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Pakistan-India Rivalry: An Analytical Perspective of Balance of Power

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Abstract *Division of British India culminated into two new states of Hindu-majority India and Muslim-majority Pakistan. However, both Pakistan and India remained hostile since their inception. Multiple factors are responsible for their rivalry, such as the disputed Kashmir, water issues, communal riots, and assets distribution, etc. This affected the South Asian politics and invited the major powers to play their political game by influencing Indian and Pakistan's positions. The paper analyzes the bilateral conflict of India and Pakistan, their techniques to maintain the balance of power, and the role of major powers. The study also examines the foreign policies of India and Pakistan and their due positions since independence. The theory of balance of power has been applied to this study to explore the various aspects and prerequisites of BOP. The paper relies on qualitative methods of research to describe the positions of India and Pakistan in their strategies of the balance of power.*

Key Words: Indo-Pak Rivalry, Balance of Power, Politics of Alliances, Foreign Policy, Cold War Politics, Major Powers Role.

Introduction

As there was a continuous state of tension between Muslims and Hindus even in united India, it adversely affected their relation after partition. The mistrust and hostile attitude towards each other always acted as the hurdle in their efforts of cooperation. Their agreements and negotiations have always been ineffective and, in some cases, failed, particularly due to their ideological clashes. Thus, their economy and military have always been suffered by this continuous state of hostility ([Waqar-un-Nisa, 2017](#)).

Since partition, four wars have been fought between Pakistan and India, first during 1947 to

1948, second in 1965, third in 1971, and fourth in 1999, which was not that much major like the first three ([Michael, 2018](#)). Nuclear weapons have played a crucial role in aggravating their rivalry; however, sometimes, it has maintained the balance of power by making them militarily strong able to deter attack by the other ([Basrur, 2009](#)).

Such hostile relations have evolved the balance of power between these two rival states. Originally, in order to balance the power with India, Pakistan was seeking support from the United States by being engaged in its military alliances (SEATO and CENTO). However, in the current scenario, it is

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seeking support from China in order to counter India. The assistance of the United States and China has been helpful in countering India to some extent ([Rizvi, 2012](#)).

The originating phase of the evolution of the balance of power took place during the cold war, as it was the time when India and Pakistan were enrolled in disputes like the United States and Soviet Union. So Pakistan got aligned with the United States, also sought support from China. However, India moved towards the Soviet Union ([Jorwal, 2015](#)).

When Pakistan and India went to war in 1947, Pakistan felt the need for external support in order to protect itself from India's aggression. In this way, the then Prime Minister Liaqat Ali Khan paid a visit to the United States and got aligned with them. As a result of these alignments, the United States granted huge economic aid, also offered nuclear weapons. It cannot be denied that the United States was actually exploiting Pakistan and was doing this for its own strategic interest, but such alignments proved advantageous to Pakistan because Pakistan became able to strengthen its military against India ([Jorwal, 2015](#)). Moreover, the defense pacts also provided hopes to Pakistani leaders regarding Kashmir issue as it will enable them to negotiate with India. Thus, the alignment of Pakistan with the United States by receiving military and economic aid enabled Pakistan to counter the power of India ([Michael, 2018](#)).

However, the alignment of Pakistan with the United States weakens its relation with the Soviet Union, which became more cordial towards India, resulting in its close cooperation regarding Kashmir issue. Thus, the Soviet Union supported India on the Kashmir issue by declaring Kashmir as an intrinsic part of India ([Jorwal, 2015](#)).

Compared to Pakistan, India was much stronger and thus did not need alignment with any block. But certain factors caused it to leave its membership in Non-Alignment Movement (NAM), including the close ties of Pakistan and the United States by being Pakistan receiver of substantial aid and the Sino-Indian war of 1962. Thus, in 1971 India became an ally of Soviet Union. However, as far as the Sino-Indian war is concerned, it worried

the Indian leaders that India was not in a position to counter China. The remedy to this insecurity of India was to ensure assistance from friendly nations. Therefore, Indian Prime Minister Nehru asked for military and economic aid from developed countries. In this way, India received the US \$70 million worth of military equipment from the United States and Great Britain for the fulfilment of immediate needs. The Soviet Union also supplied the US \$730 million worth of arms to India. However, a drift occurred in Pak-US cordial ties as a result of US economic and military aid to India. The differences in Pakistan and US relations, in turn, resulted in the close ties of Pakistan with China. The US neutrality during the 1965 and 1971 Indo-Pak wars resulted in Pakistan's withdrawal of the South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) and Central Treaty Organization (CENTO).

Apart from Indo-Pak rivalry and alignments, which evolved the balance of power in the region, the nuclearization has also been a factor responsible for the evolution of the balance of power. The nuclear tests by India in 1974 increased the arms race in the region, consequently, paved the way for ensuring a balance of power in the region ([Moorthy, Sum, & Benny, 2015](#)).

India after Independence and Cold War (1947-1962)

The onset of the cold war and India's independence almost coincided. In those days, the countries were flocking in one of the two rival camps. However, for India, circumstances demanded something else. Firstly, neither US nor USSR showed any great interest in India; they were virtually ignorant of the newly freed country, which was struggling even to feed its population. Secondly, due to the lack of interest of any of the major powers, India was placed at a disadvantage in the regional distribution of power in South Asia. India also wanted to form an independent policy ([Jha, 1971](#)).

Thus, unlike Pakistan, which immediately moved towards the US for asking for military and financial help, the Indian Prime Minister visited the US mainly for food aid. India did not opt to join any rival camp. The colonial legacy was such that Indian leaders would choose anything that would keep them out of the ambit of the Cold War. This

culminated in the policy of Non-alignment; however, it took great pains to explain to the world that it was not neutralism but the adoption of an independent foreign policy ([Kantha, 1989](#)).

Achievements

During this period, the major achievements of India were as follows:

- A crucial role has been played by India in multilateral institutions as it contributed to the "United Nations Peacekeeping Forces" in the Belgian Congo ([Van Eekelen, 2015](#)).
- India followed an independent policy by being a leading member of the "Non-Alignment Movement" (NAM).
- Steps have been taken by India in ensuring decolonization ([Mallik, 1967](#)).
- India played a role in reducing the stress of the cold war, which can be asserted from its support to "Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty" (CTBT) as in 1952, a draft resolution was launched by India and Ireland for the purpose of imposing an international ban on "Nuclear Tests" ([Bhattacharya, 1978](#)).

Failures

The major failures in this phase are as follows:

- Firstly, India moved the issue of Kashmir to the UN Security Council. Many leaders, including Sheikh Abdullah were not in favour of India seeking UN intervention because they believed that the Indian Army was in a position to free the entire Kashmir from the Pak army. Taking the issue to the UN soon threw the issue into the politics of the cold war. The United Nations dialogue disenchanted the India's political leaders regarding the resolution of bilateral issues with the help of the UN.
- Secondly, India faced severe criticism for the way it handled the affairs of Goa with Portugal. The diplomatic talks between Nehru and the Salazar regime in Portugal ended in a deadlock, and India used the military to expel the Portuguese from Goa in 1960 ([Ansari, 1963](#)).

- Thirdly, one of the tenants of the NAM was that the countries had to reduce their defense expenditures. So Indian military expenditures were drastically limited even if it was known that the security threat from China was mounting. This policy of not having enough defense expenditure proved to be a costly affair. The border dispute between China and India was a colonial legacy. When diplomatic talks failed, Indian leaders embarked upon a strategy of compulsion with an aim to reinstitute what they thought to be the territorial status quo along the Sino-Indian border. But it was an ill-conceived policy because to achieve the status quo, India sent small units of lightly armed, poorly equipped, and ill soldiers to the high altitudes of mighty Himalayas. The result was that in October 1962, China attacked with substantial force. The Indian military was not in a position to face the attack, and China imposed a massive defeat on Indian forces. After declaring victory, China withdrew from some of the areas they had entered but did not quit some 14,000 square miles which they had claimed before. This area is disputed even today ([Chaudry, 2016](#)).

Pakistan's Position

Soon after independence, special words were said by the then Governor-General and founder of Pakistan, Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, on the radio to instigate Pakistan to the World of Nations as he was in favour of friendly relations with other states. He declared:

"Our foreign policy is one of friendliness and goodwill towards the nations of the world. We do not cherish aggressive designs against any country or nation. We believe in the principle of honesty, and fair play in national and international dealings and are prepared to make our utmost contribution to the promotion of peace and prosperity among the nations of the world. Pakistan will never be found lacking in extending its material and moral support to the oppressed and suppressed people of the world and in upholding the principles of the United Nations Charter."

Thus links with other States have been established for the purpose to develop friendly relations with all, to promote harmony, to support freedom of colonized people, and to ensure strict obedience to the rules of global conduct as manifested in the UN Charter (Pakistan became a member of United Nations on September 30, 1947) ([Singh, 1970](#)).

Soon after independence, Pakistan initially established relations with the US, the USSR, and China by aiming to adopt an independent foreign policy. In this way, Pakistan has been welcomed by the United States. Thus, in February 1948, both States resumed the ambassadorial level relations. As far as Pakistan relations with the Soviet Union is concerned, in April, both agreed on diplomatic relations but were not materialized immediately as both States ambassadors resumed their assignment in Moscow and in Karachi in December 1949 and in March 1950, respectively. As regards China, the first Muslim state who felicitated the China was Pakistan ([Rais, 1977](#)).

In 1949, the first Prime Minister of Pakistan Liaqat Ali Khan got an invitation from the Soviet Union for an official visit. But instead of a visit to Moscow, Liaqat Ali Khan paid a visit to the USA in 1950, and his statements during the concerned visit demonstrated a strong pro-West nature of the Pakistan government, which made the USSR leaders hopeless ([Bhutto, 1964](#)). Pakistan and USA signed a "Mutual Defence Assistance Agreement" in 1954. In this agreement, the US agreed to provide defense machinery and training facilities to enable Pakistan to enhance its security (Khan R. A., 1990). Pakistan also joined the "South East Asian Treaty Organization" (SEATO) and "Central Treaty Organization" (CENTO) in September 1954 and 1955, respectively ([Van & Justus, 1976](#)). In March 1959, Pakistan and America signed a "Bilateral Agreement of Cooperation". The agreement declared in "Article 2" that the US will supply economic assistance and military aid to Pakistan as may be jointly decided upon in order to assist the government of Pakistan in the preservation of its national independence and integrity and in the effective promotion of its economic development ([Hussain, 2016](#)).

Achievements

Pakistan's alignment with America yielded numerous benefits. American monetary help and other services encouraged Pakistan's destructive economic system. The most important development was in the field of security, wherein both the states developed close relations. Pakistan got a grant of the US \$ 650 million worth. Despite the military assistance of arms and ammunition, artillery pieces, aircrafts F-104, B-57, F-86, and C-130, warships, radar, and communication equipment, the establishment of the "US Military Assistance Advisory Group" (USMAAG) also took place in Pakistan ([Kronstadt, 2011](#)).

Failures

Throughout the 1950s, both the superpowers (US and USSR) continue to reinforce their relationships with the South Asian States. However, during the 1960s, substantial changes arose in the whole World scenario, such as the "Sino-Indian border war of 1962" and "introduction of intercontinental missiles". Despite warnings and protests of Pakistani leaders that west weapons would be used against Pakistan and India is not able to defeat China, the West continuously granted military aid to India throughout the "Sino-Indian war of 1962". Consequently, Pakistan's attachment with the West cooled down, and the quest for searching for new friends started in order to maintain the balance of power against India. In these circumstances, China fulfilled Pakistan's quest of finding friends by becoming a close partner of Pakistan.

Thus, the Soviet Union began to realize that Pakistan's discouragement by the West might weaken its pro-west policy and bring it close to China thereby, improving their relation ([Kronstadt, 2011](#)). Thus, the Soviet Union began to continuously laugh at Pakistan and continue to reinforce its links with India while Pakistan continued to strengthen its relations with China ([Subtain, Hussain, Farooq, & Khan, 2016](#)).

India's Position from 1962-1991

After the disastrous debacle of 1962, India commenced a considerable program of remodeling military. The government perpetrated itself to

establish a huge army, restructure the air force, and expand naval programs. After the demise of Nehru, the successive prime ministers could not formally abandon the NAM, but practically they resumed a realist orientation. In 1965, there was again a conflict with Pakistan on the Kashmir matter. This ended in a truce mediated by the USSR, and immediately after peace, LB Shastri demised in suspicious circumstances. In these years, the US got more and more engaged in Vietnam War and thus focused itself away from South Asia. In 1966, the economic downturn in the country led to Johnson administration, during which India faced economic compulsion for devaluing its currency. One more reason for this undue pressure from the US was that India had denounced the Vietnam War ([Bhattacharya, 1978](#)).

In the 1960s, USSR had sensed the opportunity to increase its superiority in the Indian subcontinent. They brokered the peace agreement between India and Pakistan in Tashkent in 1966. As the US had disengaged itself from the subcontinent, China moved towards Pakistan to balance Indian Power and its proximity to USSR. In 1964, China conducted its first nuclear test at Lop Nor. This was a shocking concern for Indians, and some leaders in the Parliament called for the abandonment of the policy of Non-alignment. The need of the hour was to acquire an independent nuclear weapons option ([Chaudry, India's Foreign Policy Between 1947 and 1962, 2016](#)).

Indira Gandhi tried to gain nuclear support from the major powers but was not successful in doing so. After this failure, she organized India's "Subterranean Nuclear Explosions Project" (SNEP). This project enabled India to conduct its "First Nuclear Test" at Pokharan, Rajasthan, in May 1974.

When India faced millions of refugees from Bengal due to the civil war, Indira Gandhi quickly adopted a sensitive politico-diplomatic strategy to divide Pakistan. Under this strategy the USSR guaranteed India's security in case of any possible Chinese action against India in support of Pakistan. Thus, despite India's allegiance to Non-alignment, it signed a "20-year pact" of peace, friendship, and cooperation with the Soviet Union in August 1971. Pakistani attack on Indian northern airbases in 1971 triggered the Indian attack in East Pakistan.

However, the Indian Army, along with an aboriginal Bengali rebel movement, the "Mukti Vahini," defeated the Pakistani forces within a period of two weeks. The result was a split in Pakistan and exposure of India as an undisputed dominant power in South Asia. This was the most important achievement in this period. However, India was unable to use this military success to become a real superpower in the region. The economy was weak partly due to the state led Industrialization and partly due to Indian export pessimism. India could not develop its ties with the global economy, and thus Indian economy was kept marred by paucity of investment, license raj, corruption, technological failure, lack of innovation, and poor entrepreneurship ([Mallik, 1967](#)).

The economic weakness was made more severe by the global criticism of India's test of its nuclear weapon in May 1974. India was slapped with considerable monetary and nuclear constraints, and Indian policymakers decided not to conduct any further test. In 1979, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, and in its aftermath, the US chose Pakistan to enter into strategic partnership. To expel USSR from Afghanistan, the US relied heavily on Pakistan, and Pakistani President Zia Ul Haq was able to exact significant economic and military price from the US ([Van Eekelen, 2015](#)). From 1979 onward, the US promised two foreign assistance packages to Pakistan one worth USD 3.2 Billion for five years and another worth USD 4.02 Billion for another six years. However, the second one was not fully paid because USSR withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989. Meanwhile the world could know about the clandestine nuclear programme of Pakistan, and thus the US imposed economic sanctions on it. From 1962 till 1991, barring few fronts, India remained insignificant for the global powers ([Chaudry, India's Foreign Policy between 1962 and 1991, 2016](#)).

Pakistan's Position from 1962-1991

Regardless of being allied with Pakistan, the Kennedy government refined India and probable it as a weight to China. It was a matter of concern for Pakistan. Thus in July 1961, a visit was paid by President Ayub Khan to the United States. During his stay, he stated that "if there is a real trouble,

there is no other country in Asia on whom you will be able to trust. The only people who will stand by you are the people of Pakistan, provided you are also prepared to stand by them". However, the USA and Western countries rushed military devices to India after the "Sino-Indian border dispute" in October 1962. They also undergone combined military cooperation with India and offered nuclear assistance to India. Pakistan got confused by these propensities (Bhutto, 1964).

Pakistani leaders thus decided to review Pakistan's foreign policy to establish friendly ties with the Soviet Union. After that, steps were being taken by Pakistan for improving its relations with the USSR and China (Rais, 1977). Pakistan and the Soviet Union signed many agreements for monetary and technical cooperation. In 1961, USSR offered economic assistance and oil exploration in Pakistan. More agreements were signed between Islamabad and Moscow in January and April 1965, respectively. Ayub Khan, the president of Pakistan, visited the Soviet Union. He further signed some agreements for machinery for oil exploration and cultural exchanges (Singh, 1970). Apart from improving its relations with the Soviet Union, Pakistan also focuses on China. Pakistan supported China regarding the membership of United Nations. In 1963, border conflict arose between the two states, but they resolved the conflict in peaceful ways. On April 29, 1964, "Pakistan international airlines" (PIA) revived its air links with China. Following air links with China, the establishment of air links between Islamabad and Moscow also took place. Pakistan requested for the seat of China in the United Nations and provided support to China in its struggles in order to counter America. China has also been very supportive and friendly towards Pakistan and has always respected Pakistan's national integrity by supporting Pakistan stance on Kashmir, which can be judged from Zhou Enlai statement during his stay in Pakistan that "Chinese will support the right of self-determination of the people of Kashmir" (Rais, 1977).

This growing Soviet Union and China relations with Pakistan confused the USA. The USA pronounced the Pak-China air agreement as an unfortunate breach of free world solidarity. The American started to compel Pakistan not to

establish friendly relations with China by prohibiting her from inviting Zhou Enlai to Pakistan but was refused by Pakistan. In reaction to Pakistan's refusal, America denied support for the construction of Airport in Dhaka, due to which Ayub Khan postponed his visit to the United States. Then America did not help Pakistan during the 1965 and 1971 Wars. Then Pakistan obtained weapons and military assistance from several non-American resources, particularly from China and Turkey. It furthermore obtained assistance from France, Britain, West Germany, Italy, and the Soviet Union (Hussain, 2016). Although the relation of Pakistan with the United States was hostile due to US criticism on Pakistan's nuclear program; however, bilateral relations were resumed by the visits of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to the United States, first in September 1973 and second in February 1975. In this way, the United States revived its assistance towards Pakistan (Hussain, 2016). Furthermore, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 proved a landmark in Pak-US relations. The US increased monetary and nuclear assistance to Pakistan in order to make it capable of confronting the Soviets in Afghanistan (Hussain, 2016). In period ranges from 1983-87, the United States offered forty F-16 aircraft to Pakistan apart from other assistance agreements of war (Kronstadt, 2011). During this period, Pakistan-China remained cordial. China extended complete assistance to Pakistan in countering India and tackling Afghan crises. The barter trade through the Silk Road expanded, and China supported Pakistan in agriculture, nuclear field, and energy sector (Rais, 1977). Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) played an important role in addressing the Afghanistan problem to Muslim community. In this way, many Muslim states granted aid to tackle expenses of Afghan Refugees. Pakistan also entered into many agreements with Muslim states in order to boost its economy and develop itself militarily (Arsa, 2008). Besides the assistance by different states during the Afghan crises, Pakistan also faced serious challenges after Soviet withdrawal. The post-withdrawal problem like intra-Afghan settlement was an obstacle in the returning of refugees to Afghanistan from Pakistan. Thus, Pakistan again started to host refugees (Qureshi, 1997).

Moreover, the US also diverted its attention from Afghanistan. Consequently, Pakistan became alone in front of these problems. Aid for refugees was also minimized by United States. Furthermore, the United States also disrupted military sales and training programme in Pakistan ([Arsa, 2008](#)).

India's Position from 1991-2001

The Collapse of the Soviet Union and transfiguration of the global order pressurized India's policymakers to initiate radical changes in Indian foreign policy at a couple of degrees. NAM movement had ceased to have much meaning, and it was shunned for all practical purposes.

During the 1990s, the following were trends in foreign policy:

- Firstly, the United States, which was now the strongest power in the world, had few interests in India. In fact, the entire western world was interested in India mainly with respect to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) because India was a staunch opponent to this treaty.
- Secondly, in the second half of the 1990s, India was identified as one of the huge emanating Markets by the US department of commerce. Thus, the US expressed concerns over low investment and trade ties with India ([Vijay, 1996](#)).
- Thirdly, India started to pay attention to South-East Asia, which remained negligible throughout the Cold war era, and embarked upon a "Look East policy". Further, Indian Premier Narasimha Rao government tried to improve relations with China. A visit was paid by him to China in 1993, which resulted in an agreement by both countries for ensuring the maintenance of peace and serenity along the line of actual control. However, such Confidence- Building Measures (CBMs) proved unsuccessful whose aim was to reduce tensions along the Line of Actual Control.
- Finally, due to the insurgency in Kashmir since 1989, the relationship of India and Pakistan remained bitter as always. India has been failed in controlling the insurgency due

to continued Pakistani assistance for the insurgents.

The Vajpayee Government thus adopted a nuclear strategy and carried out nuclear tests in 1998 in Pokharan. This resulted in the recognition of India as a de facto nuclear weapons state by the international community despite the hostile attitude and sanctions of the United States. India also reclaimed all that had gone under Pakistan's army possession. However, a full scale war was avoided ([Coolben, 2012](#)). The circumstances in the 1990s onward that underpin the international relations can be summed up in the following.

- The emergence of China as a fast growing economic power.
- Emergence of Islamic Terror in the name of Jihad.
- The emergence of new powers in the Middle East such as Iraq and Iran.
- Importance of Oil in the International Politics
- The emergence of New Economic order followed by India's liberalization of the economy.
- Emergence of Organized Terrorism around the world.
- The emergence of new tools and techniques such as the Internet revolution.
- Emergence of a market culture around the world.

After the terrorist attack on the Indian parliament in December 2001, India blamed Pakistan for it and started to develop hostile relations with Pakistan, which brought mixed consequences. Thus, relations with Pakistan have been remaining quite fraught till now. India's relations with the United States improved and secured a firm footing. Thus India has also been helped by the United States under Bush Administration to free India from the rules of the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and also the two countries pursued a "Civilian Nuclear Agreement" which further strengthen their ties ([Chaudry, India's Foreign Policy between 1991 and 1998, 2016](#)).

Pakistan's Position from 1991-2001

The end of the Cold war resulted in the cooling down of Pak-US relations as the United States

became successful in achieving its objectives. Pakistan was no more important to the United States. In this way, the United States started to isolate itself from Pakistan. Following the Soviet Union withdrawal from Afghanistan, the US also imposed sanctions on Pakistan ([Coolben, 2012](#)).

Following the 1974 nuclear tests, in May 1998, India under Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee conducted its nuclear bomb tests declaring India a full nuclear state. However after fifteen days, Pakistan also conducted six underground nuclear tests ([Coolben, 2012](#)). The international community, particularly the United Nations Security Council condemned such acts and pressured both countries to put signature on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) ([Coolben, 2012](#)).

The nuclear status of both the countries became clear by their explosions. A de facto status of nuclear weapons states have also been acquired by both States with these tests ([Mahmood, 1999](#)). Moreover, the explosions resulted in the imposition of sanctions on India on May 13, 1998 and on Pakistan on May 30 ([Lepoer, 1998](#)).

India's Position from 2001-2018

Although India itself endorsed the US strategy against terrorism yet the US decision of choosing Pakistan for its policy of counter-terrorism upset the Indian leaders. It got disturbed by the resuscitated relations of United States and Pakistan. They claimed that the terrorist groups in Kashmir are having support of Pakistan because Pakistan has intense connections with Taliban. Thus, Pakistan is not a competent partner in counter terrorism strategy. India also wanted that Pakistan-based Islamic groups in Kashmir should also be the target of counter terrorism strategy as it considered Pakistan responsible for the militants attack on the Indian Parliament on December 13, 2001 ([Arsa, 2008](#)).

The railroad and air links had been blocked by India since January 1, 2002 by denying Pakistan rights of flights of aircraft. Moreover, diplomatic relations had also been demoted by India. Thus, extreme tensions arose between the militaries of both countries as Pakistan also deployed its armed forces. They were almost going to war but have

been prevented by the diplomatic intercession of the US, the UK and the European Union ([Jauhari, 2013](#)).

The rise of China in South Asia agitated the United States. The US interest to counter China has led to the closeness of India and the United States as the United States perceived India as a responsible nuclear power in the region. However, Pakistan's covert nuclear program and its growing links with militants have been perceived by the US against its interests in the region. This led to the signing of the nuclear deal between the US and India in 2005 ([Jauhari, 2013](#)).

This deal is beneficial for India as it is meeting India's quest for gaining nuclear dominancy. Despite India's attempt of conducting non-peaceful nuclear tests in the 1990s and being non signatory of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the US had signed the deal with India instead of Pakistan. However, the Indo-US deal led to the agitation of Pakistan regarding India's power. Thus in order to counter-weight India, Pakistan moved towards China. China itself was not happy about the US-India nuclear deal as it was a hurdle in Chinese own interests in the region. China responded positively by providing nuclear assistance to Pakistan like before. This led to the visit of former president of Pakistan Pervez Musharraf to China. The visit led to the involvement of China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC) in the establishment of nuclear reactors for Pakistan and resuscitation of nuclear cooperation between both countries ([Hussain M., 2017](#)).

Thus a deal has been signed by the China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC) in 2006 for building more nuclear reactors. Moreover, it has been recently recommended by the China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC) that it will build a one Gigawatt nuclear plant (having more strength than the four reactors) in Pakistan. This whole situation of convergence and divergence of interests has increased arms race between Pakistan and India as well as the cold war between US and China. Attempts have always been made by the United States for suppressing China's interests. Similarly, China has always been trying to counter-weight the United States influence in the region. US deal with India has been seen by China as a hurdle in its

objectives in the region. However, the US also viewed China's links with Pakistan as an obstacle in US dominancy in the region. The growing conflict of US and China has thus deepened the conflict of India and Pakistan. Both China and US are supported their respective partners in order to counter-weight each other which in turn increased the rivalry of India and Pakistan, resulting in receiving more aid by India and Pakistan from external major powers ([Jauhari, 2013](#)).

Pakistan's Position from 2001-2018

The terrorist attack on September 11, 2001 changed the whole international political system. Countering terrorism became the vital and immediate objective of the international community. The United States blamed Al-Qaida for these attacks and declared global war on terrorism ([Belasco, 2009](#)). Thus, Afghanistan again became the focus of attention for the United States. It also affected US policy towards Pakistan as the US again started to see Pakistan as a frontline state. In this way, Pakistan became an ally of the US in the global war against terrorism and, in turn, received substantial aid from the US ([Arsa, 2008](#)). The aid of United States to Pakistan during the War on Terror was more than its aid during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan ([Belasco, 2009](#)).

Besides China's earlier deal of constructing two reactors at Chashma nuclear complex in Punjab province, a Pak-China 2010 agreement has been signed by China and Pakistan in which China intended to sell two additional reactors to Pakistan to be based at the same place (Joshi, 2011). The deal is the extension of the 2003 agreement between Pakistan and China ([Kumar & Kalis, 2015](#)).

"One Belt One Road" (OBOR) initiative has been announced by China in 2013 in order to link China with West Asia, Central Asia, and parts of South Asia. The "China Pakistan Economic Corridor" (CPEC) is a part of the "One Belt One Road" (OBOR) aiming to ensure economic cooperation and uplift and to increase regional links ([Afridi S. K., 2015](#)).

CPEC is to make China a significant country in the world on the economic ground by linking China with both Africa and Europe via Pakistan. Basically,

it is to link the northwestern region of Xinjiang (China) and Gawadar Port (Pakistan) on the Arabian Sea by means of rail and road system. CPEC also includes the transfer of oil, gas, and other resources through pipelines in the adjacent areas. Besides this, the project aims at the establishment of a new international airport at Gwadar apart from the progress of Gawadar Port ([Farooque, 2016](#)).

The project is beneficial for Pakistan because it will help Pakistan in boosting its economy. In turn, Pakistan will be able to counter-weight India in the region. The project will also be helpful in deterring India from taking any aggressive step against Pakistan in the presence of Chinese armed forces in Pakistan administered Kashmir ([Ahmad & Malik, 2017](#)).

Currently, Shanghai is obtaining oil through a distance of about 16,000 km from the Strait of Malacca. The project will benefit China in acquiring oil through minimal distance route of about 5000 km through Gawadar ([Farooque, 2016](#)). CPEC is intended to raise trade between China, Africa, and the Middle East. It will also minimize time for China to import oil from the Middle East through Pakistan. CPEC will also link China with Central Asian States, which are rich in oil and other natural resource, can also be called as purse of the world. In this way, China will be able to counter-weight the US in Gulf countries by having a firm hold in these regions. Moreover, CPEC will ensure stability in the regions of western China, including Muslim majority city of Xinjiang, by boosting their economies ([Afridi S. K., 2015](#)). Pakistan being a less developed State is in need of foreign funding for the development of its infrastructure. CPEC will enable Pakistan to raise trade and developing its infrastructure. Apart from the fact that CPEC is providing a permanent place to Chinese in Pakistan, it can also not be ignored that it will stabilize Pakistan on political as well as on economic grounds. It will enable Pakistan to counterbalance India in the region ([Ahmad & Malik, 2017](#)).

Apart from benefiting China and Pakistan, CPEC itself is facing challenges from its competitors, particularly from Iran's Chabahar port. India is trying to counterbalance CPEC through Chabahar port with Iran (Rashid, 2017). The insurgency in Baluchistan is another important challenge faced by CPEC as it is a hurdle in the development of

Gawadar port ([Farooque, 2016](#)). Moreover, India also criticized CPEC by claiming it a threat to its interest and security as it is passing over disputed areas of Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan very close to Indian borders. The fact is that India view CPEC as a tool against India ([Ahmad & Malik, 2017](#)). However, besides challenges faced by CPEC, the Central Asian States, Afghanistan, Iran, and Russia are taking interest to become part of CPEC ([Afridi S. K., 2015](#)).

Conclusion

The importance of the balance of power in the region emerged soon after the partition of subcontinent as Indo-Pak rivalry has a close link with the balance of power. The hostile approach of both states towards each other always invited major powers to act as external balancers. Overall, the balance of power dynamics always revolves around power struggles between these major players by aligning with either India or Pakistan, depending on their own interest, thereby ensuring or disturbing peace between Pakistan and India.

Originally, the struggle for power in South Asia was between USA and USSR (Bipolarity), and both India and Pakistan took advantage of the cold war. It may also be noted that USA and USSR also always took advantage of Indo-Pak rivalry during their Cold War policy of expansionism. However, in the Post-Cold War era (Uni-polarity), China came to the ground as the rival State of USA.

China being the rising power, is following a peaceful coexistence policy towards small states, which is a threat to the hegemonic position of India in South Asia, as the small states of South Asia are moving towards China.

Russia had had deep connections with South Asia from the very beginning when it was a superpower (Soviet Union). As to keep the balance of power against USA, it conducted relations with Pakistan and India in many ways. However, in the post-Cold war period, when Russia emerged as the

principle heir of the Soviet Union, it devoted immense attention to India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. Traditionally, India being an important arms market for Russia, occupied the core position for Russia. However, the USA-India nuclear deal and growing USA-India strategic ties diverted Russian attention towards Pakistan. Thus, a shift occur in Russian policy towards South Asia as Russia moves closer towards Pakistan while drifting away from its India-centric approach in South Asia.

The USA has always looked towards South Asia, keeping in view its strategic interest for the sake of counterbalancing its rivals, previously the Soviet Union and now China. Like the cold war era when the USA was trying to gain dominating position in South Asia against its rival Russia, in the post Soviet era, it is trying to maintain the balance of power against the rising power of China. This is affecting the balance of power in South Asia among Pakistan and India.

Apart from the role of major powers, world power structure, Afghanistan crises, Kashmir issue, nuclearization, and China Pakistan Economic Corridor are the strategies which either maintained or disturbed the balance of power in South Asia.

The study concluded that the convergence and divergence of interests of Pakistan, India, China, Russia, and the USA has impacts on South Asia as well as the global balance of power. India being larger and economically stronger than Pakistan is on the verge of becoming a great power in the international system, but it cannot be assumed that there is no balance of power in South Asia because the balance of power is a dynamic process. Sometimes it tilted in favour of India while sometimes in favour of Pakistan depending on changing international situation and needs and interests of major powers. Moreover, apart from certain imbalances in other fields, there is a balance of power in the military field as both India and Pakistan are nuclear powers, and both are secure regarding their defense security which is more important than the rest.

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