uplift its economic and social sector to promote the living standards. Furthermore, both Pakistan and the Russian federation looking forward to maximizing their comprehensive bilateral relation by establishing trustworthy relations as they are trying to develop the concept of multilateralism at their relationship (Hussain, 2018).

Russian Ambassador to Pakistan Mr. Danila Ganich expressed his views regarding the Pak-Russian relations as he said that “*The world is transforming itself into unilateral to multiple*

lateral concept diplomacy and that is why Pakistan and Russia needs to facilitate their precious bilateral relation with the basic strategies of politics to cooperate with each other to support their relationship and to run with the entire foreign world. By delivering the gesture of peace and economic security and by utilizing the platform of SCO, Pakistan and the Russian federation can achieve multiple objectives as which is beneficial for their futuristic understandings. He further said that the upcoming project of CPEC will also provide a base for both the states to bring their relationship more closely and well in proper format. Lastly the state of Pakistan from geographical point of view represents gateway to multiple regions of the world and that is why Pakistan can get more benefit from its geo strategic position as Russia is also looking forward to securing its engagements with Pakistan. In short, the moves which Pakistan and Russia is taking this will secure their visionary objectives and dimensions (Salman, 2021).

According to Gul (2021), the *Voice of America Pakistan reports* said that core objective of these naval drill exercises has established collective effect to contain the sea level threats especially sea piracy and terrorism. Pakistan can get more benefit from the participant states through the exchange of modern war equipment as later on Pakistan can generate its own weaponry by keeping the latest weapons at the front and as a matter of fact this will also provide good chances for Pakistan to sell these weapons to regional states to gain economic stability. Thirdly by the collaboration, these states also coordinate to come up with solid strategies to counter the wave of pandemic COVID-19 virus as People's Republic of China donated first COVID-19 vaccine to Pakistan. The state of Pakistan is engaged in self enhancement of multiple sectors of life and thus this will shut down all the conspiracies theories against both the states. In short, this military collaboration will open new gates which will create positive impacts over the foreign policy of these concern member states.

6. Conclusion

Enormous challenges have been experienced by Pakistan and the Russia because of the geo-political dynamics which is causing impacts over their foreign policies. The fluctuating South Asian political paradigm required serious dexterous strategies to contain the elements like extremist organizations, involvement of adversary states etc. Beside these challenges, the bilateral relations between the two states and the new trilateral socio-economic bloc of (CPEC) Russia, Pakistan and China have achieved a milestone through the implementation of enormous diplomatic bilateral strategies. The present study indicates the connectivity of regions like South Asia, Central Asia and the Eurasian continent with Pakistan and the Russian Federation. Undoubtedly, transformation occurred in the geo-strategic scenario has highlighted the major geo-political and geo-economic competition in the foreign market, through which Pakistan and Russia has prepared them by adopting futuristic approaches. Furthermore, the study overviewed NATO's withdrawal from the Afghan soil and long-lasting impacts over the region of South Asia. By analyzing the responses of conducted questionnaire survey and interview, it is concluded that the participation and role of Pakistan and Russia in bringing peace to South-Asia through bilateral diplomacy in Afghanistan cannot be neglected. By observing the major Socio-economic and political dynamic events in the region, Russo-Pak relations can be improved under the present circumstances without damaging the regional affairs. The results also excavated the development sectors through which Pakistan and Russia can uphold their bilateral cooperation in an active phase. Furthermore, it is concluded that the hybrid warfare will pose a multi-dimensional influence over the socio-politico-economic cooperation, bilateral

collaboration, and peace initiatives of Russo-Pak relations. As compared to the past, Pakistan and Russia are formulating their strategy regarding the Kashmir crisis by putting their positive initiatives. Finally, the role of Russia is predicted to be as a mediator and counterpart in resolving the Kashmir issue.

6.1. Findings

- This research article is based on neo-realist and social constructivist theoretical underpinnings. The study, however, suggests that unlike the offensive and defensive bifurcated understanding, states like Pakistan and Russia are struggling for both the maximization of powers and security concomitantly.
- The study also finds that Pakistan, which was considered as a non-major state in the region is now calculating its geopolitical dynamics as a major state in regional context.
- The study further finds that like other major powers, India and Pakistan are also making geostrategic calculation for cashing hegemonic consent in their immediate and distant neighbourhood.
- The study further finds that unlike Cold War propensity, Pakistan is now giving more credence to regional powers, instead of faraway actors.
- The study also finds that in the current changing geopolitical scenario, states give more weightage to present trends, instead of old historical relations.
- The study finds that cooperation between & among states is used as tools for equipping oneself to compete in the regional and international race.
- Further it also concludes that South Asia's pacification by Pakistan and Russia through bilateral diplomacy in Afghanistan cannot be disregarded. In the current context, keeping an eye on significant socioeconomic and political dynamic events in the region can enhance relations between Russia and Pakistan without having an impact on regional affairs. The research also identified areas for improvement that would enable Pakistan and Russia to keep their bilateral cooperation moving forward.
- In addition, this research article reveals that the regional political and socioeconomic circumstances in both countries will benefit from this. But it will still take an hour to keep these helpful ties going and start closer cooperation that might completely change the status quo between the two nations.

6.2. Suggestions and recommendations

- Energy sector: Pak-Russia cooperation in energy/ power sector can be boosted through Russian initiatives of resuscitating Pakistan's steel/ power projects; investing in CPEC, CASA-1000 and TAPI gas pipeline projects and exporting electricity through CARs to adjoining region.
- Access to Indian Ocean through Gawadar Port: In post draw down scenario Russia in association with both Pakistan and China should remain fused with CPEC projects in order to gain access to the warm waters through and Gawadar port.
- Agriculture and Textile sectors: Russia/ CARs remain a huge market for Pakistan's Agricultural and Textile products.
- Pakistan must institutionalize sound counter terrorism and intelligence sharing mechanism with Russia. Pakistan should also extend its earnest support to Russia in eliminating threats emanating from Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), remaining one of her core concerns.

- Pak-Iran bilateral trade must enhance through joint economic commission/ initiatives. Both neighbouring countries should pursue early completion of Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project. Pakistan should encourage Iran of becoming CPEC's stakeholder for reaching out China, India and beyond through its regional infrastructure. Furthermore, in post US Afghan draw down scenario Iran's Chabahar Port can complement Gawadar port thus converting competition into cooperation in contrast to Indian anti Pakistan/ regional agenda.
- Indo-Pak regulated trade will help normalize the relations while accruing economic benefits and avoiding Indian industrial dominance. In post draw down scenario Pakistan is recommended to raise Indian economic stakes inside Pakistan through early completion of Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India Gas Pipeline (TAPI) project; including India in Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project; promoting bilateral trade/ commerce by granting non-discriminatory market access/ removing tariff barriers and above all benefiting from CPEC land/ sea routes. However, Indo-Pak economic ventures must remain proportional to the outcome of comprehensive dialogue process.

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Notes:

¹ General *Giulio Douhet* was an Italian general and air power theorist. He was a key proponent of strategic bombing in aerial warfare. He was a contemporary of the 1920s air warfare advocates Walther Wever, Billy Mitchell, and Hugh Trenchard.

² *Kulbhushan Sudhir Jadhav* is an Indian national. It is alleged by the Pakistani government that he was arrested in the Pakistani province of Baluchistan on charges of terrorism and spying for India's intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing.