

## US-INDIA STRATEGIC ALLIANCE AND CPEC ‘THE GAME CHANGER’: PROSPECTS FOR PAKISTAN AND RUSSIAN COOPERATION

Adam Saud\* & Kinza Arif<sup>‡</sup>

### Abstract

*South Asia equally occupies the title of the most sensitive region of the world. Regional politics is heavily governed under the principle of Balance of Power, where a continuous struggle to attain power persists amidst all the actors to ensure their state survival. A pragmatic shift in the regional politics has led to emergence of new alliances as Pak-Russian interests have coincided. Though Russia enjoys a strategic relationship with India, the Indo-U.S. nexus paves the way for Russia to extend its relations with Pakistan. Post 9/11 Russia has realized the strategic importance of Pakistan as a pivotal player towards achieving regional peace and security. The dwindling U.S. relations with Pakistan dictates latter's policies to adopt enhanced bilateral relations with Russia and China. The extension of Pak-Russian relations will provide the latter to maintain its control over the Central Asian states, and provides Moscow with the wild card to counter Indian strategic tilt towards the U.S. CPEC initiative serves as a pivotal forum to further strengthen Pak-Russian relations and aid in development of mutual trust and cooperation. Creating a win-win situation for both actors to pursue and extend their strategic interests.*

*This paper provides a qualitative analysis of the regional implications which are subtly governing the newly established relations while attempting to address the regional attributes which influence the newly established relations between Pakistan and Russia. Primarily, it focuses upon the economic and strategic interests of both states and how they align together*

---

\* Associate Professor, Bahria University, Islamabad, Pakistan. Email: [adam@bui.edu.pk](mailto:adam@bui.edu.pk)

<sup>‡</sup> Independent Researcher based in Islamabad.

*according to the current regional scenarios. Apart from that, it also analyzes the interests of the US which exercise major influence over the regional states such as India and Afghanistan. Three questions are addressed to establish an understanding behind this cooperation which deems to be fruitful for both the states. These include how the existing Indo-US nexus contributes towards this strategic shift of partnership between Pakistan and Russia? How Indo-Afghan nexus is against Pakistani interest? And prospects for Russian connectivity with South and West Asia through China Pakistan Economic Corridor.*

### **Key Words**

US-India, Strategic Alliance, Pakistan-Russia, Cooperation, CPEC

### **Introduction**

One cannot dismiss the fact that state relations are widely governed under national interests, which change constantly in accordance to the changing domestic, regional and global scenarios/conditions. States formulated foreign policies are gears to attain vast objectives, whether political or economic. It allows states to establish strong relations with other players in the international arena. With a paradigm shift in regional politics, where new alliances are emerging, Pak-Russian interests have coincided. Thus, both are getting closer to each other.

Russia holds an important position in the global politics. Its economic (weak economy but strong political influences given the fact that Russia is one of the 5 UNSC member) and military strength is key to enjoy this position. Geo-strategically, Russia holds a critical position and is enriched with natural resources. Russia has actively used its energy resources as means to achieve political and economic objectives and has used coercive ways to develop patterns of dependency within the European Union.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, these patterns of dependency are also clearly distinguishable in regards to Moscow policies towards Central Asian states.

The strained relations of the past cannot be ignored while observing the newly established relations between the two states. During its inception, Pakistan faced multiple economic and security crisis and these crises essentially directed our strategic interests to align with the western bloc to counter Soviet aggression. As our prior foreign policies directed us to be on conflicting ends, India actively utilized this period to establish stronger ties with USSR including Central Asian countries which were part of the USSR (while pursuing a non-alignment policy). Pakistan on the other hand, was

---

<sup>1</sup> John Lough, “*Russia’s Energy Diplomacy*,” (Chatham House: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, May 2011), [https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/19352\\_0511bp\\_lough.pdf](https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/19352_0511bp_lough.pdf). (accessed on April 24, 2017)

focused on establishing stronger relation with the western bloc and joined SEATO and CENTO respectively.

The Soviet invasion in Afghanistan was detrimental for Pakistan in terms of developing image; a negative perception was created amidst the Central Asian states and severed our relations with Russia. From Russian perspective, Pakistan was aiding and abetting the enemy, by providing them sanctuaries and resources. Nevertheless, current regional scenario forces both Pakistan and Russia to overlook their past relations and opt towards enhancing its strategic alliance. As in the recent years, Russia has been actively maneuvering to increase its global status and has engaged itself in pursuing strategic ties with major powers of the world, playing an assertive and active role to deal with regional issues is at the helm of Moscow's foreign policy.<sup>2</sup>

Since decades, Russia and India have maintained strong relations, for India their bilateral relations with Russia remains to be an important mainstay of Indian foreign policy or its grand strategy.<sup>3</sup> The bilateral relationship which was developed under the Cold War period has allowed them to expand cooperation in areas of economy, military and diplomacy even in the present times. Trade volumes have increased between both states, and Indian companies have widely invested in Russian energy companies/sectors. During the BRICS Summit 2016, Russia and India struck important defense deals such as, a "\$5 billion deal for India's purchase of the S-400 Triumf surface-to-air missile system."<sup>4</sup> Both states also signed deals concerning to India's import and "manufacture of Kamov Ka 226T light utility helicopters, and will also be collaborating in the manufacture of four Admiral Grigorovich-class guided-missile stealth frigates."<sup>5</sup> Other agreements involve; a cooperation pact between Indian and Russian railways, development of education and training facilities, space cooperation between Russian Space cooperation and Indian Space Research Organization and MoU's focusing upon urban development, smart city projects, and development transport logistics system are also achieved.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Rizwana Khalid, "Resurgent Russia: Challenges and Prospects for South Asia," *ISSRA Papers*, 3:2 (2012): 86-107.

<sup>3</sup> Andrew J. Stravers and Peter Harris, "Indian Foreign Policy: The Cold War Lingers," *The Diplomat*, (March 24, 2014), <http://thediplomat.com/2014/03/indian-foreign-policy-the-cold-war-lingers/>. (accessed on May 2, 2017)

<sup>4</sup> Nabarun Roy, "Is India Losing Russia?" *National Interest*, (October 27, 2016), <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/india-losing-russia-18208?page=2>.

<sup>5</sup> Nabarun Roy, "India Losing."

<sup>6</sup> "India-Russia defense deals: Six things India got from old friend Russia", *Economic Times*, (October 17, 2016). <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and->

Additionally, “Russian aircraft building company, Irkut, plans to sell between 100 and 200 promising MS-21 aircraft to India by 2025–2030.”<sup>7</sup> Other promising deals include; “designing of multirole fighter and multirole cargo aircraft, licensed manufacturing of SU-30MKI aircraft and T-90S tanks, designing and manufacturing BrahMos cruise missiles, and modernizing MiG-29 aircraft and 877EKM submarines.”<sup>8</sup> Apart from that, the construction of International North-South Transport Corridor is also underway; “which is a land-and sea-based 7,200-km long network of ship, rail, and road route between India, Russia, Iran, Europe and Central Asia.”<sup>9</sup> The project aims at improving trade connectivity between Europe and Southeast Asia, acting as another hallmark of strengthened Indian-Russian relations.

India on the other hand, is also deeply interested in enhancing its relations with U.S. In the recent years, both states have expanded their cooperation in the fields of defense, energy, economy, research and technology. US is one of India’s largest trading and investment partner.<sup>10</sup> Both states are also committed and collaborating in bilateral and multilateral fora to address specific challenges such as; ensuring mutual energy security, combatting climate change and supporting the development of low carbon economies that will eventually generate opportunities and fuel job growth in both states.<sup>11</sup> Since 2008, “U.S.- India defense trade has increased from \$ 1 billion to over \$ 15 billion, which includes the Indian procurement of 13 Lockheed Martin C-130 Hercules aircraft, 10 C-17 Globe master and 12 P-8 Poseidon aircraft from Boeing, as well as 22 AH-64 Apache and 15 CH-47 Chinook helicopters.”<sup>12</sup> The biased U.S. stance towards India, to support the latter’s ambitions as a regional leader in South Asia disrupts the balance of power in the region. Though Russia have been traditional allies, Indian tilt towards the U.S. orbit is eyed critically by Russia along with Pakistan and

---

nation/india-russia-defence-deals-six-things-india-got-from-old-friend-russia/articleshow/54866551.cms.

<sup>7</sup> I.E. Denisov; O.A. Popadyuk, “100 Postulates on Russia-Indian Relations”, *Russian International Affairs Council*, Working Paper 29 (2016). <http://russiancouncil.ru/common/upload/WP-India-Russia-29-Eng.pdf>. (accessed on July 29, 2017)

<sup>8</sup> I. E. Denisov, “*Russia-India Relations*.”

<sup>9</sup> Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury, “International North South Transportation Corridor for better Indo-Russian connectivity inches Towards Reality”, *Economic Times*, (April 10, 2017). <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/international-north-south-transportation-corridor-for-better-indo-russian-connectivity-inches-towards-reality/articleshow/58099129.cms>.

<sup>10</sup> “U.S. Relations With India,” *US Department of State*, (Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs Fact Sheet, October 9, 2015), <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3454.htm>.

<sup>11</sup> “U.S. Relations.”

<sup>12</sup> “U.S. – India Defense Relations Fact Sheet,” *U.S. Embassy & Consulates in India*, (December 8, 2016). <https://in.usembassy.gov/u-s-india-defense-relations-fact-sheet-december-8-2016/>.

China. The 2016, Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) signed between U.S. and India allows both states to operate and access military bases.<sup>13</sup> U.S. ambitions to counter China's influence within the region and South China Sea through LEMOA further complicates the strategic balance between India and Pakistan.

The rivalry between nuclear armed India and Pakistan continuously makes the strategic stability of South Asia ambiguous. As deterrence has played a critical role in minimizing chances of a full fledged war amidst Pakistan and India, yet, if deterrence itself becomes weaker between both states it would have disastrous consequences.<sup>14</sup> The current geo-political and regional environment paves the way for Pakistan and Russia to advance their bilateral relations. Russia has shown immense interests in maintaining stability within the region. The dwindling "security situation in Afghanistan has raised apprehensions about the spillover effect due to the presence of non-state actors." Russian fear that the existing instabilities within South Asia will transcend towards its borders and affect its internal security. Pakistan has been suffering tremendously under the havocs of terrorism, thus, stability within Afghanistan holds critical importance for both Russia and Pakistan. A stable region ensures enhanced ties amidst regional states to promote effective and sustainable developments. As relations between U.S. and India reaches new horizons it further cultivates Russian interests within Pakistan. Additionally, Pakistan appears to be a lucrative market for Russian armaments in wake of dwindling Pak-U.S. relations.<sup>15</sup>

### **Indo-US nexus and Strategic Shift of Partnership between Pakistan and Russia**

The regional dynamics of South Asia heavily influence Pakistan's foreign policies especially vis-a-vis India. The prime factor which drives Pakistan's defense policies is profoundly affected by India's aggressive policies towards Pakistan. Indo-Pak antagonistic relations have fueled hostility towards each other. As both states possess nuclear weapons, a rough balance has deterred both to go for a full fledged war. Pakistan exercises "credible minimum deterrence" against India, and the state officials have maintained that, Pakistan does not have an intent nor can

---

<sup>13</sup>Anwar Iqbal, "US-India Defence Pact to Impact Pakistan, China," *Dawn*, (August 30, 2016). <https://www.dawn.com/news/1280873>.

<sup>14</sup>Walter C. Ladwig III, "A Cold Start for Hot Wars? The Indian Army's New Limited War Doctrine," *International Security*, 32:3 (Winter 2007/08), 158–190. [http://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/legacy/files/IS3203\\_pp158-190.pdf](http://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/legacy/files/IS3203_pp158-190.pdf). (accessed on 24 April, 2017)

<sup>15</sup>Rizwana Khalid, "Resurgent Russia." 100.

afford to pursue a conventional or nuclear arms race with India.<sup>16</sup> Pakistan believes in retaining a “minimum credible nuclear deterrence” as a keystone of its national security policy.<sup>17</sup> To maintain state sovereignty and to counter the persistent antagonistic Indian policies, Pakistan has opted towards enhancing its military capabilities. According to *Foreign Policy*, “India has been developing a top-secret nuclear city to produce thermo-nuclear weapons” to enhance its states nuclear power, however, this resultantly disrupts regional stability.<sup>18</sup> Additional reports have suggested that India has already succeeded in developing nuclear submarines and is in pursuit of developing six more advanced submarines under project P-75I to enhance Indian navy’s undersea warfare capabilities. According to reports, these developments are also a counter towards China’s swift expansion of submarine fleet.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, the progressive relations with U.S. has provided India with significant strategic depth and wavers the balance of power between Pakistan and India.

Under the Defense Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) 2012, “U.S. and India have launched seven joint working groups to explore collaborative projects and programs and signed two Science and Technology government-to-government project agreements – the Next Generation Protective Ensembles and Mobile Hybrid Power Sources – worth roughly \$2 million.”<sup>20</sup>

The following timeline indicates the other trademarks of intensified bilateral relations. The “Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region” was issued between President Obama and Prime Minister Modi in January 2015 – “essentially both parties affirmed their shared vision for promising prosperity and stability within the region.”<sup>21</sup> During June of the same year, Secretary Carter and Minister Parrikar signed the “Framework for the U.S.- India Defense Relationship”- the framework

---

<sup>16</sup> Waseem Qutab, “*Pakistan’s Nuclear Diplomacy and NSG Membership: Opportunities and Challenges*”, (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 21 July 2016). <https://www.iiss.org/en/events/events/archive/2016-a3c2/july-652c/pakistans-nuclear-diplomacy-and-nsg-membership---opportunities-and-challenges-adc1>.

<sup>17</sup> Kurshid Khan, “Deterrence Stability, Security Doctrines and Escalation Control in South Asia”, *IPRI Journal* XIII:2 (Summer 2013). 42-62.

<sup>18</sup> Adrian Levy, “India Is Building a Top-Secret Nuclear City to Produce Thernuclear Weapons”, *Foreign Policy*, (December 16, 2015). [http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/12/16/india\\_nuclear\\_city\\_top\\_secret\\_china\\_pakistan\\_barcode/](http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/12/16/india_nuclear_city_top_secret_china_pakistan_barcode/) (accessed on July 28, 2017)

<sup>19</sup> Rahul Singh, “Rs 64,000-cr project to build submarines in India creates buzz”, *Hindustan Times*, (March 29, 2016). <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india/rs-64-000-cr-project-to-build-submarines-in-india-creates-buzz/story-hNwPyJUshugN7x38Fv35QJ.html>.

<sup>20</sup> “U.S. – India Defense Relations Fact Sheet”, *US Embassy and Consulate*.

<sup>21</sup> “*Fact Sheet: U.S.-India Defense Relationship*”, <https://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/US-IND-Fact-Sheet.pdf>. (accessed on July 30, 2017.)

covers multitude of common interests between both actors such as; (a) enhanced cooperation's in military training, exchange of intelligences and education, (b) to conduct joint military exercises and to collaborate in various multinational operations, (c) to work towards enhancing respective capabilities to prevent any proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, (d) enhancing the defense capabilities of establishments in order to promote security and defeat roots of terrorism, (e) further investigate avenues for strengthened collaboration within missile defenses and also cooperate in enhancing maritime security.<sup>22</sup> In the following year of 2016, April marked as another significant and progressive step in the enhancement of their bilateral relations, as both actors launched a new bilateral "Maritime Security Dialogue"- which precisely addressed towards the Asia-Pacific maritime challenges, naval cooperation and other multilateral engagements.<sup>23</sup> In regards to cooperation in fields of defense and security, to enhance military cooperation via conducting joint military exercises; India participated (with a ship) in the Rim-of-the-Pacific (RIMPAC) exercises held in both 2014 and 2016 which were hosted by U.S. Pacific Command.<sup>24</sup> In relation to sales of armaments, in December 2016, both states also signed a deal worth approximately \$732 million- in reference to providing the Indian Army with 145 M777 Howitzer guns.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, U.S. in 2017 also finalized India's designation as a "Major Defense Partner", this development further marked as another critical achievement of its fruitful diplomatic ties.<sup>26</sup> The closer proximities between both actors and their respective accomplishments cannot go unheeded by Pakistan, therefore it fuel grounds for Pakistan to switch and find other alternatives and embark upon extending relations with other major powers to intensify its strategic foothold.

Observing the bilateral relations amidst India and Pakistan, it can be deduced that the former has time and again opted aggressive policies towards the latter; as multiple reports pinpoint or highlight's how India's military has explicitly developed its "Cold Start Doctrine" for usage in a potential warfare against Pakistan. The content of Doctrine itself encompasses or envisages various divisions or protocols through which its respective military could successfully accomplish offensive operations with

---

<sup>22</sup> "Framework for the U.S. – India Defense Relationship", <http://archive.defense.gov/pubs/2015-Defense-Framework.pdf>. (accessed on July 30, 2017.)

<sup>23</sup> "U.S. – India Defense Relations Fact Sheet", US Embassy and Consulate.

<sup>24</sup> "U.S. – India Defense Relations Fact Sheet", US Embassy and Consulate.

<sup>25</sup> "U.S. – India Defense Relations Fact Sheet", US Embassy and Consulate.

<sup>26</sup> "U.S. – India Defense Relations Fact Sheet", US Embassy and Consulate.

both speed of deployment and operational efficiency.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, if war erupts between both actors, the key target of the doctrine is to enable Indian military to conduct successful attacks that would ultimately constrain any nuclear or conventional retaliation from Pakistan.<sup>28</sup>

To sustain effective deterrence against India and to counter the Cold Start Doctrine, Pakistan military has conducted military exercises codenamed “Azm-e-Nau” between years of 2009 and 2013; the exercises were focused towards the formalization and operationalization of a conventional response towards the Cold Start Doctrine.<sup>29</sup> Ultimately, these advances has resulted in the implementation and development of “new concept of war fighting” (NCWF) by the Pakistan military; the goal is to successfully counter any aggressive attacks and additionally targeted towards attaining and improving the mobilization period of troops, along with enhancing the inter-services coordination between its Army and Air Force (specifically).<sup>30</sup> Addressing towards Pakistan’s strategic weapons program to counter India’s BMD capabilities (India’s Ballistic Missile Program), to increase her deterrence capabilities at shorter ranges- Pakistan has successfully developed its Air Launched Cruise Missile (ALCM) – Ra’ad and Hatf IX SRBM.<sup>31</sup> Pakistan also possesses other operational and tactical level short range systems that it can employ in case a conflict erupts against India which includes: the subsonic Babur Land Attack Cruise Missile (LACM)- that holds the range of 700 kilometers, other suited and potential counterforce employment missiles include various Short Range Ballistic Missiles (SRBMs) that consists of: Hatf-1A- which holds range of 100 kilometers , Abdali- which holds range of 180 kilometers and Ghaznavi-which holds range of 280 kilometers.<sup>32</sup> In regards to Pakistan’s arsenal of road-mobile ballistic missiles, which are likely to be reserved or assigned for counter value targeting includes; the solid-fueled Shaheen-I (holding 750-kilometer range), Shaheen-1A (holding 1,100-kilometer range), Shaheen-II (holding 2,000-kilometer range), Shaheen-III (holding 2,750-kilometer range), and lastly the liquid-fueled Ghauri ballistic missiles which holds 1,100-kilometer range respectively.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Walter C. Ladwig III, “A Cold Start.” 164-168.

<sup>28</sup> Walter C. Ladwig III, “A Cold Start.” 164-168.

<sup>29</sup> Meenakshi Sood, “Pakistan’s (Non-Nuclear) Plan to Counter ‘Cold Start’”, *The Diplomat*, (March 25, 2017). <http://thediplomat.com/2017/03/pakistans-non-nuclear-plan-to-counter-cold-start/>. (accessed on July 28, 2017)

<sup>30</sup> Meenakshi Sood, “Pakistan’s (Non-Nuclear) Plan.”

<sup>31</sup> Kinza Arif, “Pakistan Completes Nuclear Triad”, *Foreign Policy News*, (January 16, 2017). <http://foreignpolicynews.org/2017/01/16/pakistan-completes-nuclear-triad/>.

<sup>32</sup> Mansoor Ahmed, “Pakistan’s Tactical Nuclear Weapons and Their Impact on Stability”, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, (June 30 2016). <http://carnegieendowment.org/2016/06/30/pakistan-s-tactical-nuclear-weapons-and-their-impact-on-stability-pub-63911>. (accessed on July 28, 2017)

<sup>33</sup> Mansoor Ahmad, “Pakistan’s tactical Nuclear Weapons.”

On account of the creation of this Doctrine, Pakistan has blamed India for intentionally creating perilous environment in South Asia, by the continuous engagement in a military buildup which threatens Pakistan's security.<sup>34</sup> Enforcing Pakistan to expand its own military capacities, and also prospect scenarios where Pakistan will adopt "offensive defense" against India in a manner which will lead towards a nuclear war.<sup>35</sup>

### **How the Indo-US Nuclear Deal and NSG Waiver Misbalances the Strategic Stability of South Asia?**

After the 9/11 incident, the West primarily adopted a biased approach towards India. Then again, this biased approach became clearly evident under the Indo-US Nuclear Deal and the NSG waiver granted to India.<sup>36</sup> Multiple analysts have pointed out how both actions are in clear violation of the guidelines of Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT).<sup>37</sup> Under the Indo-US Nuclear Deal both entities have signed 123 agreements which allows India to enhance its conventional military capabilities, thus, disrupting the regional balance of power. In depth analysis of Indo-US Nuclear Deal showcases how India is empowered under US assistance; primarily, US has removed various high-technology sanctions imposed upon India since 1974. Essentially, this very element allows India to exercise its full potentials to strengthen its nuclear program.

Secondly, it has enhanced economic relations between both entities. As this deal displays, how it aids US to become India's largest trading partner. Which would also enable India to transform its economic power to attain other national interests. Subsequently, enhanced commercial dealings would assist in formulating people to people contacts. Thirdly, this very deal enables them to form a strengthened alliance to counter "terrorism". A clause within this deal allows US forces to use Indian military bases in wake of an "international crisis". To further fulfill the objectives, both states have expanded critical intelligence sharing. Lastly, it depicts how US has become a prime provider of arms supply to India, e.g. US support towards India for development of next generation aircraft carrier.<sup>38</sup> These ties are further

---

<sup>34</sup> Walter C. Ladwig III, "A Cold Start." 169.

<sup>35</sup> Walter C. Ladwig III, "A Cold Start." 172.

<sup>36</sup> Mateen Haider, "Indo-US nuclear deal will negatively impact South Asia: Sartaj Aziz", *Dawn*, (28 January, 2015). <http://www.dawn.com/news/1159804>.

<sup>37</sup> Kinza Arif, "Pakistan Completes Nuclear Triad."

<sup>38</sup> C. Raja Mohan, "10 years of Indo-US civil nuclear deal: Transformation of the bilateral relationship is the real big deal", *The Indian Express*, (July 20, 2015). <http://indianexpress.com/article/explained/10-yrs-of-indo-us-civil-nuclear-deal-transformation-of-the-bilateral-relationship-is-the-real-big-deal/>.

enhanced as it showcases how both parties have showed keen interests in pursuing full civil nuclear cooperation, and via this deal it has only enabled them to further enhance India's nuclear program. These steps however, are detrimental towards nuclear deterrence within South Asia.

Additionally, the NSG waiver further tilted the strategic balance of the South Asia, as this waiver substantively favors India's position against Pakistan. Adding fuel to the everlasting rivalry amidst both entities for big power resources and geo-strategic advantages. Though Russia along with France approved India's position to attain the waiver, in hopes of garnering large share of the estimated \$100 billion in nuclear fuel and technology purchases India would plan to make. However, viewing the enhanced bilateral cooperation between India and US, Russia is anxious to avert India from being pulled into the US orbit.<sup>39</sup> China on the other hand, expressed concerns over this special status provision towards India within the nuclear regulatory regime. This opposition was viewed critically by India, as their officials openly voiced disappointment towards China. Relations between China and India have remained strained since 1962, and not long after China became a valuable strategic ally of Pakistan. However, both states have pursued strong economic relations in the recent years.<sup>40</sup>

Though Pakistan desired towards reaching a similar agreement with US, nevertheless, US did not pay heed to Islamabad's desire. A civilian nuclear deal would have aided Pakistan to overcome energy crisis it has been facing in the recent years and also would have assisted in establishing a stronger economic hold in the global market. With the rise of terrorism and the wars against it, Pakistan has suffered tremendously. Despite aiding the international community to eradicate threads of terrorism, US has widely adopted a biased approach towards India. As discussed previously, such inclinations towards India disrupts the regional stability.

Under this dilemma, if Pakistan opts towards establishing closer ties with Russia, the energy crisis it has been facing in the recent years can be addressed. As Russia enjoy key energy reserves, investments by Russian companies can aid Pakistan to establish its effective economic hold.<sup>41</sup> Positive examples of such cooperation can be seen under Russian investments towards the expansion of Guddu and Muzaffargarh power plants and the development of Thar Coal Project etc. In order to maintain the strategic balance in the region, Pak-Russian interests have aligned positively.

---

<sup>39</sup> Kranti Kumara and Deepal Jayasekera, "Nuclear Supplier Group gives India unique "waiver," but only after row between Delhi and Beijing", *World Socialist Web Site*, (17 September 2008). <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2008/09/nucl-s17.html>.

<sup>40</sup> Kranti Kumara and Deepal Jayasekera, "Nuclear Supplier Group."

<sup>41</sup> Sabah Aslam, "Pakistan-Russia joint military exercise: New doors of opportunities", *Foreign Policy News*, (September 26, 2016). <http://foreignpolicynews.org/2016/09/26/pakistan-russia-joint-military-exercise-new-doors-opportunities/>.

Pakistan resultantly, under these circumstances, becomes a lucrative market for Russian armaments and allows Russia to maintain its presence within the region.

Along with the Middle East, South Asia remains to be one of the most sensitive regions of the world. Pakistan and India are actively engaged in expanding its nuclear arsenal and becoming diversified at an aggressive pace. Indian military doctrine is confrontational towards Pakistan's internal securities; the Cold Start doctrine is an active scheme to seize Pakistan's territories before stepping into a nuclear war.<sup>42</sup> Though, India maintains the claim that such developments are only ensued to safeguard its respective securities against China, blatantly it cannot be denied, that its respective mobile convention forces are steered towards Pakistan, as due to its geographical positioning/limitations they cannot be implemented or used against China. Therefore, the regional balances have begun to shift under the introduction of the Cold Start Doctrine, as the deterrence within South Asia has generally become more complicated and directing towards an unending arms race.

Though the Indo-US Nuclear Deal has not been implemented on its full potential, yet it has enabled India to enhance its civilian nuclear program with construction of 6 reactors by 2017. The NSG waiver granted India the strategic depth it needed. To offset any future coercion by India, it is imperative for Pakistan to take concrete steps to enhance its defensive capabilities. These developments have resultantly created the loophole for Pakistan to further strengthen its nuclear hold which was clearly evident after the successful tests of submarine launched cruise missile "Babur III", which enabled Pakistan to possess the nuclear triad capabilities.<sup>43</sup>

## **Indo-Afghan Nexus against Pakistani Interests**

### **The Pak-Afghan Conundrum**

Like India, our relations with Afghanistan has remained strained since the inception of Pakistan. Afghanistan has widely claimed that certain

---

<sup>42</sup> Michael Krepon and Julia Thompson, "Deterrence Stability and Escalation Control in South Asia", *The Stimson Center*, 2013. [https://www.stimson.org/sites/default/files/file-attachments/Deterrence\\_Stability\\_Dec\\_2013\\_web\\_1.pdf](https://www.stimson.org/sites/default/files/file-attachments/Deterrence_Stability_Dec_2013_web_1.pdf). (accessed on April 25, 2017). See also, Sutirtho Patranobis, "Pakistan Military Strong Enough to Defend Itself Against India: Chinese expert", *Hindustan Times*, February 7, 2017. <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/pakistan-military-strong-enough-to-defend-itself-against-india-despite-cold-start-chinese-expert/story-gctp6gAQDeOIBPGgiaKRRM.html>.

<sup>43</sup> Khurshid Khan, "Deterrence Stability." 59.

territories of Kyber Pakhtunkhwa should be under the legitimate rule of Afghanistan. This issue between both states can be marked as the first element of their strained relationship. Thus far, Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan have also taken U-turns in accordance to the existing dilemmas i.e. Soviet Afghan War and Post 9/11 scenario. The Soviet Afghan War provided Islamabad with the landscape to enhance bilateral relations with the US, as interests of both coincided to counter Soviet aggression. However, 9/11 forced the international environment to take a 180-degree shift, and the need of time enforced Pakistan to change their policies towards Afghanistan. On the other hand, this shift in policy allowed Pakistan to improve its relations with Central Asian States and Russia.

To enhance its position within the region, New Delhi has actively pursued to have stronger bilateral relations with Afghanistan. In the recent years, it has invested \$300 million in Afghanistan for the development of Salma Dam. This project would enable Afghanistan to boost agribusinesses; as the dam would generate up to 42 megawatts electricity to assist the agrarian sector.<sup>44</sup> India in addition, has also provided Afghanistan with high-altitude equipment worth \$8 million; they are also providing Afghanistan with shared personnel such as, high-ranking military advisers and helicopter technicians from its intelligence and counter-espionage organization- the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW).<sup>45</sup> Their relations since 2015 have further intensified, while India has also taken several initiatives to enhance Afghanistan's security capabilities. India has also embarked upon the establishment of Afghanistan's new parliament complex in Kabul, while investing approximately \$90 million.<sup>46</sup> Another important side note is Afghanistan's accession in the World Trade Organization in 2015, which resultantly has boosted its economic capacities along with aiding its internal dynamics, as reports indicate how its exports have increased since 2013, from \$150 to \$570 million respectively.<sup>47</sup>

Along with Afghanistan, India has also moved forward to maintain smooth relations with Iran. To balance the development of Gwadar port and CPEC, Chabahar Port transit and trade agreement has been initiated. For many analysts this initiative acts as counter towards Gwadar Port. As mentioned previously, India has moved forward carefully to strengthen its

---

<sup>44</sup> M. Ashraf Haideri, "Since 9/11 Afghanistan Makes Progress amid Violence", *The Diplomat*, (September 12, 2016). <http://thediplomat.com/2016/09/since-911-afghanistan-makes-progress-amid-violence/>.(accessed on May 3, 2017)

<sup>45</sup> Sumit Ganguly, "Sources of Tension in Afghanistan and Pakistan: A Regional Perspective India's Role in Afghanistan", *CIDOB Policy Research Project*, (January 2012). See also, Shashank Joshi, "India's Af-Pak Strategy," *RUSI Journal*, 155:1 (February/ March 2010). 20-29. <https://shashankjoshi.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/journal-201002-joshi.pdf>.(accessed on May 3, 2017)

<sup>46</sup> Sumit Ganguly, "Sources of tension."

<sup>47</sup> M. Ashraf Haideri, "Since 9/11."

regional position by maintaining fast/progressive ties with Iran, Afghanistan and the Central Asian states. On the other hand, US strategies towards the region only aids India to bolster their presence within the region. US attempts to counter China's rise as a global power actively involves using India as a strategic tool.<sup>48</sup> Despite the terrorist activities in the region and increasing the security concerns regional projects like Turkmenistan-Uzbekistan-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (TUTAP-500), TAPI, CASA-1000 and Gwadar Port are underway.<sup>49</sup> These projects would surely contribute towards stability and development of the region.

### **Russian Interests in Afghanistan: Pakistan a Favorable Ally?**

To attain greater regional stability, Pakistan and Russia have showed keen interests in developing stronger ties. The stability of Afghanistan appears to be the core agenda of both the states, as both understand the fact that enhanced ties amidst the regional states need to persist to generate sustainable developments, peace, and stability within the region.<sup>50</sup> The stability of Afghanistan is a crucial element in Pak-Russia relations as it would enhance the chances of greater economic cooperation and trade between Pakistan and Russia through Central Asian States.<sup>51</sup> However, the hostilities which persist amidst the triad (India, Afghanistan and Pakistan) complicates the environment. Additionally, the heightened security concerns within Afghanistan has further raised apprehensions about a domino effect due to presence of Non-State Actors. The unstable situation in Afghanistan also indirectly influences the security environment within Central Asian states. Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and Islamic State of Khurasan (ISK) are considered to be the most lethal militant organizations currently based in northern Afghanistan which is a source of distress for Russia.<sup>52</sup>

Under such circumstances, Pakistan appears to be a more favorable and beneficial partner for Russia to counter terrorist activities in Afghanistan and Central Asia. Essentially, encouraging a high level of cooperation amidst their respective militaries. In Defense Expo IDEAS 2014 in Karachi, the Russian Defense Minister recognized Pakistani defense production

---

<sup>48</sup> M. Ashraf Haideri, "Since 9/11."

<sup>49</sup> M. Ashraf Haideri, "Since 9/11."

<sup>50</sup> "Russia supports China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project: Envoy", *Dawn*, (December 17, 2011). <http://www.dawn.com/news/1302890>.

<sup>51</sup> Khurram Abbas, "Russia's Revival: Opportunities and Limitations for Pakistan", *IPRI*, (February 4, 2016). <http://www.ipripak.org/russias-revival-opportunities-and-limitations-for-pakistan/>.

<sup>52</sup> Khurram Abbas, "Russian Revival,"

capabilities and also appreciated the skills and expertise of Pakistan's military in combatting war against terrorism.<sup>53</sup> In response to these emerging threats, both states have initiated steps to display a united front, and engaged in joint military drills to show steady progress in their developing relations. Though, India and Russia exercises progressive ties with each another, Russia has disregarded India's opposition towards joint military exercises after the Uri Attacks.<sup>54</sup> Additionally, Russian Ambassador to Pakistan Alexy Y. Dedov also stated that Russia is keen to assist Pakistan in fighting terrorism by suppling military equipment.<sup>55</sup> The 2017 military drills would also mark a significant change in relations between both states, as the drills aim to improve combat readiness against terrorism and bolster mountain training.<sup>56</sup>

### **Regional Integration via China Pakistan Economic Corridor and Opportunities for Russia**

Pakistan and China have shared positive history, which ultimately acts as a fundamental agent towards their enhanced bilateral cooperation. Both have interests regarding to regional security and stability, and consequently, China has supported Pakistan in matters related to defense and security.<sup>57</sup> The \$62 billion bilateral arrangement of CPEC initiative under the umbrella of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), allows Pakistan and China to expand their scopes or agendas in regards to regional connectivity, economic prosperity and economic security. Therefore, CPEC initiative firstly provides with ample opportunities for involved actors to conduct smoother economic relations via safe economic transit routes, secondly aides in extending their respective regional affiliations, and lastly stimulates or fuels region to region ties as well. The initiative can also be viewed as a critical asset for furthering economic ties and plays a vital card for further footing the Chinese strategic influences within the region, which can also transcend beyond other regions as well.<sup>58</sup> Additionally, it would further enhance Pakistan's strategic position economically, diplomatically and militarily.<sup>59</sup>

---

<sup>53</sup> Khurram Abbas, "Russian Revival."

<sup>54</sup> Kamran Yousaf, "Pakistan, Russia, China seek to crack Afghan conundrum", *Express Tribune*, (November 21, 2016). <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1237886/pakistan-russia-china-seek-crack-afghan-conundrum/>.

<sup>55</sup> APP, "Russia Supports China Pakistan Economic Corridor Project: Envoy", *Dawn*, (December 17, 2016). <http://www.dawn.com/news/1302890>.

<sup>56</sup> Polina Tikhonova, "Pakistan and Russia Boosting Military Ties with 2017 Drills", *ValueWalk*, (December 3, 2016). <http://www.valuwalk.com/2016/12/pakistan-russia-army-drills/>.

<sup>57</sup> Kinza Arif, "CPEC: Interdependence means Integration."

<sup>58</sup> Kinza Arif, "CPEC: Interdependence means Integration."

<sup>59</sup> Polina Tikhonova, "CPEC: China, Pakistan and Russia Bringing Multipolar World Order", *ValueWalk*, (April 27, 2017). <http://www.valuwalk.com/2017/04/cpec-china-pakistan-russia-multipolar-world-order/>.

Many European and Central Asian States have shown desire towards joining the initiative. As it would allow latter to find new markets for their energy reserves, and providing them alternative route to gain access to Indian Ocean. Similarly, for European States, this project opens doors towards newer and greater opportunities and enables them to enhance their influence in Central Asia as they remove themselves from Russian energy dependencies.

For Russia, CPEC initiative provides the ideal opportunity to penetrate into the markets of South Asia. Under the recent EU sanctions imposed upon Russia, it is keen to find alternative markets for its energy reserves and expand across Europe. Russia enjoys the title of being the world's largest producer of crude oil and the second-largest producer of dry natural gas.<sup>60</sup> Pakistan has openly welcomed Russia's investments in the energy sectors. Russian companies such as Rosneft and Gazprom can assist Pakistan in the further development of oil and gas programs.<sup>61</sup> Additionally, it would enhance the economic benefits and developmental avenues for Pakistan. Russia's policy shift aims at establishing newer markets and gaining access to the warm waters of the region. Plus, it would also allow Moscow to re-establish ties with Beijing while retaining their control over the Central Asian states. Pakistan has offered Russia the use of Gwadar port providing them with the access to the regions warm waters and connectivity.<sup>62</sup>

In February 2019, Pakistan and Russia signed an agreement under which 1500 KMs offshore pipeline will be constructed from Gazprom's resources in the Middle East to Pakistan. This project will cost \$10 billion for which initial study will be done by Gazprom on its own expenses. An expected 500 million to 1 billion cubic feet of natural gas per day will be provided to Pakistan.<sup>63</sup> Russia also intends to invest into the TAPI pipeline project. According to Inter State Gas Systems, a state owned Pakistani company, it is "executing the pipeline project along with Russia's energy giant Gazprom."<sup>64</sup> President Putin, in an online statement, said "As far as we can, we will contribute to this (Afghan Peace) process, including by developing economic cooperation with Afghanistan, by taking part in

---

<sup>60</sup> Khurram Abbas, "Russian Revival."

<sup>61</sup> Khurram Abbas, "Russian Revival."

<sup>62</sup> Uroosa Khan, "Re-shift in Russian policy." 4.

<sup>63</sup> Israr Khan, Pakistan Signs \$10 billion Gas Pipeline Agreement with Russia," *The News*, (February 7, 2019). URL: <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/428722-pakistan-signs-10-bn-gas-pipeline-agreement-with-russia>

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

various international projects, such as, for example, the TAPI.<sup>65</sup> Russia has signed an agreement to construct a North-South Gas pipeline from Karachi to Lahore. Similarly, Moscow has showed its interest to construct the Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline as well.

Russia is a key player in the changing regional as well as global politics. Since Moscow is resurging, it needs regional as well as global allies. It wants to enhance its international trade through exploring new trade routes and markets. Pakistan being one of the largest markets in the world, provides Russia with ample opportunity to do trade with Pakistan and to international markets, especially the Middle East and Africa through Pakistan. One good option for Russia is to do trade through Iran, but international politics of Iran limits Moscow's intentions there. Furthermore, Russia does not want to prefer any single country in the region, which will hurt its regional interest. Therefore, Moscow favors that Gwadar and Chahbahar should complement each other.

Despite having competition on the Eurasian routes, Russia supports BRI project as it will help Russia to broaden its integration with broader Eurasian markets. It also backs CPEC. Russian investment in Pakistan is increasing steadily. Russian telecom company, VimpleCom has purchases Mobilink and is interested in Bank Alfalah as well.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, one of CPEC's auxiliary corridors is recently initiated Russian-Pakistan Economic Corridor.<sup>67</sup> Although, Russia alongwith India and Iran initiated North South International Corridor in 2002 to which many other states have joined, the project is still not fully operational. Besides other problems, conflicting interest of the signatory states and initiation of East-West Corridor, are the major hurdles for the implementation of North-South Corridor project.<sup>68</sup> Similarly, Indian tilt towards the US has also cooled down enthusiasm towards the project.

Nevertheless, recent months have seen positive development so far this project is concerned. Agreement to resolve the Caspian Sea territory last year, alongwith Moscow's desire to link North-South and East-West corridors with each other, have given high hopes for regional integration. Moscow supports Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC)

---

<sup>65</sup> Huseyn Hassanov, "Russia Ready to Take Part in TAPI Pipeline Project: Putin," *Trend News*, (December 12, 2018). URL: <https://en.trend.az/casia/turkmenistan/2996682.html>

<sup>66</sup> Saddam Hussain, "A Possibility of Russia Pakistan Economic Corridor." *CPEC Info*, <http://www.cpecinfo.com/news/the-possibility-of-a-russia-pakistan-economic-corridor/NTIxMA==>.

<sup>67</sup> Jan Achakzai, "Pakistan Leverages CPEC to launch Two Auxiliary Corridors: SPEC and RPEC," (January 11, 2019). URL: <https://www.globalvillagespace.com/pakistan-leverages-cpec-to-launch-2-auxiliary-corridors-spec-rpec/>

<sup>68</sup> Paul Goble, "Can the Kremlin Finally Realise the North-South Transit Corridor?" *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 16, issue. 26, (February 2019). URL: <https://jamestown.org/program/can-the-kremlin-finally-realize-the-north-south-transit-corridor/>

and Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA) projects. It knows that in order to connect itself with Pakistani markets, stability in Afghanistan is must. CPEC is crucial to Russian interests in the region as it will improve the infrastructure and will integrate Afghanistan into the broader region. CPEC will provide Russia with opportunity to expand its international trade through Gwadar and Karachi port.

Additionally, the current international and regional scenario's paves the way for China and Iran to also further strengthen their bilateral engagements; as China aims at advancing its bilateral engagements with Iran after signing of Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.<sup>69</sup> Iranian officials also travelled to China a week before the agreement between P5+1 was reached, to discuss energy sales to China and investment in the energy sector in Iran.<sup>70</sup> Reports have also suggested China's interests in assisting Iran's economic development via investing in oil and gas projects.<sup>71</sup> The talks about Iran joining the CPEC initiative and route development between Chabahar Port and Gwadar Port are also been discussed.<sup>72</sup> Which will eventually aid in further enhancement of regional cooperation and development.

### **Prospects for Future Cooperation between Pakistan and Russia**

A widely discussed notion in international arena stresses upon the fact that there are no permanent friend and foes in state relations, only interests prevail. Which seems to clearly define the emerging relations between Pakistan and Russia. Considering the geographical proximities and the mutual interests within the region, a true diplomatic relations would always be preferred.<sup>73</sup>

---

<sup>69</sup> John Garver, "China and Iran: An Emerging Partnership Post-Sanctions", Middle East Institute, (February 2016), <http://www.mei.edu/content/china-and-iran-emerging-partnership-post-sanctions>. (accessed on July 28, 2017)

<sup>70</sup> Lindsay Hughes, "The Energy and Strategy of China – Iran Relations", *Future Directions International*, (November 17, 2015), accessed on July 28, 2017, [http://futuredirections.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/The\\_Energy\\_and\\_Strategy\\_of\\_China\\_Iran\\_Relations.pdf](http://futuredirections.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/The_Energy_and_Strategy_of_China_Iran_Relations.pdf).

<sup>71</sup> Pavel K. Baev, "The China factor in Russian support for the Iran deal", *Brookings*, (July 21, 2015). <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2015/07/21/the-china-factor-in-russian-support-for-the-iran-deal/>. (accessed on 28 July, 2017)

<sup>72</sup> Saleem Shahid, "Rail link planned between Gwadar and Iranian port", *Dawn*, (January 12, 2016). <https://www.dawn.com/news/1232397>. See also, "China to welcome Iran's inclusion in CPEC, says ambassador", *The News*, (October 17, 2016). <https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/157858-China-to-welcome-Irans-inclusion-in-CPEC-says-ambassador>.

<sup>73</sup> Sabah Aslam, "Pakistan-Russia joint military exercise."

The convergence of threat perceptions, strategic interests and shared approach towards regional and global developments hinges the emerging relations between Pakistan and Russia. India's ambitions to achieve regional hegemony with US assistance might jeopardize New Delhi's ties with Moscow, nevertheless, it would further open avenues for Pakistan and Russia to pursue stronger ties. To actively counter the contemporary issues, cooperation in fields of defense, economy and science and technology would be essential to develop trust between both actors.<sup>74</sup> Russia can act as a vital source of military and nuclear technology for Pakistan and aid in expansion security capabilities. The Afghan instability, terrorism, drug issues, nuclear safety and other issues call for close cooperation and ensure that a long term engagement amidst both States will prevail.<sup>75</sup> Russia has also suggested to provide Pakistan with counter-terrorism equipment in minimizing terrorism and radicalism. Both entities intend to initiate mechanisms for effective intelligence sharing and joint operations.<sup>76</sup> Positively, Anti-terror cooperation amid both states can also be strengthened at multilateral forums like the SCO, which China is also a member.<sup>77</sup>

Additionally, SCO forum will also provide opportunities for Pakistan and other member states to cooperate in a number of high-tech sectors, "such as biotechnology, aviation and space, climate change adaptation, disaster management, drug trafficking and disease mitigation."<sup>78</sup> With the growing Indo-US relations, Russia has developed a nagging skepticism about India's future role in Afghanistan and Central Asia. Consequently, Russia perceives Pakistan as a supportive hand in assuring regional peace.<sup>79</sup> Expanding bilateral cooperation on energy and infrastructure projects would be essential for both states economic and strategic interests. CPEC initiative provides with forums and prospects for "promotion of trade, investment and joint ventures in the fields of energy, infrastructure development", agriculture sectors, and metal industry.<sup>80</sup> After joining SCO as full members, Pakistan and India participated in the joint military drills under SCO along with rest of the member states, unprecedented throughout India-Pakistan history since 1947. Russian efforts play a key role in this regard. According to Prof Sun Zhuangzhi, "It is a rare opportunity for Pakistan and India, which have long

---

<sup>74</sup> Vladimir Moskalenko and Petr Topychkanov, "Russian and Pakistan opportunities." 16.

<sup>75</sup> Vladimir Moskalenko and Petr Topychkanov, "Russian and Pakistan opportunities." 16.

<sup>76</sup> Khurram Abbas, "Russian Revival."

<sup>77</sup> Sarah Akram, "Pakistan Russia Relations: Future Trends", Institute of Strategic Studies, (March 24, 2016). <http://issi.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Final-Issue-brief-Sarah-Akram-dated-24-3-2016.pdf> (accessed on May 7, 2017)

<sup>78</sup> Khurram Abbas, "Russian Revival."

<sup>79</sup> Muhammad Hanif, "Pakistan-Russia Relations: Progress, Prospects and Constraints", *IPRI Journal* XIII:2 (2013). 63-86.

<sup>80</sup> Muhammad Hanif, "Pakistan-Russia Prospects." 76.

been involved in military conflict, to enhance military exchanges and trust. This could improve regional stability.”<sup>81</sup> Role of Moscow during the recent military standoff between Pakistan and India has been remarkable. It pursued both the states not to resort to military means to resolve their tensions.

Russia is eager to maintain peace within the region, to enhance their economic hold. The renewed sanctions upon Russia, also forces it to have a pro-active engagement with Pakistan. The Ukraine crisis alone, resultantly, has been an influential factor in urging Russia to explore new defense and energy markets.<sup>82</sup> In the previous years, both states have pursued to have constructive dialogues regarding Russian-Pakistani civil nuclear cooperation. Such a deal will be similar to the one Pakistan exercises with China and aid Pakistan to meet its rising energy demands.<sup>83</sup> Promotion of people-to-people contacts; pursue student exchange programs, enhancing linkages and exchanges between media persons, academics, parliamentarians, maintain open channels of communication between both state officials to develop trust and understanding, collaboration between entertainment channels and entrepreneurs would essentially assist in enhancing the bilateral cooperation.<sup>84</sup> To meet their respective interests, a stronger bilateral relationship between Islamabad and Moscow deems to be fruitful. The path towards forging stronger ties and new avenues in the fields of economic, energy and defense cooperation are clearly visible. Thus, Pakistan should actively pursue its enhanced relations with Russia on a positive note, and not let these relations be influenced by its relations with other players of the international arena.<sup>85</sup>

## Conclusion

Changing relationship between Russia and Pakistan have given high hopes for realignment into the regional politics. US-India Strategic Partnership brought Moscow and Islamabad closer to each other. This closeness has given rise to Russian investments in Pakistan. Initiation of CPEC has also been taken positively by Russia and is very much supportive to this project. Pakistan and Russia have enhanced their military cooperation as well. Both the states are on the right path of cooperation, mutual trust, and

---

<sup>81</sup> Ashraf Haidri, “The SCO Can Deescalate India Pakistan Tensions,” *The Diplomat*, (March 1, 2019). URL: <https://thediplomat.com/2019/03/the-sco-can-de-escalate-india-pakistan-tensions/>

<sup>82</sup> Sarah Akram, “*Pakistan-Russia trends.*” 2.

<sup>83</sup> Sarah Akram, “*Pakistan-Russia trends.*” 6.

<sup>84</sup> Sarah Akram, “*Pakistan-Russia trends.*” 5.

<sup>85</sup> Sarah Akram, “*Pakistan-Russia trends.*” 6.

friendship. Their interests converge on majority of the issues. Pakistan needs energy and investment which Russia is providing gradually. On the other hand, Moscow needs Islamabad's support to its regional and global initiatives, to which later has also given a positive response. The very first time, both states have convergence of interest in Afghanistan.

In case of India, enhanced relations between Pakistan and Russia might assist in reaching settlements with India. Though it seems to be a far-fetched idea. On the other hand, greater chances of a trilateral relationship between Pakistan-Russia-China seems to be emerging. It appears that under the current scenario, their respective interests have coincided with one another especially. With all three actors working towards maintaining regional stability and diminishing US influences in the region. Resultantly, it is evident that under political and economic dynamics of South and Central Asia, old buddies are parting their ways and new economic and strategic alliances are emerging. This regional paradigm shift has brought Islamabad and Moscow closer and this relation will continue to blossom at least for the near future.

### Bibliography

- Abbas, Khuram. 2016. "Russia's Revival: Opportunities and Limitations for Pakistan." *IPRI*. Accessed May 8, 2017. <http://www.ipripak.org/russias-revival-opportunities-and-limitations-for-pakistan/>.
- Ahmed, Mansoor. 2016. "Pakistan's Tactical Nuclear Weapons and Their Impact on Stability." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, June 30. Accessed July 28, 2017. <http://carnegieendowment.org/2016/06/30/pakistan-s-tactical-nuclear-weapons-and-their-impact-on-stability-pub-63911>.
- Akram, Sarah. 2016. "Pakistan Russia Relations: Future Trends." *Institute of Strategic Studies*. Accessed May 7, 2017. <http://issi.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Final-Issue-brief-Sarah-Akram-dated-24-3-2016.pdf>.
- Ali Ansari, Ahmad. 2009. *Indo-Pak Relation*. Islamabad: Institute of Space and Technology.
- Arif, Kinza. 2017. "Analyzing the Pak-Afghan conundrum." *Foreign Policy News*, January 19. <http://foreignpolicynews.org/2017/01/19/analyzing-pak-afghan-conundrum/>.
- . 2017. "Pakistan Completes Nuclear Triad." *Foreign Policy News*, January 16. <http://foreignpolicynews.org/2017/01/16/pakistan-completes-nuclear-triad/>.
- . 2017. "CPEC: Interdependence means Integration." *Regional Rapport*, February 4. <http://regionalrapport.com/2017/02/04/cpec-interdependence-means-integration/>.
- Aslam, Sabah. 2016. "Pakistan-Russia joint military exercise: New doors of opportunities." *Foreign Policy News*, September 26.

- <http://foreignpolicynews.org/2016/09/26/pakistan-russia-joint-military-exercise-new-doors-opportunities/>.
- Baev, Pavel K. 2015. "'The China factor in Russian support for the Iran deal'." *Brookings*, July 21. Accessed July 28, 2017. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2015/07/21/the-china-factor-in-russian-support-for-the-iran-deal/>.
- Bhutta, Zafar. 2016. "Pakistan invites Russia to join CASA-1000." *Express Tribune*, October 6. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1194194/bolstering-cooperation-pakistan-invites-russia-join-casa-1000/>.
- Bilal Khalil, Ahmad. 2017. "Pakistan and China: Don't Fear Chabahar Port." *Diplomat*, January 31. Accessed July 28, 2017. <http://thediplomat.com/2017/01/pakistan-and-china-dont-fear-chabahar-port/>.
- Bilal Khalil, Ahmed. 2016. "The Tangled History of Afghanistan –India-Pakistan Triangle." *the Diplomat*, December 16. Accessed May 3, 2017. <http://thediplomat.com/2016/12/the-tangled-history-of-the-afghanistan-india-pakistan-triangle/>.
- Bremmer, Ian. 2016. "These 5 Facts Explain Why India and Pakistan's Kashmir Dispute Is Going to Get Worse." *Time*, September 23. Accessed April 23, 2017. <http://time.com/4504654/india-pakistan-kashmir-dispute/>.
- C. Ladwig III, Walter. 2007/8. "A Cold Start for Hot Wars? The Indian Army's New Limited War Doctrine." *International Security*, Winter: 158–190. Accessed April 24, 2017. [http://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/legacy/files/IS3203\\_pp158-190.pdf](http://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/legacy/files/IS3203_pp158-190.pdf).
- Dawn*. 2016. "Russia supports China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project: Envoy." December 17. <http://www.dawn.com/news/1302890>.
- Denisov, I.E., and O.A. Popadyuk. 2016. "100 Postulates on Russia-Indian Relations." *Russian International Affairs Council*. Accessed July 29, 2017. <http://russiancouncil.ru/common/upload/WP-India-Russia-29-Eng.pdf>.
- Economic Times*. 2016. "India-Russia defense deals: Six things India got from old friend Russia." October 17. <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/india-russia-defence-deals-six-things-india-got-from-old-friend-russia/articleshow/54866551.cms>.
- Gady, Franz-Stefan. 2015. "Does Pakistan have a sea-based second strike capability?" *The Diplomat*, March 13. Accessed April 24, 2017. <http://thediplomat.com/2015/03/does-pakistan-have-a-sea-based-second-strike-capability/>.

- Ganguly, Sumit. 2012. "Sources of Tension in Afghanistan and Pakistan: A Regional Perspective India's Role in Afghanistan." *CIDOB Policy Research Project*.
- Garver, John. 2016. "China and Iran: An Emerging Partnership Post-Sanctions." *Middle East Institute*, February 8. Accessed July 28, 2017. [http://www.mei.edu/sites/default/files/publications/Garver\\_ChinaIran.pdf](http://www.mei.edu/sites/default/files/publications/Garver_ChinaIran.pdf).
- Haider, Mateen. 2015. "Indo-US nuclear deal will negatively impact South Asia: Sartaj Aziz." *Dawn*, January 28. <http://www.dawn.com/news/1159804>.
- . 2016. "Pakistan successfully tests Ra'ad cruise missile: ISPR." *Dawn News*, January 19. Accessed April 23, 2017. <http://www.dawn.com/news/1234015>.
- Haideri, M.Ashraf. 2016. "Since 9/11 Afghanistan Makes Progress amid Violence." *Diplomat*, September 12. Accessed May 3, 2017. <http://thediplomat.com/2016/09/since-911-afghanistan-makes-progress-amid-violence/>.
- Hanif, Muhammad. 2013. "Pakistan-Russia Relations: Progress, Prospects and Constraints." *IPRI Journal XIII* (no 2): 63-86. Accessed May 6, 2017. <http://www.ipripak.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/art4han.pdf>.
- Hughes, Lindsay. 2015. "The Energy and Strategy of China – Iran Relations." *Future Directions International*, November 17. Accessed July 28, 2017. [http://futuredirections.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/The\\_Energy\\_and\\_Strategy\\_of\\_China\\_Iran\\_Relations.pdf](http://futuredirections.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/The_Energy_and_Strategy_of_China_Iran_Relations.pdf).
- Iqbal, Anwar. 2016. "US-India defence pact to impact Pakistan, China." *Dawn*, August 30. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1280873>.
- Joshi, Shashank. 2010. "India's Af-Pak Strategy." *RUSI Journal* 155 (no 1): 20-29. Accessed May 3, 2017. <https://shashankjoshi.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/journal-201002-joshi.pdf>.
- Khalid, Rizwana. 2012. "Resurgent Russia: Challenges and Prospects for South Asia." *ISSRA Papers* 3 (2): 86-107. Accessed May 2, 2017. [http://www.ndu.edu.pk/issra/issra\\_pub/articles/issra-paper/ISSRA\\_Papers\\_Vol3\\_IssueII\\_2011/05-Resurgent-Russia-Rizwana-Khalid.pdf](http://www.ndu.edu.pk/issra/issra_pub/articles/issra-paper/ISSRA_Papers_Vol3_IssueII_2011/05-Resurgent-Russia-Rizwana-Khalid.pdf).
- Khan, Khurshid. 2013. "Deterrence Stability, Security Doctrines and Escalation Control in South Asia." *IPRI Journal XIII* no. 2: 42-62. Accessed July 30, 2017. <http://www.ipripak.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/art3khu.pdf>.
- Khan, Uroosa. 2017. "Re-shift in Russian Policy Towards Pakistan: Balancing the Unbalanced." *Institute of Strategic Studies*. Accessed May 7, 2017. [http://issi.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Final\\_IB\\_Aroosa\\_dated\\_07-4-2016.pdf](http://issi.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Final_IB_Aroosa_dated_07-4-2016.pdf).

- Krepon, Michael, and Julia Thompson. 2013. "Deterrence Stability and Escalation Control in South Asia." *the Stimson Center*. Accessed April 25, 2017. [https://www.stimson.org/sites/default/files/file-attachments/Deterrence\\_Stability\\_Dec\\_2013\\_web\\_1.pdf](https://www.stimson.org/sites/default/files/file-attachments/Deterrence_Stability_Dec_2013_web_1.pdf).
- Kumar, A. Vinod. 2016. "NSG and China's Grand Strategic Flip-flops: Some Plausible Explanations." *Institute for Defense Studies and Analysis*. Accessed April 25, 2017. [http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/nsg-and-china-grand-strategic\\_avkumar\\_240816](http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/nsg-and-china-grand-strategic_avkumar_240816).
- Kumara, Kranti, and Deepal Jayasekera. 2008. "Nuclear Supplier Group gives India unique "waiver," but only after row between Delhi and Beijing." *World Socialist Web Site*. September 17. Accessed April 24, 2017. <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2008/09/nucl-s17.html>.
- Levy, Adrian. 2015. "India Is Building a Top-Secret Nuclear City to Produce Thermonuclear Weapons." *Foreign Policy*, December 16. Accessed July 28, 2017. [http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/12/16/india\\_nuclear\\_city\\_top\\_secret\\_china\\_pakistan\\_barack/](http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/12/16/india_nuclear_city_top_secret_china_pakistan_barack/).
- Lough, John. 2011. "Russia's Energy Diplomacy." *Chatham House: The Royal Institute of International Affairs*. Accessed April 24, 2017. [https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/19352\\_0511bp\\_lough.pdf](https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/19352_0511bp_lough.pdf).
- Mahmood Azad, Tahir. 2016. "Pakistan-Russia Strategic Partnership: New Horizons for Cooperation." *Institute of Strategic Studies*, December 26. Accessed July 28, 2017. <http://issi.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Final-Issue-brief-Tahir-Azad-dated-26-12-2016.pdf>.
- Moskalenko, Vladimir, and Petr Topychkanov. 2014. "Russia and Pakistan Shared Challenges and Common Opportunities." *Carnegie Moscow Center*, May. Accessed May 6, 2017. [http://carnegieendowment.org/files/russia\\_and\\_pakistan2014.pdf](http://carnegieendowment.org/files/russia_and_pakistan2014.pdf).
- News*. 2016. "China to welcome Iran's inclusion in CPEC, says ambassador." October 17. <https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/157858-China-to-welcome-Irans-inclusion-in-CPEC-says-ambassador>.
- Pakistan Observer*. 2017. "Second Strike Capability." January 11. <http://pakobserver.net/second-strike-capability/>.
- Patranobis, Sutirtho. 2017. "Pakistan military strong enough to defend itself against India: Chinese expert." *Hindustan Times*, February 7. <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/pakistan-military-strong-enough-to-defend-itself-against-india-despite-cold-start-chinese-expert/story-gctp6gAQDeOIBPGgiaKRRM.html>.

- Putz, Catherine. 2016. "Afghanistan's Biggest Problem: Relations with Pakistan." *Diplomat*, July 26. Accessed May 3, 2017. <http://thediplomat.com/2016/07/afghanistans-biggest-problem-relations-with-pakistan/>.
- Qutab, Waseem. 2016. "Pakistan's Nuclear Diplomacy and NSG Membership: Opportunities and Challenges." *International Institute for Strategic Studies*. Accessed July 30, 2017. <https://www.iiss.org/en/events/events/archive/2016-a3c2/july-652c/pakistans-nuclear-diplomacy-and-nsg-membership---opportunities-and-challenges-adc1>.
- Raja Mohan, C. 2015. "10 years of Indo-US civil nuclear deal: Transformation of the bilateral relationship is the real big deal." *Indian Express*, July 20. <http://indianexpress.com/article/explained/10-yrs-of-indo-us-civil-nuclear-deal-transformation-of-the-bilateral-relationship-is-the-real-big-deal/>.
- n.d. "Realism in International Relations." *InternationalRelations.org*. Accessed July 30, 2017. [http://internationalrelations.org/realism\\_in\\_international\\_relations/](http://internationalrelations.org/realism_in_international_relations/).
- Rej, Abhijnan. 2017. "Pakistan tests Babur III missiles: how should India interpret this move?" *FirstPost*, January 10. Accessed April 24, 2017. <http://www.firstpost.com/india/pakistan-tests-babur-iii-missile-how-should-india-interpret-this-latest-move-3196456.html>.
- Roy Chaudhury, Dipanjan. 2017. "International North South Transportation Corridor for better Indo-Russian connectivity inches towards reality." *Economic Times*, April 10. <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/international-north-south-transportation-corridor-for-better-indo-russian-connectivity-inches-towards-reality/articleshow/58099129.cms>.
- Roy, Nabarun. 2016. "Is India Losing Russia?" *National Interest*, October 27. <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/india-losing-russia-18208?page=2>.
- Sarmad Zia, Muhammad. 2017. "'Pak-Russia defense relations'." *Nation*, March 27. <http://nation.com.pk/columns/27-Mar-2017/pak-russia-defense-relations>.
- Shahid, Saleem. 2016. "Rail link planned between Gwadar and Iranian port." *Dawn*, January 12. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1232397>.
- Singh, Rahul. 2016. "Rs 64,000-cr project to build submarines in India creates buzz." *Hindustan Times*, March 29. <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india/rs-64-000-cr-project-to-build-submarines-in-india-creates-buzz/story-hNwPyJUshugN7x38Fv35QJ.html>.
- Sood, Meenakshi. 2017. "Pakistan's (Non-Nuclear) Plan to Counter 'Cold Start'." *Diplomat*, March 25. Accessed July 28, 2017. <http://thediplomat.com/2017/03/pakistans-non-nuclear-plan-to-counter-cold-start/>.

2016. *Sputnik International*. December 2. Accessed July 28, 2017. <https://sputniknews.com/military/201612021048098128-pakistan-navy-frigate/>.
- Stravers, Andrew J., and Peter Harris. 2014. "Indian Foreign Policy: The Cold War Lingers." *The Diplomat*, March 24. Accessed May 2, 2017. <http://thediplomat.com/2014/03/indian-foreign-policy-the-cold-war-lingers/>.
- Sultan, Ahmed. 2015. "FMCT — the odds are against us." *Dawn*, June 22. Accessed April 25, 2017. <http://www.dawn.com/news/1187552>.
- Taimur Fahad Khan, Muhammad. 2016. "Renaissance of Pakistan-Russia Relations." *Institute of Strategic Studies*. Accessed May 7, 2017. [http://issi.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Final\\_IB\\_Taimur-Khan\\_dated\\_27-12-2016.pdf](http://issi.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Final_IB_Taimur-Khan_dated_27-12-2016.pdf).
- Tikhonova, Polina. 2017. "CPEC: China, Pakistan and Russia Bringing Multipolar World Order ." *ValueWalk*, April 27. <http://www.valuewalk.com/2017/04/cpec-china-pakistan-russia-multipolar-world-order/>.
- . 2016. "Pakistan And Russia Boosting Military Ties With 2017 Drills." *ValueWalk*, December 3. <http://www.valuewalk.com/2016/12/pakistan-russia-army-drills/>.
- Times of Islamabad*. 2016. "Russia to construct \$2 billion Lahore-Karachi gas pipeline project." October 18. <https://timesofislamabad.com/russia-construct-2-billion-lahore-karachi-gas-pipeline-project/2016/10/18/>.
- Times of Islamabad*. 2016. "Russian Intelligence Agency Chief secret visit to Pakistan." November 26. <https://timesofislamabad.com/57224-2/2016/11/26/>.
2016. "U.S. – India Defense Relations Fact Sheet." *U.S. Embassy & Consulates in India*. December 8. Accessed July 30, 2017. <https://in.usembassy.gov/u-s-india-defense-relations-fact-sheet-december-8-2016/>.
2015. *U.S. Relations With India*. October 9. Accessed July 30, 2017. <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3454.htm>.
- Yousaf, Kamran. 2016. "Pakistan, Russia, China seek to crack Afghan conundrum." *Express Tribune*, November 21. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1237886/pakistan-russia-china-seek-crack-afghan-conundrum/>.