

Underlying Implicating factors of U.S. War on Terror and its Unintended Consequences for Pakistan

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Abstract

Pakistan's reactive foreign policy attitudes and actions negate (or seem contradictory to) the core principle of realist paradigm, which says that intentions may vary independently without having any influential peer-pressure. Holistically, the critical analysis of Pakistan's foreign policy history exhibits that this country always chooses to pursue a reactive policy rather than proactive one. The best and recent example is Pakistan's dealing with Afghanistan problem since 9/11. This study uses archival evidence of long-simmering tensions about the continuing Afghanistan War and its unexpected consequences of Pakistan's policy decision to examine hypotheses derived from Barry Buzan's Regional Security Complex Theory. This paper aims to make the following inquiries: (1) how did Pakistan react in the response to U.S. invasion of Afghanistan and its War on Terror? (2) What have been the factors implicating Pakistan in Afghanistan War? (3) Why has Pakistan been failed in designing a proactive policy to prevent the challenges surfaced from enduring Afghan conflict and pose the serious threats to its security? (4) What are the unintended consequences of Pakistan's reactionary policy towards Afghanistan and in which direction have these outcomes guided Pakistan towards? While foreseeing the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan and its spillover effect on region, this paper will provide Pakistan's proactive strategies in the form of National Action Plan and CPEC so as to overcome such possible effects in future over the internal security situation and economic condition of the country.

Keywords: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Regional Security Complex Theory, U.S., War on Terror

Introduction

Pakistan's foreign policy, since its inception, suffers the dilemma of myopic optimism with little space for analytical approach to the geopolitical and strategic outlook. Like many other new-born states, Pakistan had to cope with many challenges including social, economic, political and even ideological manifestations. However, Pakistan faced two imminent challenges that shaped its character and strategic outlook since then. Firstly, the country was a composite of multi-ethnic groups with large differences in their history, culture, color and language; thereby creating a severe crisis of identity. In order to deal with this crisis, religion or Islam was considered as the binding force in ensuring a coherent Pakistani identity buttressed by the Islamic-oriented nationalism. Secondly, the survival of the new-born state became the cornerstone of Pakistan's identity-driven foreign policy. In this respect, Hindu-dominated

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India and an anticipated Soviet expansionism were considered as the sources of threat to the survival of Pakistan. However, Pakistan's strategic orientation was to maintain parity with India so as to deny Delhi the opportunity to become regional hegemon and dictate comparatively weaker Pakistan. In order to achieve this desire, Pakistani leaders were convinced that they needed strong allies to build its military capabilities; thereby ensuring parity vis-à-vis India. This led them to become part of the 'northern tier' of the US containment policy against the then Soviet Union by formally joining the CENTO and SEATO in 1954 and 1955 respectively. However, this also influenced Pakistan's foreign policy in the long-run with a considerable compromise on autonomy and focus on the entire spectrum of geopolitical and strategic calculations. For instance, Islamabad attracted widespread criticism from the Soviet Union for allowing the US U-2 reconnaissance aircrafts to station at the Peshawar airbase, and hence later was leveled by the Soviet support for India during the 1971 war which resulted in dismemberment of Pakistan.

For most part of the history, Pakistan's foreign policy decision making largely remained hostage to the US interests in the region. Stephen P. Cohen identifies four features of the relations between Pakistan and the US including 'partial, asymmetric, non-congruence and perceptual distortion'. First, for both countries, their individual interests remain more prior than their 'overlapping interests'. For decades, the US was chiefly concerned about the Soviet Union while India remained an existential danger in Pakistan's strategic calculations. Second, the security relations between the two remained asymmetrical; Pakistan inherits and bears the desired and undesired outcomes of the geopolitical and strategic policies adopted by the two countries with little effects on the US due to its 'intermittent' engagement in the region. Third, the security interests of Pakistan and the US remained 'non-congruent' with little harmony of interests. Pakistan viewed the US as a source of weaponry and political support while the US dealt Pakistan as a launching base against the Soviet Union. Finally, the relationships between the two Cold-War allies are agitated by the 'misperception' and stereotypical imaginations (Rose & Husain, 1985: 13-14).

In the backdrop of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and the GWOT, Pakistan remained an "essential anchor of the entire South West Asian region". However, whether it was the Anti-Soviet Afghan Jihad during 1980s or the US-led Global War on Terror in post-9/11 era, Pakistan equally remained reactive and undetermined in formulating its foreign policy objectives; consequently resulted in a plethora of internal and external challenges. This is why the research paper tries to unlock various strategic imperatives associated with Pakistan's decision of to join the US-led GWOT. Based on a multi-dimensional assessment of the situation at that time, the paper enumerates the compelling factors which led Pakistan to join the war against terrorism. This also necessitates employing a theoretical model of Berry Buzan's Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) so as to identify the role of world powers in setting the direction of foreign policy of the third world states and its impact on Regional Security Complexes (RSCs). It will investigate reasons behind failure of

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Pakistan in adopting a pro-active, instead of reactive, approach towards the evolving geopolitics of the world. In the end, the paper will be able to underpin various undesired outcomes resulted from the reactive approach towards important issues including the Afghan Jihad and Global War on Terror in Afghanistan.

II. Buzan's Regional Security Complex and Pakistan's Compulsions of Reactive Foreign Policy

Buzan and Wæver., in the *Regions and Powers: the Structure of International Security*, opens a new inquiry into the study of international security. With a categorical approach towards regional securities and their inter-dependence, Buzan and Waever explains the geo-political shift and pattern of security from the vast domain of international security to small units of different regions following the Cold War. In order to scrutinize this regional pattern of security, they used a distinct lens to study this shift what Buzan has termed as the *Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT)*. RSCT designates a distinction between “the system level interplay of the global powers, whose capabilities enable them to transcend distance, and the subsystem level interplay of lesser powers whose main security environment is their local region” (Buzan & Wæver, 2003: 4). The theory revolves around conceptualizing the regional security order with particular emphasis on the shift that has occurred in the global security structure following de-colonization and then the Cold-War. The essence of the RSCT is that, “since most threats travel more easily over short distances than over long ones, security interdependence is normally patterned into regionally based clusters: security complexes” (Buzan & Wæver, 2003: 4).

Buzan has divided the world into various ‘security complexes’. Each of these complexes is characterized by a process of securitization where “most states historically have been concerned primarily with the capabilities and intentions of their neighbors” (Buzan & Wæver, 2003: 3-4). Describing the effects of globalization in post Cold War era over the global security structure, Berry Buzan explains that one side of this phenomenon illustrated the ‘center-periphery’ relationships. Such a relationship is defined by exploitation and coercion with neo-colonialism as a replacement to the former colonialism; thereby rendering powerlessness to the periphery. The dominant liberal powers frame the global security structure in which the “centre–periphery structure generated and maintains the weak position of the periphery for the benefit of the core” (Buzan & Wæver, 2003: 1-2).

The global powers penetrate into these complexes; thereby rendering gigantic implications on the security environment and foreign policies of the small states involved. Pakistan has been one such case where in the backdrop of a bigger and aggressive rival, she cultivated alliances with the United States. South Asia remained an area of primary concern to the US during the Cold War era because of four major developments; the Soviets ingress in Indian Ocean, Sino-Indian war in 1962, the Iranian Islamic revolution and finally, the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in 1979.

The decade of 1980s proved significant in measuring cooperation between Pakistan and the US. The US, in a drive to contain the Soviet expansionism, manipulated Pakistan's strategic significance into operation and successfully dismembered the Soviet Union. The policies adopted in the meantime, however, had some undesired implications for the region in general and Pakistan in particular. One of them was the rise of Al-Qaeda which later managed to invite the US military presence in Afghanistan by carrying out the 9/11 attacks in the United States in 2001. Such a valuable interest of super powers in South Asia had implications for "the (regional) balance of power, insecurity in the region and Pakistan's foreign policy in turn" (Memon, 1994: 52).

III. Pakistan's Foreign Policy: Overview

Like any other new born nation, Pakistan prioritized its survival as the ultimate objective of its foreign policy. The enmity of the Muslim League and Congress did not end with the partition but transformed into a state level with Pakistan facing five times larger India as arch-rival. In face of such a bigger threat, Pakistani leaders wanted to ensure state's survival which became the ultimate end of the country's foreign policy in the successive decades. Pakistan achieved a perceived assurance in the form of alliances led by the United States back in 1950s. However, such a security to the survival and assistance relative parity against India came at a price. "Pakistan's reliance on the superpowers involvement in the region which imposes constraints and opportunities on Pakistan's foreign policy, making Pakistan vulnerable concerning superpower behavior" (Memon, 1994: 56). Owing to its important geostrategic location, Pakistan had to become part of the Western bloc to dismantle the so-called 'Evil Empire' or former Soviet Union and rescue the 'free world'. Pakistan's foreign policy remained submissive to the US interests with a significant impact on the country's national security. The engagement with the US largely constrained Pakistan's foreign policy independence and hence options. For instance, it is believed that General Ayub offered India a 'Joint Defense Pact' and later refused to match into Kashmir during the 1962 Sino-India Border war just because of the pressure from Washington. After providing airbases to the US spy planes in 1960 and then making arrangement for the Sino-US re-approachment in 1970s, Pakistan had to become a 'fall guy' with sanctions imposed by the US in wake of its clandestine nuclear program (Ahmed, 2009: 45). The failure on part of Pakistan's Foreign Policy was visible when Washington provided 'massive military support' to New Delhi in the backdrop of Sino-India war in 1962. In 1970s, when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto tried to enforce Pakistan's 'Middle Eastern Character' and draw out country's identity from the 'Sands of the Arabian Peninsula', the Arab countries provided monetary assistance which helped continue the struggle for the 'Islamic Bomb' (Mazhar & Goraya, 2009: 93).

The takeover of Gen Zia following the overthrow of Bhutto altered the strategic orientation of Pakistan's Foreign Policy. The change in orientation, however, was not

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caused by the takeover of Gen Zia but by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. The Soviet invasion revitalized Pak-US relations and hence set a new stage for cooperation against the expansionist power. Anticipating a Soviet advance towards Pakistan and becoming a ‘nutcracker’ between India and the Soviets, Pakistan joined the ‘deadly embrace’ with the US and cultivated a comprehensive strategy to defeat the Soviet Union. Its premier intelligence agency, the ISI, trained almost 90,000 mujahideen fighters which set the Soviets on fire in Afghanistan. The war, however, came to an end with the Soviet withdrawal in 1989 which also ended the cooperation between Pakistan and the US (O’Hanlon, 2011: 32).

The disintegration of the Soviet brought a systematic change in the world and transformed the Bipolar World into a world with single superpower. The constraints experienced by Pakistan’s foreign policy, however, were not lifted rather overburdened in the form of new challenges and national security threats. The Cold War provided Pakistan an opportunity to utilize the global conflicts to its advantage and solve its issue of national security. However, in the Post-Cold War era, the global environment was changed and provided little to Pakistan’s regional security objectives. Moreover, the objectives of Pakistan’s foreign policy did not change or adapt to the new global strategic environment. The 1990s was full of challenges and lack of foreign policy options for Pakistan. Dealing with the “threat of being branded a terrorist state (due to support for the Taliban), the continuing Kashmir problem, the end of US aid and the problems in Afghanistan” required a comprehensive transformation in foreign policy. The decade continued to transcend the geo-political and geostrategic imperatives for Pakistan until the deadly terrorist attack on the United States on September 11, 2001.

Global War on Terror and Pakistan’s Response

Sometimes termed as the second phase of Pakistan’s foreign policy, the post-9/11 era brought a significant shift in Pakistan’s political and strategic trajectory. The attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon invited the United States under President Bush and launched a massive military campaign against Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. The gravity of the attack was visible by the speech of the then US President George W. Bush;

“Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime” (*The Guardian*, September 21, 2001)

Being in the proximity, Pakistan could not have undermined the repercussions for the US adventure in Afghanistan. The attacks were termed as ‘the pearl harbor of the twenty first century’ by the George W. Bush and vowed to ‘bring them (perpetrators) to justice’ (George W. Bush Address to the Nation, September 11, 2001).

Pakistan was equally challenged by the attacks since Musharraf regime was anticipating direct implications for the possible US policy regarding Al-Qaeda, sheltered by the country's ally the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA). It was no less than a dilemma for the Musharraf government for the Bush administration delivered the message of 'either you are with us or you are with the terrorists' (Bush: you are either with us, 2009). The challenge for the policy makers was "how to synchronize its national interests with the imperatives of international situation" (Butt & Sidiqi, 2016: 724). The foreign policy options for Pakistan were constrained to two. The first option "makes common cause with Washington in its war against Al Qaeda network based in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan" (Ghosh, 2009: 278). The second option was to "persist with its pro-Taliban Afghan policy and, as a consequence, suffer international condemnation" ((Ghosh, 2009: 278). In the later case, Pakistan had to assess its potential capability of dealing with United States; thereby withstanding its sanctions and possible onslaught. After assessing the pros and cons, Pakistan chose the former option and joined hands with the US by vowing to 'combat the modern-day evil' (9/11: The World Reacts, September 6, 2011). The decision to align with the US in their fights against terror highlighted a substantial shift in the Pakistan's policy regarding the Taliban.

IV. U-Turn on Afghanistan: Fixing the Dilemma and Implicating Factors

Following the attacks of 9/11, the US demanded the Musharraf regime to provide the US with 'blanket flights and landing rights to conduct its military operations, territorial access to the United States including airbases, naval ports at the strategic locations on the border, intelligence to the United States'. The US also called on Pakistan to put an end to the anti-US activities and terrorist organizations in the country and 'condemn' the September 11 attacks. Musharraf yielded to the US demands and expressed support for the US-led war on terror. This, however, also signifies Berry Buzan's point which says that "security entails both the internal and external threat". Musharraf was wise enough in assessing the internal disparities caused by the extremist elements operating from the sanctuaries in Afghanistan as well as the external threat India which had long been trying to alienate the country (Akbar, 2015: 128).

Expressing support for the US policy in Afghanistan was a significant U-turn that Pakistan took, especially in reference to the Taliban. This happened in the backdrop of 'pressurized' stance from Washington urging Pakistan to cooperate against Al-Qaeda and the harbors (Taliban). Pakistan yielded to the US pressure and "reluctantly" withdrawn all the support to the Taliban, previously supported by the country since 1994 (Tellis, 2008: 3). The Taliban felt hurt seeing an ally turning against them just because of the pressure and fear of survival from the super power. One of the closest aides to Musharraf disclosed that;

"Pakistan, due to immense pressure from the US, asked Mullah Omer to hand over bin Laden to the US but Mullah Omer claimed that even if he handed over bin Laden to

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the US, they would make another excuse to invade Afghanistan. Mullah Omer called Pakistan “Majboristan” (a state that is in a helpless condition) and told Pakistan to do what they saw as being in their national interest” (Akbar, 2015: 123)

Turning against the Taliban, however, was not an easy task for Pakistani policy makers because they could not afford to abstain from the vital national interest in Afghanistan, of which Taliban were regarded as the fundamental instrument. However, Musharraf had to choose between Pakistan and the Taliban. After deciding to support the US-led coalition, President Musharraf said that

“the choice is between saving Pakistan or the Taliban and I am opting for Pakistan. Pakistan comes first everything else come later. Pakistan situation is extremely hazardous and holds potential dangers to Pakistan strategic assets. Never had the country seen such perilous time since 1971. One wrong move at this stage can jeopardize the very survival of Pakistan and allowing the fortress of Islam come to harm would be a disservice to Islam. I call upon the nation to show complete unity and solidarity for any decision which his government may take regarding hunt Osama operation” (Akbar, 2015: 123-124)

Following are some of the implicating factors that led to a U-Turn in Pakistan’s post-9/11 Afghan policy.

1. Economic Incentives

Pakistan’s economic situation was scaling down day by day following the sanctions put by the US due the nuclear tests carried by the country in 1998. The country could not have afforded any wave of sanctions, possibly by the United Nations this time. Therefore the US demands to end its long-standing support to the Taliban and crackdown on Al-Qaeda operative in the country quickly earned Pakistan’s support. Due to the proximity and most viable route to Afghanistan, the US took Pakistan as a launching base for it Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

2. Fear of US Onslaught

One of the reasons behind Pakistan’s approval to the US plan was the fear of a direct US assault on the country’s mainland in pursuit of the hostile elements. Just after the attacks, Pakistan’s ISI chief was in Washington to meet the then Deputy Secretary of State Armitage on September 13, 2001. Musharraf claimed that in that meeting, Armitage warned Gen Mehmood, the ISI chief, that cooperate or “be prepared to be bombed. Be prepared to go back to the Stone Age” (Conroy, September 23, 2006). The remarks were then refuted by Mr. Armitage who argued that he did not give any such remarks but accepted that he delivered a tough message to Islamabad. Therefore, Pakistan cooperated because any direct intervention could have lead to catastrophic results. The US strict behavior was visible when Bush stated that “what the United States does would not be token act but a continued sweeping and sustained

campaign”. Bush has a strong message in which he made it clear that not only the terrorists will be hit but the campaign will also deal with the perpetrators and those countries which harbor the terrorists (Shah & Riaz, 2013: 99).

3. International Prestige

The US-led coalition for military offensive in Afghanistan enjoyed the support of the international community. Soon after the attacks, the United Nations Security Council adopted Unanimous Resolution No. 1368 which called on all states to “work together urgently to bring to justice the perpetrators, organizers and sponsors of the terrorist attacks, stressing that those supporting and harboring the terrorists would be held accountable” (UN Role in Fighting Terrorism, September 12, 2001, 159). The resolutions were the sign of an international backing for the US military campaign in Afghanistan. President Musharraf while addressing the nation on September 19 also mentioned the same rationale for joining the war on terror, he stated that “we know that whatever the United State intentions are they have the support of the UN Security Council and the General Assembly in the form of resolutions”. Thus any non-compliance to the international community against the terrorists could have invited international humiliation and possibly a bad name with the designation of a ‘terrorist state’.

4. Indian as Alternative

The third possible reason was the Indian offer to the US for airbases and logistic support in case of Pakistan’s non-compliance. This was also elaborated by President Musharraf that “we are not prepared to help, India is. So if you want to commit suicide, I do not” (Luce, March 26, 2018). There was a possibility that if Pakistan had not offered support, the US could have launched their military offensive through India by building a land bridge over Pakistani airspace which could have threatened Pakistan’s own survival. Hence this leads Pakistan to unequivocally support the US in their fight against terrorism in Afghanistan.

Reactive versus Proactive Approach: Resulting Challenges

Foreign Policy is a “set of political, economic and strategic objectives that a country seeks to follow, bilaterally or multilaterally, in its relations with other countries of the world”. However, the same foreign policy becomes a source of challenges and threats when it is not backed by a proactive approach. Therefore, in order to achieve the aforementioned economic, political and strategic objectives, the state ought to back their foreign policies with active strategic vision so as to act rationally in relation to the predictive challenges in the evolving global strategic environment.

Owing to the existing and emerging challenges posed by the foreign policy decisions in the past, the debate over the nature of Pakistan’s foreign policy has become a business as usual in the academic circles in the country. Over the past seven decades, Pakistan’s foreign policy has largely remained reactive with less sense proactive

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approach to address the geostrategic challenges. The reactive approach is more visible in its dealings in Afghanistan, especially after 2001 when Pakistan had to join the US-led counter-terrorism operations in Afghanistan. Some would argue that it is the centralized government which lead to flaw-full foreign policy with little concession for consultation while others will blame the basic organizational structure of the foreign policy decision making. This was the reason that a section of the policy makers approved Musharraf's decision by terming it "rational, realistic and pragmatic and in the national interest, calling it as inevitable based on the global consent", while other criticized it for being "idealistic and personally opportunistic decision, calling it damaging to the national interest" (Akbar, 2015: 128).

The reactive approach in Pakistan's foreign policy has rendered multiple challenges for the country when the elite driven approaches led the country to join the US camp, again in 2001. The post-9/11 foreign policy choices constrained independent options, "compromised the political sovereignty and damaged the economic sovereignty" (Irshad, 2005: 21). The long-standing tussle between military and civilian beaurocracy has cultivated a non-consensus based approach which has affected the country's policies and foreign policy is no exception. The decision of Musharraf to join the US camp was a reactive decision, and was not a bad decision for some good reasons. However, the extensive support and unequivocal support remained unchecked and non-divisive which brought significant internal challenges for the country's domestic survival. The spillover effects of extremism and terrorism made its ways into Pakistani society with drastic impact on the overall societal makeup of the Pakistani society. The following section will look into the undesired consequences of the rational policy options exercised by Musharraf regime in post-9/11 era.

V. Unintended Consequences of Pakistan's Reactive Foreign Policy

1. Conflict on Western Border

The post-9/11 policy to support the US efforts in Afghanistan turned disastrous for Pakistan, especially in context of the western border and the adjoined Pak-Afghan region. The war on terror made its way into Pakistan and ended up with a shift in Pakistan's focus from the eastern border to the western border. The terrorists, with sanctuaries in Afghanistan have become emboldened in carrying out violent attacks in Pakistan. Over the past two decades, the US and ISAF forces have frequently crossed the Pak-Afghan border and raided the adjoined region multiple times. The most disturbing incident includes the air attack on the Salala check-post in 2011 which killed 24 Pakistani soldiers and injured many (Firdous, November 26, 2011). The attack was termed as a 'blatant aggression' by the Pakistani Military (Anthony & Conway, November 30, 2011). This, however, is not the only issues concerning the western border. Rather, the frequent violation and cross firing of the Afghan National Army has also caused unrest in the Pak-Afghan border region.

2. Cross Border Terrorism

Soon after joining the US campaign in Afghanistan, the leadership of the Al-Qaeda and the Taliban fled to the adjoining Pak-Afghan border region, known erstwhile as the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (now part of KPK). This not only invited the US cross border raids but also became a 'hotbed' for the terrorist activities targeting the Pakistani state. As a result of this menace, Pakistan has become the top country which suffered severe damages and "drastic effects of the war on terror in terms of human and material losses" more than any other nation in the world (Akbar, 2015: 132). Pakistan has lost more than 50,000 civilians with more than 6000 soldiers in the fight since 2001 (*The Express Tribune*, January 3, 2018). These sacrifices have also been recognized by the international community. For instance, the US defense Secretary James Mattis recognized that 'Pakistan has lost more troops total than all of NATO coalition combined in the fight against them' (Iqbal, January 9, 2018). Such a huge loss was partly mitigated by launching massive military operations in the tribal areas including the ongoing operation 'Zarb-e-Azb'. In order to prevent more attacks and proper security mechanism for the border is necessary. The border management initiative can be taken as part of Pakistan's latest attempt to proactively deal with the emerging issues before they become grave national security threats to the country.

3. Proxy War in Afghanistan

The US military ingress following the 9/11 also incentivized India and allowed her to play a major role in Afghanistan. This, however, created troubles for Pakistan. India, being a rival state, has been viewed as part of the problem in Pakistan's strategic circles in relevance to Afghanistan. Apart from a huge amount of Soft-Power, India maintains a credible amount of Hard-Power in the country. The main feature of this hard presence can be defined in terms of the 'proxy warfare' it has waged against its western neighbor Pakistan. She is involved in harboring terrorism in Baluchistan and in the Pashtun tribal belt areas alongside Afghanistan border (Kerr, 2013: 3). This came to the high light when Pakistani security forces captured a serving Indian naval officer Kulbhushan Yadav, operating covertly under RAW, Indian premier intelligence agency. India's adverse actions in Afghanistan have largely been focused on countering Pakistan's 'legitimate' security interests in the region. Indian presence in Afghanistan is aimed to squeeze Pakistan from both Eastern and Western front by making alignment with Afghanistan to counter any of the productive efforts being done by Pakistan. This was also acknowledged by the former US Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel when he claimed that "India has over the years financed problems for Pakistan on that side of the border, and you can carry that into many dimensions" (*The Tribune*, February 26, 2013). This can also be attributed to the reactive approach of Pakistan's foreign policy since policy makers could not pre-empt any Indian role in Afghanistan. This largely remained irrelevant in Pakistan's strategic perspectives until India started fomenting terrorism in Pakistan and cementing their footholds in Kabul.

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VI. The Way Forward: a Glance over Pakistan's Proactive attempt – External and Internal Factors

1. CPEC: External Factor

Over the past seven decades, Pakistan's foreign policy has largely remained reactive to the encirclement and threat perception. Having a strong military with a stagnant and weak economy, Pakistan has always responded to different developments in terms of power with little attention for economic, social and cultural factors into consideration. Most of the economic developmental plans have remained short term with no long-term planning as priority. This was the reason that even the billion dollars support provided by the US after 9/11 did little in solving the economic, energy and infrastructural problems of the country. This can be attributed to the lack of proactive element in Pakistan's foreign policy. However, Pakistan has tried to adopt the proactive stance at foreign level with comprehensive cognition of the geopolitical and security environment and trying to use them to its advantage. The extensive emphasize on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has been one such case where the country is employing her assets of proactive engagement so as to improve the country's economic situation. The post-9/11 era has turned Pakistani economy into stagnant water with no considerable growth rate and economic disparity in the society. The CPEC project, which worth more than US \$ 60 Billion, will give a booster shot to Pakistan's economic pace.

With a chain of projects including energy, infrastructure, ports construction, road and rail routes in the country, Pakistan has given top priority to the project in its foreign policy. The project has transformed Pak-China relationships to a new level with added dimension of economy, besides security and military as the main determinants of relationships. The project has, for the first time, allowed the civilian leaders on both sides, especially in Pakistan, to augment their grip on decisions making in economy related issue. This also has implications for Pakistan's foreign policy, which was largely security-centric, and now enjoys a new pattern with economic engagement as the integral element. CPEC has multiplied the foreign policy options for Pakistan. It can largely employ a proactive strategy to gain support in the region, and even can earn allies back which were previously lost to the Indian camp such as Iran. Iran's desire to become part of this ambitious project raises green lights for Pakistan's policy makers because this can be an opportunity to revitalize its relationships with Iran which has frequently remained concerned about our security ties with Saudi Arabia. Sun Weidong, Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, has also argued that "Iran can also be a very important country along the Belt and the Road initiative, so we really look forward to enhance our cooperation with Iran" (Boni, July 17, 2017). Moreover, the Iranian President Hasan Rouhani has already expressed a desire to become part of CPEC. Rouhani, in his meeting with PM Nawaz Sharif on sidelines of UNGA meeting, stated that 'Iran wants to become part of CPEC' (Abbas, September 22,

2016). Such cooperation, if materialized, will also offset India's influence in Iran which has invested billions of dollars in the Chabahar port and is also a major importer of Iranian oil. Moreover, Pakistan can utilize the proactive approach in foreign policy to earn the support and cooperation of its cold war rival Russia. Pakistan has played its cards and attracted Russia for a number of reasons including their converging interests in Afghanistan and Central Asia. Russia has yielded to Pakistan's approach and increased military and economic cooperation with the country. Russian and Pakistani militaries launched their mutual military exercise in 2016 and continued to conduct exercises in 2017 and then the recent military exercise 'Druzhba-III' in Pakistan (Gul, October 22, 2018). Moreover, the two countries have also signed a US \$ 10 Billion deal for an offshore gas pipeline which reflects the growing economic ties between Pakistan and Russia (Ahmadani, October 22, 2018). In this way, Pakistan can cultivate enormous ties with regional and extra-regional countries to diversify her foreign policy options without constraining its independence by locking into a particular power with a compromise of its strategic and political autonomy.

2. National Action Plan: An Internal Factor

The economic development and flagship projects like CPEC won't taste the drop of success until an improved security situation in Pakistan. In order to drive out the fears of internal security threats and disruption by terrorists, Pakistan has also adopted a security driven proactive policy known as the National Action (NAP). Adopted after the heinous attack on the Army Public School Peshawar in 2014, the plan was aimed to "chalk out an Action Plan with specific, mostly quantifiable and ultimately time-bound agenda to curb the scourge of terrorism" (nacta.gov.pk). The NAP can be regarded as the domestic security initiative of Pakistan's growing proactive approach towards policy formulation and execution after a prior threat assessment. The plan comprises 20 different actions in the form of twenty points which include. 1) Lifting Moratorium from death sentence, 2) Special military courts were set for speedy trials, 3) NACTA was strengthened, 4) Blocking finances to terrorist groups, 5) Prevent emergence of 'proscribed' militant groups, 6) Regulation of Madrassas, 7) Strict measures against abusive acts on social media, 8) Strict action against sectarian groups (terrorists), 9) Karachi operation to be ended till final results, 10) Zero-tolerance on terrorism, 11) Prevent media from glorifying terrorists, 12) Empowering Baluchistan government, 13) Reforms in the criminal justice system, 14) Administration issues and settlement of IDPs in FATA, 15) Armed groups will not be allowed to operate in Pakistan, 16) Desmantling communication of terrorists, 17) Strict action against religious 'persecution', 18) Employing and deploying robust counter-terrorism force, 19) Strict regulation of literature and action against hatred based literature, 20) Registration of Afghan refugee (nacta.gov.pk). The National Action Plan was steady enough in putting a gradual end to terrorism in the country with significant decline in terror related incidents. The National Counter-Terrorism Authority (NACTA) has expeditiously reformed the law enforcement strategies with

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employment of foreign models of threat assessment and counter-terrorism. For instance, in the 2nd Workshop on Proactive Approach to Counter Terrorism, various models were presented from countries including European Union, Canada and Srilanka. The workshop also carried out ‘practical exercises’ with emphasize on threat assessment technique. (2nd Workshop on Proactive Approach to Counter Terroism, 2018).

The NAP, although, is experiencing some political malfunctioning but the plan has yielded significant results. Moreover, such a proactive approach can mitigate the security situation which in turn will help the country attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and development.

Conclusion

Pakistan’s foreign policy assessment has been on the verge of political biasness, malfunctioned democratic culture with lack of strategic vision in the policy-makers. The reactive approach, whether it was to the entry into the US bloc in 1950s or the revival of submission to the US interests in 1980s. Pakistan failed to augment its benefits in relation to the costs which significantly hampered the social, economic and strategic advancement of the country. The alienation of the country at the hands of the US coupled with the spillover effects of the war on Terror smashed the long-term economic and developmental planning for at least two decades. The classical practice of reacting to a tragedy or development has now become old-fashioned. The threat assessment and perception has become the dominating variables in relevance to which, states pursue certain pre-emptive acts to counter the threat in detail without becoming a grave danger. The revival or an attempt to revive the pro-active element in foreign policy in the form of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) with a tight security agenda of National Action Plan (NAP) can turn the tide and become archetypal for a possible proactive design of Pakistan’s foreign policy formulation.

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