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# TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE SDG OF ENDING POVERTY IN SOUTH ASIA: A CASE STUDY OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN

SYED IMRAN SARDAR\*

## Abstract

*Ending poverty by 2030 in all its dimensions is indeed challenging. It is even more challenging for countries that remained off-the-track in the previous Millennium Development Goal of halving poverty by 2015. The reason behind it was two-fold: lack of will and the states' vulnerability to inter and intra-state conflicts. Both apply to India and Pakistan, the two largest and the most populous states in South Asia. Since their inception, the relationship between both states has never been smooth, resultantly, human security was compromised. In line with this thinking, this paper purposely takes India and Pakistan as a case study to highlight the state of poverty by monitoring progress made in the Millennium well as the Sustainable Development Goal of eradicating poverty so far. While examining, the paper argues that ending poverty by 2030 would remain a pipedream, unless both India and Pakistan prioritise non-traditional issues and put serious efforts into the global mission of poverty-free world.*

## Introduction

In September 2000, all the United Nations (UN) member states unanimously adopted the Millennium Declaration. This declaration set out eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be achieved in a time span of fifteen years, i.e., by 2015. These MDGs were primarily a global commitment to the following:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;
2. Achieve universal primary education;
3. Promote gender equality;

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4. Reduce child mortality;
5. Improve maternal health;
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases;
7. Ensure environmental sustainability; and
8. Develop a global partnership for development.

According to the 2105 UN report on MDGs, this global effort produced tangible outcomes and overall became a historically successful anti-poverty movement.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the report also admitted that income inequalities persisted, which continued to cause uneven progress in lifting people out of extreme poverty and other related goals. The co-joined target of halving hunger was also narrowly missed. Similarly, the goal of universal primary education was missed as well. The target of gender parity is yet to be met. There was tangible progress in the field of child mortality and maternal health, though, both remained below the target. The number of new HIV/AIDS patients fell by 40 percent, but the target of halting and reversing its spread could not be achieved. Moreover, around 663 million people in the world are still deprived of safe drinking water.<sup>2</sup>

The MDG initiative, despite its patchy progress, established that development through international commitment under the UN is indispensable. The UN helped with setting up a Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund. While keeping in mind the strengths and weaknesses of the fifteen years-long journey to meet the MDG goals, a new post-2015 agenda was designed in the shape of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved by 2030. These goals reiterated, in a more holistic and enthusiastic way, a global commitment to the following:

1. End poverty in all its dimensions;
2. End hunger by achieving food security, improving nutrition, and promoting agriculture;
3. Ensure good health and wellbeing for all ages;
4. Ensure quality education for all;
5. Achieve gender equality by empowering women and girls;
6. Ensure access to clean water and sanitation for all;
7. Ensure affordable, reliable, and clean energy for all;

8. Promote economic growth, employment, and decent work for all;
9. Build resilient infrastructure and industry and foster innovation;
10. Reduce inter and intrastate equality;
11. Make cities and communities sustainable;
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production;
13. Take urgent action to deal with climate change and its impacts;
14. Conserve and sustainably use water resources;
15. Take care of life on land through managing forests and land degradation;
16. Build strong institutions and inclusive societies through promoting peace and justice; and
17. Revitalise partnerships to achieve the sustainable goals.

The SDGs are aimed at sustaining the progress achieved during the 2000-2015 MDG period and look forward to bridging the gap between the missed targets. Like the MDGs, a Sustainable Development Goals Fund assisted needy states in their quest for reaching the SDGs. The SDGs are to be achieved by 2030. In this renewed effort too, poverty alleviation has been prioritised as goal number one and is, thus, the focus of this study.

As the world is moving from halving extreme poverty to ending poverty, South Asia is still grappling with the 2015 millennium targets. It missed most of the targets set out in the September 2000 MDG agenda. The overall situation of the region is not different from Sub-Saharan Africa with regard to poverty reduction, which is the first and foremost goal of both MDGs and SDGs. Unlike in Africa, the reason for non-eradication of poverty in South Asia is primarily a lack of will on the part of member states. Secondly, India and Pakistan, the two largest and most populous states play a key role in regional developments. By and large, their bilateral relationship shapes this region's ability to achieve socio-economic goals. After fifteen years of trying to meet the MDG poverty reduction target, India and Pakistan together still have the largest concentration of people living in debilitating poverty. The numbers of poor partly rose because people were unable to surpass the poverty line through increased income, as reflected in the Gross Domestic Product

(GDP). Furthermore, elite capture worked against the poor. This is a kind of corruption in which resources are manoeuvred to benefit certain influential people rather than the larger population.<sup>3</sup> Vital resources include land that in turn produces food to reduce hunger, especially among the poor. Elite capture continued to skewer the benefits of any increase in the level of the GDP, which worked against the poor.

Overall, poverty figures also did not decline as expected under the MDGs because of uncontrolled population growth and, combined with natural calamities, posed serious challenges for South Asia. Natural calamities have the potential to put the target at risk. The latest report of Overseas Development Institute (ODI) titled *The Geography of Poverty, Disasters and Climate Change in 2030* put 11 countries most at risk of disaster-induced poverty, including Pakistan. It also singled out India for a special mention. The report argued that poverty and disasters are closely interlinked, as the countries that are expected to have a very high level of poverty in 2030, coincidentally, are the most vulnerable to natural hazards.<sup>4</sup>

Both India and Pakistan are at risk of natural disasters. Since a massive earthquake of 7.6 magnitude struck Pakistan in 2005, it has faced more than a dozen strong jolts that severely damaged infrastructure and upset the life of hundreds of thousands of people. Similarly, Indian river banks and deltas are prone to flooding. For instance, a massive flood in Bihar affected more than seven million people. These factors reversed most of the progress achieved towards the goal of eradicating poverty. Thus, the situation on ground urges both Islamabad and New Delhi to adopt a people-centric approach and to prioritise poverty as their first and foremost goal to make the region free of economic deprivation.

In line with this thinking, the paper in hand takes Pakistan and India as a collective case study and monitors their progress in meeting the first SDG goal related to poverty eradication by the year 2030. The paper is broadly divided into two main sections. The first looks at the progress achieved by 2015 under the umbrella of the MDGs and the causes behind missed targets. The second section deals with the SDGs and highlights the achievements so far. It discusses the problems and prospects in visualising success in SDGs' 2030 commitment. The paper concludes that despite efforts, both India and Pakistan remained



unable to meet the MDG target of eradicating poverty because of the strategic and security environment due to Indian and Pakistan rivalry and lack of political will. The paper argues that meeting SDGs is challenging but attainable if both states infuse genuine impulse and prioritise their non-traditional issues. The paper further argues that progress on poverty reduction in the whole of South Asia in general and India and Pakistan, in particular, is grossly dependent on conflict and cooperation between these two big states. Hence, cooperation is the key to eradicating poverty in South Asia and this is attainable even before the SDG target year of 2030.

### **Methodology**

This paper provides a comparative analysis of the progress achieved by India and Pakistan to reach the millennium development goal of ending poverty by 2015. The comparison is based on the data on economic figures, as well as poverty calculated on the basis of health factors. However, this data is not available equally for both Pakistan and India. Thus, the sources for Pakistan include official poverty estimates using calorie-based figures and the cost of basic needs through Poverty Head Count Ration (PHCR). For India, data is used from the Expert Group Report (EGR) prepared under the supervision of C. Rangarajan, former chairman of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council, and MDGs-specific country reports. Apart from official data, the paper adds published works such as working papers, credible newspapers, and the World Bank's estimates, with the intent to present a comprehensive analysis.

The paper also presents a brief comparison of the progress achieved in SDGs, as no official country-specific report is available yet. Moreover, the two countries utilise different methods to evaluate poverty. Since June 2016, Pakistan has used the Multi-dimensional Poverty Index (MPI). India, on the other hand, has not yet adopted the MPI to track its progress for achieving the SDGs. Therefore, I have extracted data for India from the global MPI for comparative analysis with Pakistan. The paper goes on to extend the discussion to shortfalls in the previous policies, present challenges, and future prospects to materialise the SDG vision of eradicating poverty by 2030.

## The goal of halving poverty in the Millennium Development Agenda

The 2000-2015 MDGs and the 2015-2030 SDGs could together be said to form the UN's post-2015 Millennium Development Agenda.<sup>5</sup> To fully comprehend and analyse the prospects for the success of the SDGs, we return to the MDGs in which the UN had set the goal to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger by 2015. As Table 1 shows, this goal had broadly three targets: target one was to halve between 1990 and 2015 the proportion of people whose income was less than \$1.25 a day; target two was to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people; and target three was to halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger. These three targets had a total of nine indicators.

Every state had a choice to select two or all three targets. They could also modify the indicators for reaching the MDGs' first goal of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger. For instance, there were three targets for this goal in which the first and the second target directly dealt with extreme poverty and hunger. Many states selected only two targets and adjusted the indicators according to their national poverty lines.

**Table 1**

### Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Targets	Indicators
Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day	1.1 Proportion of population below \$1 (PPP) per day 1.2 Poverty gap ratio 1.3 Share of poorest quintile in national consumption
Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people	1.4 Growth rate of GDP per person employed 1.5 Employment-to-population ratio 1.6 Proportion of employed people living below \$1 (PPP) per day 1.7 Proportion of own-account and contributing family workers in total employment
Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger	1.8 Prevalence of underweight children under five years of age 1.9 Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption

**Source:** Extracted from The United Nations Children's Fund official website, available at <[https://www.unicef.org/statistics/index\\_24304.html](https://www.unicef.org/statistics/index_24304.html)>

Globally, the first MDG target of halving the rate of extreme poverty was met five years before the scheduled date of 2015. In 1990, more or less, half the population of developing countries was surviving on less than \$1.25 a day that dropped to 14 percent in 2015. Progress towards realising the second target of achieving full employment and decent work for all, including women and young, remained below the satisfactory level. Statistics revealed that the global employment-population ratio dropped by only two percent from 62 to 60. In the third target, the proportion of undernourished people fell sharply but not by the target of half the population.<sup>6</sup>

Pakistan adopted both targets for eventually achieving the goal of ending poverty and the three indicators against which progress was measured towards attaining the MDG target of eventually ending hunger that spelt out as follows:

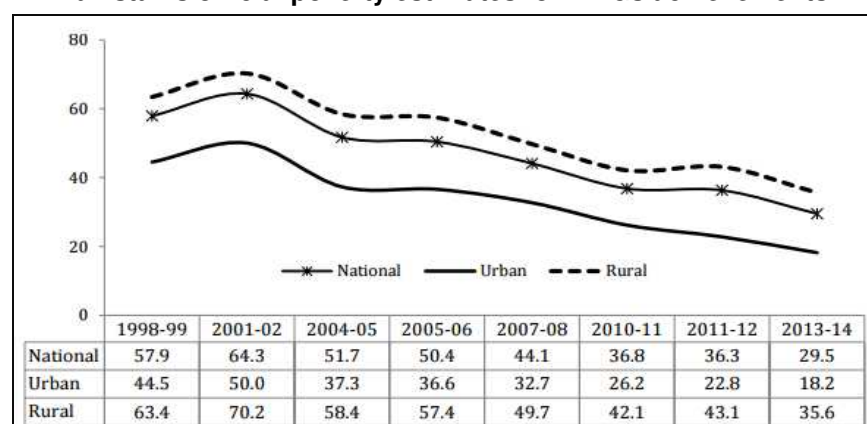
1. Halving the proportion of population below the calorie-based food non-food poverty line;
2. Halving the proportion of underweight children under the age of five; and
3. Halving the proportion of population below the minimum level of dietary energy consumption.

Upon completion, in 2015, of the given timeframe, these indicators showed unsatisfactory progress, as Pakistan remained off-track with respect to halving the proportion of underweight children and the population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption. In all the provinces, i.e., Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), and Balochistan, progress severely lagged, particularly with regard to the prevalence of underweight children.<sup>7</sup> The percentage of underweight children was 40 in 1990-91. It declined to 31.5 percent in 2011-12, which was still higher than the target of 20 percent.

Regarding halving the proportion of population below the poverty line by 2015, Pakistan was generally on track. The MDG method of assessing poverty was based on Food-Energy Intake. Under this method, Pakistan's population below the poverty line fell from 34.5 percent in 2001/02 to 12.4 percent in 2010/11 and 9.3 percent for the year 2013-14. Thus, Pakistan was in line with the MDG target of reducing extreme poverty.

To monitor poverty even more accurately than during the 2000-2015 MDGs period, Pakistan adopted a new Cost of Basic Needs (CBN) approach after 2015. In the standard CBN methodology, basic food items are selected according to the minimum nutritional intake and then the cost of acquiring the basket is also added. According to this methodology, Pakistan's poverty percentage stands at 29.5, down from 58 percent during the MDG baseline year of 1990. This means that 55 million people were living below the poverty line in the year 2013-14. The urban incidence was estimated at 18.2 percent (down from 44.5 percent), whereas the rural incidence of poor persons was 35.6 percent (down from 63 percent). The figures also indicate that the rural household consumes more than urban families.<sup>8</sup> Overall, these figures compare favourably with the MDG baseline of the year 1990 and, therefore, Pakistan was successful in attaining the target of the reduction of poverty.

**Figure 1**  
**Pakistan's official poverty estimates for MDGs achievements**



**Source:** *Pakistan Economic Survey 2015-16*, Ministry of Finance, Government of Pakistan.

In the case of India, the country adopted a different set of criteria for the two indicators to measure poverty reduction for halving the number of poor persons between 1990 and 2015. For India, poverty meant, one, the proportion of people whose income was less than one dollar a day and, two, the Poverty Head Count Ratio (PHCR) to assess hunger that was an MDG co-indicator of poverty. The MDG target was to

halve the proportion of people suffering from hunger. In 1990, India's PHCR stood at 47.8 percent, while the MDG target worked out to around 23.9 percent. India achieved this target ahead of the deadline. According to the 2011-12 PHCR estimates, the poverty ratio was 21.9 percent.

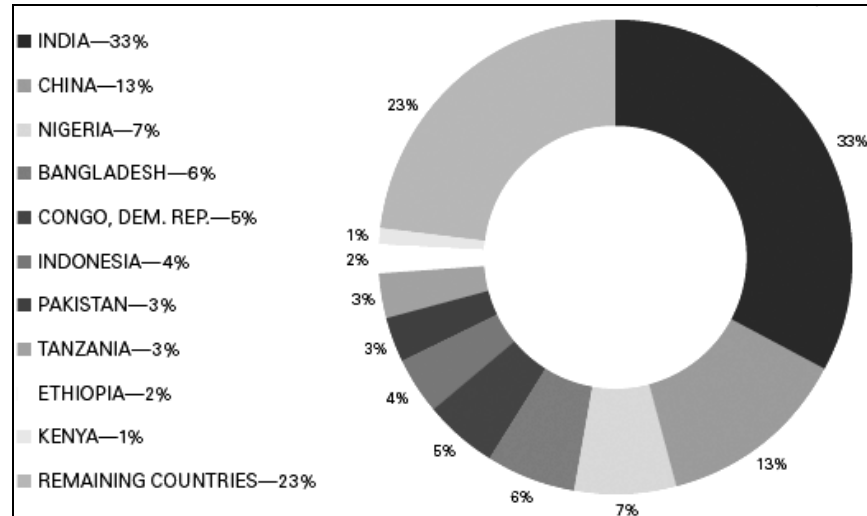
In India, efforts for poverty reduction have shown sustained growth. This is a result of an increase in social spending through programmes such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act of 2005 (MGNREGA) and National Rural Health Mission (NRHM). These programmes have undoubtedly played a significant role in poverty reduction. However, progress in the second target was low. A quarter of Indians remain undernourished, over one-third of children are underweight, and nearly one-third of the world's food insecure people live in India.<sup>9</sup> In 1990, the malnourished child percentage was 53.5. In a span of fifteen years, India was only able to cut it by 13.5 percent and the percentage stood at 40 in 2015, far higher than the MDG target of 22 percent.

Based on the Expert Group Report (prepared under the supervision of C. Rangarajan, former chairman of Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council of India), the monthly per capita consumption expenditure of Rs.972 in rural areas and Rs.1,407 in urban areas was set as the poverty line at the all-India level. This implies a monthly consumption expenditure of Rs.4,860 in rural areas or Rs.7,035 in urban areas for a family of five at 2011-12 prices.<sup>10</sup> Per day, it is Rs.32.4 for rural and Rs.46.9 for urban areas. The monthly per-capita consumption of Rs.972 for rural areas includes all food and non-food expenditures. It included Rs.554 for food items, Rs.141 for essential non-food items, and Rs.277 for other expenses. Similarly, Rs.1,407 for urban areas was the sum of expenses of Rs.656 for food items, Rs.407 for essential non-food items, and Rs.344 for other expenses.

According to this poverty line, 30.9 percent of India's rural population and 26.4 percent of urban population was poor in 2011-12. In total, 57.3 percent (363 million) of the whole population was below the poverty line, that was comparatively higher than Pakistan's official estimates. According to the World Bank's latest report, India alone shares 33 percent of the world's total number of people living below the poverty line of 1.25 dollars a day in the world (see Figure 1). Pakistan is better off in dealing with extreme poverty. It has already achieved the

target of halving extreme poverty before 2015.

**Figure 2**  
The share of the top ten countries in extreme poverty



**Source:** Prosperity for All: Ending Extreme Poverty, World Bank, 2014

If we look at India's and Pakistan's status in global estimates (World Bank, Headcount Analysis 2014), we find that 21.04 percent of the whole population (2008 estimates) in Pakistan was living below the poverty line of US \$1.25 a day. If the baseline is increased to \$2 a day (the international standard of middle-income countries), then around 60.19 percent of the population falls below the poverty line. In the case of India, 32.67 percent of its whole population falls below the poverty line of \$1.25 a day. Whereas, according to the standard for middle-income countries, around 68.72 percent of the whole population is considered poor.<sup>11</sup> Comparatively, Pakistan's position is better than India in both international poverty line estimates. Even in comparison to other South Asian countries, Pakistan is better off than Bangladesh (43.25 and 76.54 percent in \$1.25 a day and \$2 a day, respectively) and Nepal (24.82 percent and 57.25 percent).<sup>12</sup>

### **The goal of eradicating poverty in the Sustainable Development Agenda**

Failure to achieve MDGs in 2015 proved that traditional methods of poverty eradication had severe limitations. Traditionally, poverty was assessed by measuring income or consumption. However, calorie-based or income-based criteria for measuring poverty are static in nature and address neither the incidences nor the multiple dimensions of poverty. The approach was basically one-dimensional and categorised a person as poor if his or her income was below the national or international poverty line. This cut-off line only ensured that people had enough money to buy food. According to Amartya Kumar Sen, “You cannot draw a poverty line and then apply it across the board to everyone in the same way, without taking into account personal characteristics and circumstances,”<sup>13</sup> because people who fall below the poverty line experience multiple deprivations such as poor health, lack of shelter, education, sanitation, and clean water.

This gap was firstly addressed in the Human Development Index (HDI), jointly developed by the Pakistani and Indian economists Mahbub ul Haq and Amartya Sen. HDI has three dimensions under which countries are ranked as developed, developing, or underdeveloped: life expectancy, education, and per capita income. A country with a high rate of life expectancy, per capita income, and a long period of education is considered developed. From 1990 onwards, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) started using the HDI in its annual Human Development Reports.

To further address the multidimensionality of poverty Sabina Alkire and James Foster developed the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) to improve upon the HDI. This approach takes into account the multiple deprivations faced by the poor by increasing the criteria for assessing poverty. Although MPI also has three dimensions like HDI, they are different: health, education, and living standards. These dimensions further have ten indicators; two each for health and education, and six for living standards. Beginning in 2009, Mexico was the first country to use this approach for official poverty estimates. In 2010, the UN Human Development Report also introduced the MPI to rank countries according to the above-mentioned indicators. It was expected that this approach would adequately address the problem of

the rich skewering the national development efforts to their own benefit, in other words, elite capture.

Having realised the holistic nature of the MPI approach, the UN (in contrast to the exclusive income-based approach adopted for the MDGs) incorporated the MPI into SDGs, as it supports the priorities set for 2015-2030 agenda. Overall, the SDGs have a wide spectrum. It sets a total of 169 targets and 231 indicators. Poverty reduction, like in MDGs, has also been prioritised as its first goal, with the additional call to end poverty in all its manifestations by 2030. This goal has seven targets and twelve indicators that appear in the report as shown in the following table:

**Table 2**  
**Targets and indicators of the goal of poverty eradication**

<b>Targets</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
1. By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day	1.1 Proportion of population below the international poverty line, by sex, age, employment status, and geographical location (urban/rural)
2. By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women, and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions	2.1 Proportion of population living below the national poverty line, by sex and age 2.2 Proportion of men, women, and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions
3. Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable	3.1 Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, new-borns, work-injury victims, and the poor and the vulnerable
4. By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular, the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services,	4.1 Proportion of population living in households with access to basic services 4.2 Proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, with legally recognised documentation, and who



ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology, and financial services, including microfinance	perceive their rights to land as secure, by sex and by type of tenure
5. By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social, and environmental shocks and disasters	5.1 Number of deaths, missing persons, and persons affected by disaster per 100,000 people 5.2 Direct disaster economic loss in relation to global GDP 5.3 Number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies
6. Ensure significant mobilisation of resources from a variety of sources, including through enhanced development cooperation, in order to provide adequate and predictable means for developing countries, in particular, least developed countries, to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions	6.1 Proportion of resources allocated by the government directly to poverty reduction programmes 6.2 Proportion of total government spending on essential services (education, health, and social protection)
7. Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional, and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions	7.1 Proportion of government recurrent and capital spending to sectors that disproportionately benefit women, the poor, and vulnerable groups

**Sources:** Extracted from the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals website, available at <<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg1>>

The targets above address the multidimensionality of poverty. Targets one and two urge complete eradication of extreme poverty, measured by persons earning less than \$1.25 a day. These targets are a continuation of the MDG of halving poverty by 2015, and the SDG of

halving the proportion of people of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions by 2030.

Target three bounds UN states that signed on the SDGs to implement nationally appropriate social protection systems for all people. Target four demands that all men and women, particularly the poor and vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources. They are also required to have equal rights with respect to access to basic services related to land ownership, inheritance, natural resources, new technology, and finance, including microfinance.

Target five demands a comprehensive system for the poor to protect them from climate change-related shocks. Target six bounds the respective governments to allocate resources for poverty reduction programmes. Similarly, target seven demands to carve out pro-poor and gender-sensitive policies at national, regional, and international levels.

Monitoring progress in the above targets and indicators is a daunting task. In the MDGs, progress was mainly judged by the states' respective definitions, thus, results were ambiguous. MPI approach complements the traditional cost-based approach and accurately monitors progress towards the most challenging goal of ending poverty in all its forms by 2030. Many countries are reporting the incidence of multidimensional poverty either by using global MPI or national MPI. In addition to the three dimensions of MPI (health, education, and standard of living) it also consists of ten indicators: nutrition, child mortality, years of schooling, school attendance, cooking fuel, improved sanitation, safe drinking water, electricity, flooring, and assets. These detailed indicators cover all foreseeable pitfalls to achieving the SDG of eradicating poverty in the world by 2030. Further details are presented in the table below.

**Table 3**  
**Deprivation thresholds and weights of global MPI**

Dimension	Indicator	Threshold	Relative Weight
Education	Years of Schooling	At least one household member has less than five years of schooling	1/6
	Child School Attendance	At least one school-aged child is not attending school up to class 8	1/6
Health	Child Mortality	At least one child has died in the family	1/6
	Nutrition	At least one household member is malnourished.	1/6
Living Standard	Electricity	Not having electricity	1/18
	Improved Sanitation	Not having access to adequate sanitation	1/18
	Safe Drinking Water	No access to safe drinking water	1/18
	Flooring	Home with dirty floor	1/18
	Cooking Fuel	A household using low quality, polluted cooking oil	1/18
	Assets	The household does not have a radio, TV, telephone, bike, motorbike or refrigerator and does not own a car or truck.	1/18

**Source:** Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI)

The MPI has three dimensions that are equally weighted, i.e., each dimension receives 1/3 weight. Sequentially, each indicator within health receives 1/6 weight. Similarly, education has 1/6 weight and living standard has 1/18 weight. A person is considered poor if he or she has a deprivation score higher than or equal to 1/3 or 0.333. In practical terms,

a poor person ticks off one-third of all boxes in the MPI questionnaire. The table placed in the Annex provides further illustration.

Both Pakistan and India, being part of this global effort, reiterated their commitment to end multidimensional poverty by 2030. Pakistan has been active since the launch of the SDGs and to meet these goals it launched a National Task Force. It maintains close coordination with the civil society and the private sector to share best practices, relevant knowledge, and modern techniques that are essential for achieving the post-2015 agenda. Moreover, Pakistan Poverty Research Papers (PRSPs) with regard to global commitment of poverty eradication is a document dedicated to monitoring initiatives towards achieving poverty targets. This document provides first-hand knowledge about the incidence of poverty in the country that is being incorporated into the country vision for 2030. Examples of these initiatives are Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund, Benazir Income Support Programme, *Zakat* programmes, and Khushhal Pakistan Programme.

Thus, the country has internalised the SDGs as its National Goals and incorporated many global initiatives into its national development plans. Especially for poverty, Pakistan joined the Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network (MPPN) in 2014 and officially adopted an MPI approach to track achievements with regard to SDGs in 2015-16. This approach is also planned to be used for all districts using Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement (PSLM) data with a purpose to examine deprivations at the grassroots level and subsequently plan its development policies. However, national poverty and headcount continue to be estimated using outcome-based consumption data.<sup>14</sup>

While using the MPI approach, Pakistan's Ministry of Planning, Development, and Reform launched the country's first-ever official report in June 2016. The report was compiled with technical help from UNDP and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), University of Oxford. According to this report, 39 percent of the population is multi-dimensionally poor in which the Federal Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Baluchistan have the highest rates of poverty, 73 percent and 71 percent, respectively. In KP, the poverty rate is 49 percent, in Gilgit-Baltistan and Sindh 43 percent, in Punjab 31 percent, and in Azad Jammu and Kashmir 25 percent. The report showed a

consistent downward trend from 55 percent in 2004 to 39 percent in 2015; however, progress is uneven, as disparities exist. In urban areas, poverty stands at 9.3 percent whereas 54.6 percent of the rural population is poor with very weak social indicators as compared to healthy economic indicators.<sup>15</sup>

India, though a member of the MPPN, has not yet adopted the MPI to track progress on the SDGs. Therefore, no country-specific report is available. Data for India is taken from the global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2016. According to the report, India's MPI value is 0.283 (using India Human Development Survey IHDS, 2005-06) that means 53.7 percent of the population is facing multidimensional poverty and average intensity across the poor is 52.7 percent.<sup>16</sup> Pakistan's score in this report stands at 0.230 (using Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey PDHS, 2012-13) that translates to 44.2 percent of population suffering from multidimensional poverty and average intensity across the poor is 52.1 percent. In a regional scenario, Afghanistan was found to be the poorest country with 66.2 percent (MPI-0.353), followed by India with 53.7 percent (MPI-0.283), Pakistan with 44.2 percent (MPI-0.230), Bangladesh with 41.3 percent (MPI-0.196), Nepal with 28.6 percent (MPI-0.126), Bhutan with 27.2 percent (MPI-0.119), Sri Lanka and Maldives with around 5 percent (MPI-0.018) poverty. The average intensity level, however, was around 47 percent, and most concentrated in Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan with more than 50 percent of the population intensely deprived (see the table below).

**Table 4**  
**Multidimensional Poverty Index 2016, South Asia**

Country	Year	MPI	% MPI poor (H)	Intensity of MPI (A)
Maldives	2009	0.018	5.2	35.6
Bhutan	2010	0.119	27.2	43.9
Nepal	2014	0.126	28.6	44.2
Bangladesh	2014	0.196	41.3	47.4
Pakistan	2012/13	0.230	44.2	52.1
India	2005/06	0.283	53.7	52.7
Afghanistan	2010/11	0.353	66.2	53.4

**Source:** Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI)

## Conclusion

The paper began with reflections on the goal of eradication of extreme poverty set out in the MDGs. Both India and Pakistan were moderately successful in achieving the target of halving the proportion of extreme poverty by 2015. Progress, however, was uneven. The goal of complete eradication of extreme poverty by 2030 under the SDGs, coupled with a target of halving the proportion of people of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions, is indeed challenging. Both states are lagging behind targets and have to go a long way to address the incidences and multiple dimensions of poverty. However, times demand the uplift of the region out of poverty in all its forms, otherwise, South Asia will lag behind in the global competitive race set by the 2030 SDGs.

In Pakistan, the government is keen to consolidate and galvanise national efforts to meet global commitments. Establishing a National Task Force on MDGs was a crucial step in this regard. Its brainstorming with the non-governmental and private sectors has resulted in innovative best-practice strategies geared towards achieving the SDGs' targets. The PRSPs document closely examines the initiatives geared towards achieving poverty targets. The initiatives recording success in poverty reduction include Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund, Benazir Income Support Programme, *Zakat*, and Khushhal Pakistan. In the case of India, sustained growth with an increase in social spendings such as MGNREGA and National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) played a significant role in poverty reduction.

To further this effort, both India and Pakistan need to adopt an even greater holistic and integrated approach to deal with the menace of poverty. Poverty can be tackled with close coordination between public and private sectors and between the donor and receiver countries, regional cooperation, and joint ventures focusing on enhancing agricultural productivity and increased spending on social safety programs. In line with this thinking, as well as building upon the 2000-2015 Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund and the current Sustainable Development Goals Fund, India and Pakistan can allocate funds for an indigenous dedicated 'Sustainable Development Goals Achievement Fund (SDGAF)' in their respective national budgets. Prior to the utilisation of such a fund, it is important to identify the poor so that maximum benefit could be directed towards the people in real need.

The success of community targeting programmes and techniques can be used, for example from the *Zakat* programme. Pakistan should strengthen its three anti-poverty programmes that are running on community-based knowledge: *Zakat* and National Rural Support Programme.<sup>17</sup> The data for these programmes is generated by household surveys. Hence, these programmes provide an actual number of multifaceted poor at the grassroots level. For monitoring and transparency, a decentralised surveillance force can be set up with the help of local school teachers/counsellors that regularly report progress in their respective areas to the concerned ministry. For this purpose, an online user-friendly form needs to be prepared and proper training needs to be provided to conduct this job. This force would also help minimise corruption through elite capture.

Apart from targeted anti-poverty interventions, improvements in other sectors such as agriculture, governance, disaster management, and trade have a significant impact on poverty reduction. In agriculture, there is room for improvement in a knowledge-based agriculture system. Trade too has a potential to reduce poverty significantly if both states focus more on human security, follow liberal trade policies, and soften visa regimes. The goal of eradicating poverty is unlikely to be reached until governments come to terms with the increased risk of natural disasters. This is a serious matter because the ODI has found both Pakistan and India to be amongst the top eleven countries in the world at risk of natural disasters.

In short, Pakistan and India, as leaders in South Asia, could achieve the SDGs target of eradicating poverty through holistic community-based best practices. To this end, knowledge sharing is essential, especially via relaxed visa requirements. Since both countries have dominating agricultural sectors, their efforts, or lack thereof, have immense repercussions that impact attaining the SDG of eradicating poverty by 2030.

**Annexe****Hypothetical illustration**

Indicators	People in Households				Weights
	1	2	3	4	
Household size	4	7	5	4	
<i>Education</i>					
No one has completed five years of schooling	0	1	0	1	1/6=0.167
At least one school-age child not enrolled in school	0	1	0	0	1/6=0.167
<i>Health</i>					
At least one member is malnourished	0	0	1	0	1/6=0.167
One or more children have died	1	1	0	1	1/6=0.167
<i>Living Standards</i>					
No electricity	0	1	1	1	1/18=0.056
No access to clean drinking water	0	0	1	0	1/18=0.056
No access to adequate sanitation	0	1	1	0	1/18=0.056
House has dirt floor	0	0	0	0	1/18=0.056
Household uses "dirty" cooking fuel (dung, firewood or charcoal)	1	1	1	1	1/18=0.056
Household has no car and owns at most one bicycle, motorcycle, radio, refrigerator, telephone or television	0	1	0	1	1/18=0.056
Score $c_i$ (sum of each deprivation multiplied by its weight)	0.222	0.722	0.389	0.500	
Is the household poor ( $c \geq 1/3 = 0.333$ )?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Censored score $c_i/k$	0	0.722	0.389	0.500	

**Source:** United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Reports, < <http://hdr.undp.org/>>

**Note:** Deprived =1 and non-deprived=0, the score below 0.333 or 1/3 will be considered 0 (no poor).

In the case of the first household, total members are four in which only two members are deprived, marked 1. So the total sum of the weights is  $1+1= 0.167+0.167=0.222$ . This score is below than 0.333, therefore will be considered 0 that means no multidimensional poor.



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# APPROPRIATION AND FICTIONALISATION OF BUDDHA'S LIFE BY THE WEST

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## Abstract

*Siddhartha, a novel written in 1992 by a German author Herman Hesse, is an appropriation and re-telling of the Gautama Buddha's story of enlightenment in a much simplified manner. The novel has mystified its readers and critics everywhere in the world. This is because Gautama Buddha's life history has been appropriated by a German writer in ways that not only personalise and naturalise what the Eastern followers of Gautama Buddha might consider 'revelation' but also Westernise it to a great extent. The East considers the Buddha as a visionary religious leader with divine powers, but Hesse has shown him as a modern man who validated his own experience, observation, and analysis over others and tradition. So Hesse's Siddhartha is a triumph of 'reason' and 'experience' over superstitious reverence for the supernatural. This view or perception of the Buddha has implications for the epistemological claims of the postcolonial world. This paper aims to explore, argue, and establish the hidden implications of Hesse's Siddhartha for the postcolonial world we inhabit.*

## Introduction

Appropriation in the postcolonial world has various meanings and interpretations. It changes meanings from time to time, situation to situation, and context to context, as per the necessities of civilisation.<sup>1</sup>

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The word means adaptation, recycling, re-contextualisation, borrowing, and recreation. Hesse's *Siddhartha* is based upon the borrowing of Buddha's story from historical and religious accounts of the East.<sup>2</sup> A closer examination of the text shows that appropriation and recreation gives a modern outlook to various incidents of Buddha's life. Appropriation and adaptation of culture is taking place since the development of the Mesopotamian civilisation. Sometimes, writers appropriate and borrow things for their own interests and sometimes for the interest of their audience and readers. Appropriation depicts a deeper interest of the writers, as well as a conscious borrowing.<sup>3</sup>

Postcolonial theorists and writers have appropriated the English language and used it as a tool to convey their grievances to the West. They have tried to convey that colonisation was evil in the name of good, which has not only destroyed the religion and culture of the natives but also crushed the identity of the colonial masses. Some of the postcolonial writers are in favour of appropriation of language, while others are against it. Postcolonial theory is based upon the appropriation of the English language. Developing and colonised nations are quite astonished that the West has appropriated anything from the East. The appropriation of Buddha's life by the German novelist has significance and deeper meanings.

Adaptation and appropriation take place in many forms such as the appropriation of language, symbols, culture, sounds, artefacts, objects, and styles from one culture to another.<sup>4</sup> Eastern history is a witness that Buddha was a spiritual leader who has followers. Writers across the world have appropriated Buddha's life in different ways. Hesse's narration of *Siddhartha* is very interesting in a way that it not only resents the different selves of Siddhartha but also signifies the different selves of individuals. Hesse portrays that there are two sides of the human mind: spiritual and rational. All these sides and selves work simultaneously and are characteristic of human beings. On the basis of the common instinct, the writer signifies himself with Buddha. He thinks that every individual goes through different experiences of life through the process of construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of different thoughts. Hesse saw his picture in Buddha and that is the reason for the appropriation of Buddha's life. Buddhists are of the view that writing the biography of Gautama Buddha is un-Buddhist. The

fictionalisation of the story gives a new colour and significance to Buddha's life.

The art of fictionalisation is very old, which universalises a specific character, situation, and culture for all the ages. The writers used to fictionalise the historical and religious figures. Shakespeare and Chaucer had great command in this art.<sup>5</sup> On the same lines, Hesse has appropriated and fictionalised Buddha's life in the form of the novel *Siddhartha*. This fictionalisation also represents the journey of every individual in the world to intellect and wisdom. Sir Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia* is a recent example of fictionalisation of the Indian history.<sup>6</sup> *Siddhartha* reflects Western interest in Buddha's life and philosophy. Other than the appropriation of Buddha's life by the Western writers, some natives have also fictionalised Buddha's life, such as Hanif Kureishi in the *Buddha of Suburbia*.<sup>7</sup> The writers have also discussed Buddha according to their own angles and interests quite contrary to so many others. Representation and fictionalisation of one's own history have a different meaning from interpreting the history of other nations. Western fictionalisation seems to be a direct judgment on the East. There are differences between Orientalist's and Occidentalists' representations. Shakespeare's and Waris Shah's representations of their own history and culture are not the same as Hesse's and Arnold's interpretations of the cultures of other civilisations; the latter two works fictionalised the history of others. The aforementioned two representations generate the concept of self and other, which is considered a 'coloniser's view'.

Hesse has discussed the life and philosophy of Gautama Buddha in a very systematic way in the form of the novel *Siddhartha*. This adjustment and fictionalisation may uncover the self-portraying component Hesse has used to make an analogy for his own particular translation and comprehension of Siddhartha.

### **Appropriation of incidents**

Buddhists and Eastern writers have not used the original name of Buddha in their stories, which is Siddhartha, except in the introductory chapters of history books.<sup>8</sup> Historians and religious scholars have introduced Buddha in a spiritualist fashion. Religious scholars and historians of the East have spiritualised Buddha's birth, family life and

disappointment with family life, companionship with monks, and search for truth and enlightenment.<sup>9</sup> Hesse has told the story of Siddhartha, a young man who left home just for his mental satisfaction because he was unhappy. According to Hesse's account, Buddha became a rebel against the existing realities and left the house of his father to search for 'truth'. Hesse portrays the biography of this excursion—disappointments and triumphs, impediments and inversions, and tests and tribulations. Most importantly, Hesse portrays the procedures of his idea, i.e., how his great ideas transpired with reference to his own encounters of life. It is not possible for anyone to have knowledge of the thinking inside the brain of Buddha who left his home for the wilderness. Moreover, the novelist also narrates his own experiences through his mouthpiece, Siddhartha. Sometimes, the *Siddhartha* reflects the struggle, experiences, and the conquests of the writer himself. That is the reason, it is argued, that Hesse saw himself in Buddha.

*Siddhartha* has been divided into two sections, which present the spiritual and intellectual sides of Siddhartha's mind. Further division into different chapters makes the novel more systematic. All this division makes it more delightful in understanding the enlightenment of Gautama in a more systematic way. It also signifies the different hurdles and steps towards the spiritual growth of individuals. To a large extent, Hesse has appropriated all major incidents from the Eastern history and fictionalised them in various forms. The first representation of Hesse's Siddhartha has a great resemblance with the Eastern accounts. But when the child grows up and begins to see things from an independent perspective, the story takes a different turn. The turn has different meanings and reasons for the intellectuals, as well as followers of Buddha. The first section of the novel is totally based upon his spiritual experiences, while the second section shows Siddhartha's fight against his desires.<sup>10</sup>

The second section of the novel revolves around the learning of Siddhartha from nature because it is considered that nature is the best companion of human beings on earth. It not only provides food to the living but also performs the role of an educator. Some people have the ability to learn from nature, while others remain ignorant for the whole of their lives. Buddha had the ability to learn from nature. The otherworldly separation from the physical is, in this mission, just a misleading statement, insufficient and inadequate. The body is nothing without a

soul and a soul is nothing without a body. In any case, the occurrences include two sorts of characters: anecdotal and the fictionalised.

### **Fictionalisation of characters**

The novelist has introduced many new characters in *Siddhartha*, which are unseen in historical and religious accounts of Gautama's life. There are many fictionalised characters such as Kamala, Child, Ferryman, Kamaswami, and the best friend of Siddhartha named Govinda. The writer signifies the Samanas<sup>11</sup> with monks, which is also very remarkable. It seems to argue that Buddhism is derived from Hinduism. Govinda starts his journey with Siddhartha and becomes his disciple in their first meeting, which is also very significant. But he joins Siddhartha again after his enlightenment, which signifies the existence of idealism and realism in the world. Every character has played its role in the novel but Govinda is the most significant.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, fictionalisation has created generalisation, which has universalised the story and preaching of Siddhartha.

### **Spiritual quest**

According to historians and religious scholars, the journey of Buddha starts towards spiritualism when he leaves his home. However, Hesse considers it a journey towards realism. The novel shows that Siddhartha leaves his home in the companionship of his friend Govinda just for the search of truth. They spend time with the Samanas and also meet with the chosen one Gautama. Govinda chooses to live with the chosen one but Siddhartha restarts his journey towards enlightenment. The character goes through different experiences to reach enlightenment. The awakening comes in Siddhartha's life after a lot of experiences.<sup>13</sup>

### **The son of Brahmins**

In the introductory chapter, the novelist has presented Siddhartha as a Brahmin son who is not satisfied with all that he has. His family and society have great expectations of him. Hesse has drawn a complete picture of Siddhartha's life. The writer narrates that the parents are proud to see the child because it reflects their future. They want to see him as a great man. "There was happiness in his father's heart

because of his son who was intelligent and thirsty for knowledge; he saw him growing up to be a great learned man, a priest, a prince among Brahmins.”<sup>14</sup>

Religious books represent Buddha as a chosen one who was born with spirituality and intellect. The father called several fortune-tellers to ascertain the future of his five years old son. They told him that the child had amazing future and that he could possibly progress towards becoming the Buddha, who will get profound edification, or a general ruler, a saint of mainstream legend. The child's identity, the father was told, would lead the entire world. The fortune-tellers also told Buddha's father, according to the historical accounts, that four things will try to change the mind of the child: a dead body, a monk, a sick man, and an old man. These things will cause the child to leave home, the father was told. According to historical accounts, the father tried to save his child from these four things predicted by the Brahmins. The novelist has fictionalised the incidents for the generalisations of the themes. He has demonstrated the insubordinate state of mind of Siddhartha only for his inward fulfilment, which runs parallel with his defiant mentality. He needs to scan out the way for himself rather than dazzle confidence. Hesse has fictionalised this exceptional occurrence just to demonstrate that the advancement of individuals depends upon their common sense and a comprehension of things through various encounters. The Eastern accounts of Gautama's life narrate that it was fated for Siddhartha to become the Buddha. They are of the view that Siddhartha was born as a prophet.

Hesse negates the notion and narrates that Siddhartha became a Buddha through his own hard work and experiences. Siddhartha leaves his home in the company of his friend Govinda after getting permission from his father. Things automatically change at home because it was the death of the expectations of the father and mother. Here, Hesse portrays that he only visits his mother's room before leaving the house. He touches her feet and starts his journey.

History is a witness that when Buddha decided to leave home, he had a son and a wife. But Hesse's fictionalised account narrates that Siddhartha got married during his journey towards self-conquest. Historical accounts show that before leaving his home to start the journey, Buddha goes to see his child and spouse around the evening



time. Hesse has portrayed that Siddhartha just visits his mother's space to see her. This is the principal episode of fictionalisation. Hesse has endeavoured to fictionalise the adventure of Buddha just to naturalise it for every single individual. The reality and fiction are joined in such a way as to influence them to look one. Hesse's fictionalised Siddhartha leaves home as Buddha had left. The love of the parents and friends was unable to provide mental satisfaction to the character. He starts thinking that wisdom varies from person to person and that he should search out his own ways to acquire wisdom for his mental satisfaction.<sup>15</sup>

Its comparison with Karen Armstrong's *Buddha* shows to what extent the two accounts match or differ. Armstrong is of the view that all things that happened in Buddha's life were spiritual. The picture presented by Armstrong shows that Buddha was a revealed prophet as it was already written in his fate.<sup>16</sup>

The two introductions appear to be fundamentally the same. Hesse has given Siddhartha a craving for involvement and information, while Armstrong has presented Buddha as having innate rebelliousness, which created discontent in his life. Armstrong gives a spiritual touch to the situation and her presentation is loaded with particular insights about the names of individuals and spots, while Hesse's depiction is generally anonymous, aside from a couple of Indian characters.<sup>17</sup>

Killings one's wants or forbearance isn't conceivable through training and preparing alone. The practice of self-control is temporary and hence this experience goes in circles. The natural self cannot be killed at all, leading to scepticism and questioning. Hesse's fictionalised Siddhartha always questions existing realities because the realities change with the passage of time. Realities and truths are relative terms. That is the reason for Siddhartha's negation of the experience he gets from the Samanas. He is of the view that experience from the prostitute is better and faster than the experience from the Samanas.<sup>18</sup> He further expresses a belief, which appears common to both Eastern and Western mystic thought, i.e., about knowledge of the self. He presents that knowledge is the worst enemy of the man. Knowledge is present everywhere in the world.<sup>19</sup> This awareness is the turning point that self cannot be ignored or killed.

## **Gautama**

Gautama is actually another name of Buddha that Hesse has fictionalised as a different character in the novel named Gautama. The novelist has presented Siddhartha as an ordinary character who gets enlightenment through his own hard work and experiences. In this story, Siddhartha, the youthful individual, meets Gautama as a man not exactly the same as him. Gautama is a standout amongst the most vital developments in the story of the novel. Siddhartha watches everybody intently. He sees the monks in their yellow robes under and besides the trees, like bees, while they are busy with their supernatural things, performing meditations and also begging with bowls.<sup>20</sup> Some of the monks go for begging and Gautama himself is shown engaged in such type of activities in the novel.

In the novel, Siddhartha describes Gautama through his critical eye—Gautama is learned as well as the illustrious one who got enlightenment through his own experiences. He developed the eightfold path on the basis of his own experience to overcome the sufferings of the humanity. That is the reason his voice works like light and star to his listeners.<sup>21</sup>

And then Siddhartha raises a question to which Gautama responds that such questions are a result of the contradiction between idealism and realism. He says that opinions mean nothing because they vary from person to person. On the same lines, teaching means the salvation of human beings from their problems and sufferings. He is of the view that Gautama teaches nothing beyond the salvation from sufferings.

To which Siddhartha replies politely to Gautama, “O Illustrious One... You have learnt nothing through teachings.”<sup>22</sup> Since Siddhartha believes that experience and wisdom cannot be communicated through words, he asks Gautama whether he can express his feelings about the events that led to his enlightenment.<sup>23</sup> After meeting with Gautama, the character adopts the policy of selection and rejection because he is of the view that worldly progress depends on construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of different theories.

The theory of choose and reject portrays the concept of Westernisation, which is based on the construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of different thoughts. The character Siddhartha is the

mouthpiece of the novelist and portrays his philosophy. He gets enlightenment through his own experiences by rejecting the existing ones. Having said that, however, all the prophets and the theorists have shown some form of rebelliousness before the projection of their own religion or theory, respectively. Similarly, Siddhartha rejects the instructions of the instructors.

### **Awakening**

Siddhartha of the novel goes through all the experiences himself. All the companions and seniors leave him in the way. This is simply the beginning of getting to be one with the goal that he has set for himself in life. It is only an internal monologue. So Siddhartha constructs the realities, then after some time, he rejects the realities he had once constructed himself. This is the most unmistakable Westernisation of Siddhartha's story, the essential issue of the adjustment of Buddha's life. This directly alludes towards the circumstances where Gautama conflicts with the religion of his ancestors. Hesse has endeavoured to demonstrate that enlivening is the aftereffect of the refusal of acknowledgement of the substances built by others.<sup>24</sup>

Beyond any doubt, the self and its wants vary from individual to individual and the entire world exists in a person. Each individual attempts to take in the appropriate responses of the fundamental inquiries that are considered beyond his own capacity for reasoning. So what Buddha has said with regard to these exceptionally essential inquiries is that everybody ought to take in the appropriate responses of these extremely fundamental inquiries.<sup>25</sup> None of the individuals can predict the experiences of Siddhartha in its true sense because truth and experience are relative terms, which vary from person to person.<sup>26</sup>

At the beginning of the journey of Siddhartha in the novel, he is deprived of the companionship of his friend Govinda. For the fulfilment of the desire and achievement, Siddhartha gets rid of his friends, society, parents, and home. Buddhists' customs, however, not only depend on the self but are related to the eightfold path of Buddha. The Buddhist customs aren't about the affirmation of self; they are tied in with following the rules. Hesse has appropriated the story in a Westernised style and has changed it from medieval to modern.

All these four segments show how he has gone through different experiences quite contradictory to the existing ones. Each chapter of life is a step towards a spiritual journey that ends in frustration and realisation that one must return to life and to 'self' for its understanding.

### **Hesse's interest in the East**

Hermann Hesse has written *Peter Camenzind* (1904) and *Demian* (1919) before the publication of *Siddhartha*. However, he got more name and fame after the publication of *Siddhartha*, where he has tried to encompass his philosophical thoughts regarding spiritualism, naturalism, idealism, and realism. *Steppenwolf* also presents the philosophy, which is much nearer to *Siddhartha*. *Siddhartha* is well-equipped with the philosophical points of Hesse that could be relevant in the modern age. In any case, he authored a few different books other than these.

The German writer's visit to Indonesia has greatly affected his writings. The books he published after his visit to the East (perceived as his journey to India) have some customary subjects. For instance, the twofold nature of individuals, various selves of a man's soul, and change in these distinctive selves with the passage of time.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, he has also expounded the theory that soul and body is one thing, not two.

### **Conclusion**

Among all of Hesse's novels, *Siddhartha* is the best representative of all the notions that have been described above. Additionally, this is in light of the fact that he had second thoughts before writing it. Before the documentation of *Siddhartha*, Hesse wrote a letter to his friend George Reinhart in August 1920, in which he communicated. "My huge Indian work isn't prepared yet and may never be. I'm putting it aside until further notice since I would need to delineate next a period of advancement that I have not yet completely experienced myself."<sup>28</sup>

The novel is a fictionalised representation of Siddhartha's enlightenment and a story of his friend's idealism. He feels dissatisfaction and hopelessness, despite the fact that he has all the luxuries of life in his palace. He leaves all these things for the search for truth. He gets experience and learning through his own struggle and hard

work. His self moulds after getting different experiences and his preferences also change with the passage of time. Change and self are common themes of the novel.

Nature is a powerful source of inspiration and guidance for the character in the novel. Under the shadow of this nature, he joins Govinda and meets with Gautama. All the transformation takes place just because of his interaction with nature. Siddhartha adopts various strategies to kill his desire and to get rid of the suffering in one way or another but remains unsuccessful. First, he adopts the way of the Samanas and remains hungry to get rid of his suffering. Later on, he realises that it is not a proper way to get rid of sufferings. He leaves the Samanas and searches for the holy one.

Spiritualism is not enough to get enlightenment, materialism is also required; that is what makes the second section of the text interesting. Siddhartha meets different personalities for the conquest of material needs. He realises after a lot of experiences that material needs cannot be suppressed. He meets Kamala for his mental satisfaction, who is a prostitute. The learning from Kamala has its own importance. Siddhartha learns a lot from ferrymen and businessmen and later on realises that all these segments are part and parcel of the enlightenment of the individual. At every stage, he constructs reality, then he himself deconstructs the constructed one. The journey of Siddhartha signifies different stages of worldly progress. Various theories have been constructed for the benefit of the human beings. But later on, these theories were replaced with modern ones.

Hesse has appropriated and fictionalised Buddha's story. The kind of individual freedom that Hesse proposes for a discoverer and follower of the spiritual path has tremendous political consequences. This debate also has food for thought for the postcolonial writers. Through the narration of the story of Siddhartha and Govinda, Hesse has tried to create a difference of thinking between the East and the West. He is of the view that through the process of construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction, the West reached postmodernity and dominance over the East.

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# THE 'WORLD ORDERS' IN CENTRAL ASIA: UNITED AGAINST POLITICAL ISLAM?

ADAM SAUD\*

## Abstract

*Central Asia is a region of immense importance for all major powers, as well as regional states, for their diverse interests. There is more of a divergence of interest than convergence, as far as major powers are concerned. The situation is so complex that this involvement and divergence of interest has been given the name of the 'New Great Game'. Despite having divergent interests, Russia, China, the US, and the Central Asian Republics want to counter Political Islam in the region. All of them are also concerned with the Afghan situation, which is considered the spring of Political Islam in the region. This paper attempts to explore the convergence of interest of major powers, better known as the 'world orders' against the Islamic Order. The research tries to address the following questions: What are the world orders? Which world orders are involved in Central Asia? Why has Political Islam emerged in Central Asia? What are the kinds of Political Islam in Central Asia? And why the world orders' interests converge against Political Islam in this region?*

## Introduction

Importance of Eurasia in global politics has been recognised by all the major powers throughout history. In 1904, Herald Mackinder, in his famous theory of 'Heartland', has emphasised the importance of this region by stating that "whoever controlled Central Asia would yield enormous power."<sup>1</sup> The Great Game between British India and Tsarist Russia is the best example of the importance of this region, wherein both the superpowers of their time tried to occupy it. The disintegration of the

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Soviet Union and the ideological vacuum in the newly independent Central Asian states paved the way for extra-regional powers to engage in this region. Motives and interests of these powers have convergences as well as divergences. The US was interested primarily in the safety of nuclear weapons and nuclear waste left by the Soviet Union in Central Asia, especially Kazakhstan, import of hydrocarbons from the region to the Western markets, and initiation of the process of democratisation and market economies in the Central Asian Republics.

Russia, on the other hand, still considers Central Asia its backyard and is averse to allowing any other regional or extra-regional power to control this region. Russian interests in the region include energy security in terms of oil and gas exports from the region to Europe through mainland Russia, countering extremism, terrorism, and drugs and arms smuggling, security of the large number of ethnic Russians in Central Asia, primarily in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, and containment of potential contenders to its influence in the region. China is primarily concerned with its trade and economic relationship with Central Asia. Other important objectives of China in the region include import of hydrocarbons, countering extremism, separatism, and terrorism, as well as physical infrastructure development in the Central Asian states. India, Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey have their own vested interests ranging from economic to political and from cultural to religious. Muslim countries like Saudi Arabia, UAE, and—to a lesser extent—Pakistan were interested in Islamic revivalism in the Central Asian Republics. Iran and Turkey wanted to revive their historic socio-cultural and religious ties with Central Asia.

The non-state actors in the form of religious groups have their own agenda and interests in this region. They consider China, Russia, and the US imperialist powers trying to destroy Islam and its heritage in the region. There are several Islamist groups claiming to implement *sharia* laws in Afghanistan and Central Asia. Another hue of Islamists is fighting for 'independence' in Xinjiang, China, and the North Caucasus, Russia. Although they differ in their strategies to achieve their objectives to implement *sharia* laws, all of them are declared as Political Islamists by all the local, regional, and extra-regional governments. Some of these groups try to achieve their objectives through constitutional means, while others resort to violent methods. So there is a sharp difference within



Political Islam. Since all the major actors involved in the region have a convergence of interests against Political Islam, they have joined their hands to counter it.

This paper attempts to find out why, despite their divergence of interests, Russia, China, the US, and the Central Asian Republics want to counter Political Islam in the region. It attempts to explore the convergence of interest of major powers, better known as 'world orders' against the Islamic Order. In doing so, it analyses the role of various 'world orders' and versions of Political Islam active in Central Asia. It applies the theory of world orders and uses a descriptive, analytical, and critical method of research. The paper is divided into three major parts. The first part discusses the emergence and different variants of Political Islam in Central Asia. The second part talks about the convergence of interests of the world orders against Political Islam, while the third part presents an analysis of the situation. After analysing the Central Asian region, Xinjiang, and North Caucasus, the paper comes to the conclusion that the emergence of Political Islam is an indigenous phenomenon but failure to achieve its objectives in the Central Asian region can be attributed to the convergence of world orders against it.

### **Theoretical framework**

Tahir Amin has declared all the actors involved in the region as 'world orders', with convergences and divergences of interests in the region. He says that these world orders cooperate and compete with, as well as interpenetrate each other. These world orders have made Central Asia a competing ground for their divergent interests. This situation has been termed as the New Great Game by various experts on the region. But all these world orders are on one page against the Islamic Order in the region.

The authors of *Defining the Post-Cold War World Order*<sup>2</sup> have given five major existing paradigms in the post-Cold War international politics. These include 'the end of history' by Francis Fukuyama, 'the clash of civilisations' by Samuel P. Huntington, 'complex interdependence' by Joseph Nye, 'neo-realism' by John Mearsheimer, and 'the criminal anarchy' by Robert D. Kaplan. The authors of *Defining the Post-Cold War World Order* argue that none of these paradigms could explain the changing dynamics of international politics. According

to the authors of the 'world order' project, their analysis of the principal fault lines of the emerging world order range from civilisational clash (Huntington) to great power competition (Mearsheimer), liberal-market democracy versus history (Fukuyama), American leadership versus disorder (Nye), and anarchy (Kaplan).<sup>3</sup>

All of these paradigms are concerned with the possible political and probably economic decline of the West. Therefore, to continue the Western dominance in international politics and preserve the status quo, they have given these theories. Since none of these paradigms is acceptable to the broader international community as a whole, a new concept of multiple world orders has been given by Hayward R. Alker, Thomas Biersteker, Takashi Inoguchi, and Tahir Amin. These authors are of the view that the post-Cold War era has witnessed multiple world orders, which compete, cooperate, interpenetrate, and overlap with each other. World orders encompass ideas about political and economic systems, conceptions of religion, and their role in society.<sup>4</sup>

According to these authors, the world orders are "patterned human activities, interaction regularities, or practices evident on the world scale. World orders are also multidimensional. They traditionally have normative, political, and directional aspects, i.e., they are intentional. They often perform a governance function. Finally, their politically contested goals, norms, and values are grounded in widely (inter-subjectively) shared beliefs, worldviews, historical missions, cosmologies, or modes of thought."<sup>5</sup> These world orders operate in Central Asia as well.

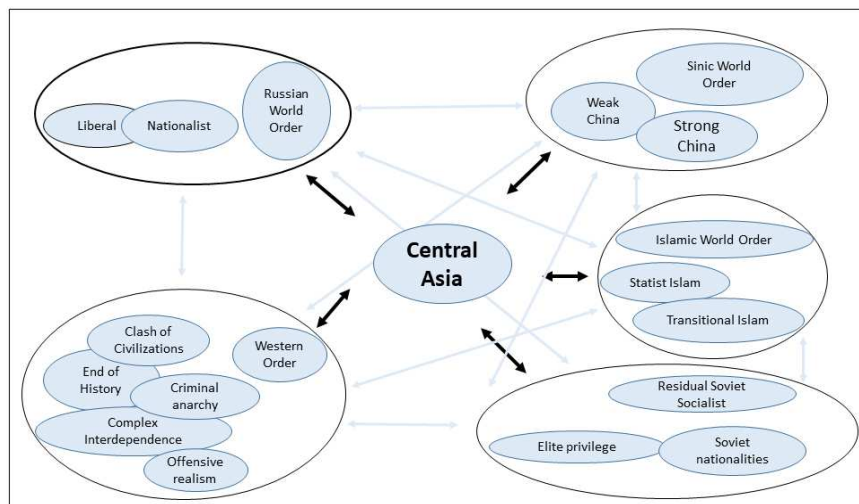
Tahir Amin has described the world orders in Central Asia in detail. He states, "World boundaries do not have to be absolute and mutually exclusive, so, we expect to find overlapping and even interpenetrating orders, and smaller, possibly regional orders within more encompassing, truly global world orders."<sup>6</sup> The competing world orders in Central Asia are Islamic, Chinese, Western Liberal, Slavic, and Residual Socialist. Central Asia has got sandwiched amongst these world orders because all of them compete as well cooperate with each other, which has brought the regional leadership to a state of confusion. The situation, however, has benefited the region, as the Central Asian states not only get assistance from but also trade with these 'orders'.

According to Tahir Amin, all these 'orders' are not unified and have different versions. The Residual Socialist order is divided into 'elite privilege' and 'Soviet nationalities' thinking. This order is engaged in nation building and wants to establish an independent policy. However, the elite are heavily dependent on Moscow and cannot overlook the Russian minorities living in Central Asia while formulating policies. The Russian Slavic order has three dimensions: Western school of thought, the Asiatic school of thought, and the Eurasian school of thought. All the three schools of thoughts try to chart out a policy towards Central Asia according to their own viewpoint. The Western Liberal order looks at Central Asia from five different dimensions, including the end of history, clash of civilisations, complex interdependence, neo-realism, and criminal anarchy. The Islamic world order has two dimensions in the region: state-centric Islam and transnational Islam. While the Chinese world order is stuck between the concepts of weak and strong China. This thinking has deep influence over Chinese policy towards Central Asia.<sup>7</sup>

The most important phenomenon, according to Tahir Amin, is that all the world orders are at one page against the Islamic world order. They think that the Islamic world order in Central Asia is a source of destabilisation for other world orders. It is deemed as a common enemy. Coordinated efforts to contain the Islamic order by other world orders have forced the Islamic order to think of all the other world orders as a common enemy bent upon destroying the religious and cultural traditions of the region. Tahir Amin states, "The western liberal order finds commonality with the Russian, Sinic and Residual Socialist world orders in combatting the Islamic world order in central Asia."<sup>8</sup>

The following figure explains the competition and cooperation of world orders in Central Asia.<sup>9</sup>

**Figure 1**  
**Interpenetrating world orders and Central Asia<sup>10</sup>**



**Source:** Tahir Amin, "World Order in Central Asia," in Renee Marlin-Bennett (ed.), *Alker and IR: Global Studies in an Interconnected World* (London: Routledge, 2012), p.75.

It is also interesting to note that there is no single world order within the Muslim world. One may find various Islamic world orders, which operate across the whole Muslim world. The major reason is that no single commonly accepted variant of Islam has been given by the Muslim world. Terrorism is one variant of the transnational Islamic world order. Today's Islamism is comprised of state-centric Islam and transnational Islam. Sometimes these two versions of Islam compete with each other and sometimes cooperate. The same is happening in Central Asia. Despite such realities, all the world orders are at one page against the Islamic order in Central Asia.

### **Political Islam in Central Asia, Xinjiang, and North Caucasus**

Islam remained deeply embedded in the socio-cultural and political life of Central Asia throughout its history. The region remained one of the greatest seats of learning in the Muslim history, especially in the Middle Ages. Samarkand and Bukhara remained the centres of

civilisational excellence. The madrassas of this region, the equivalent of modern-day universities, produced world-class scientists, physicians, musicians, architects, religious scholars, and statesmen.<sup>11</sup> Clergy and the Sufis had great respect not only among the society but also in the emperors' courts. Rulers of the region imposed Islamic laws and practices into their states not only after the region embraced Islam as its religion but even before the Muslims could establish their rule in *Mawar-an-Nehr*.<sup>12</sup> However, after the advent of sea routes, the economic importance of Central Asia declined, as trade through the ancient Silk Routes decreased substantially, which weakened the power of Turkestan.<sup>13</sup> It was split into three Khanates of Khiva, Bukhara, and Kokand. Later, the whole region was occupied by Tsarist Russia and then the Soviet Union. Two major movements, Basmachi and Jadeed, erupted to revive Islamic rule and teachings in the region. Basmachi Movement was an armed movement while Jadeed movement was to bring modern education to the Central Asian region.<sup>14</sup> Both the movements received setbacks and ultimately died. Scholars and historians claim that both these movements were political in nature and both wanted to revive the lost glory of Islam in Turkestan.

There had been certain clandestine Islamic movements throughout the Soviet era but they did not contribute substantially to Islamic revivalism in the region. It was Glasnost and Perestroika policies of the last Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev that paved the way for Political Islam to rise in Central Asia. The independence of the five Central Asian Republics was a landmark for Political Islam to flourish as it got support from the extended 'brethren' community of Muslims, especially from the Middle East. The success of Mujahideen in Afghanistan also contributed considerably to the revival of Political Islam in Central Asia. Right after their independence, Political Islam surfaced in the form of small groups like *Islami Lashkari Tauba* and *Barka* in Namangan region of Uzbekistan and *Hizbe Nuzhat-e-Islami* (Islamic Renaissance Party) in Tajikistan. They demanded implementation of *sharia* in this region. Although they could not succeed in their struggle as Political Islamist groups of Uzbekistan were crushed by the Karimov regime<sup>15</sup> and Islamic Party of Tajikistan struck a deal with the regime in 1997 to end its armed struggle against the regime and joined the Tajik

electoral system as a registered political party,<sup>16</sup> their struggle sowed the seeds of revival of Political Islam in the region.

An important Islamist group operating in the region is Hizb-ut-Tahrir (HT). HT wants to establish a caliphate(s) across the whole Muslim world.<sup>17</sup> It is quite popular in this region as well. It has the largest number of members out of all the Political Islamist groups, despite being banned. Since it has a non-violent strategy to achieve its objectives in Central Asia, it is very attractive to the educated youth and there are reports that a large number of young females have also joined HT.<sup>18</sup> This organisation is quite active in the provision of social services to the needy in Central Asia.

The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) is the most lethal and violent organisation in the region. Created in 1998 in Afghanistan with the help of Al-Qaeda and the Taliban regime in Kabul, the major aim of the movement was to overthrow the 'un-Islamic' regime of the former Uzbek president Islam Karimov. It primarily remained engaged in Afghanistan before moving to FATA region of Pakistan with the onset of the Operation Enduring Freedom after 9/11. It is found involved in some of the deadliest terrorist activities in Pakistan. Different operations by Pakistani security forces pushed it back to Afghanistan where it has engaged itself with other transnational Islamist groups. There are reports that it has split into two major factions: one is supporting Al-Qaeda while the other has affiliated itself with the Islamic State of Khorasan, the Afghan chapter of Daesh.<sup>19</sup> Since Karimov has died and the new Uzbek president Shavkat Mirziyoyev is more progressive and open towards religion, the future of the IMU seems bleak in Central Asia. However, its affiliation with Daesh and Al-Qaeda keeps it alive in other parts of the world, notably Syria and Afghanistan.

Right after the independence of the Central Asian region, the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) tried to penetrate into Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The IRP was established in Astrakhan city of the Russian Volga region in 1990 by Tartar intellectuals. The major aim was to revive Islamic values and teachings in the former Soviet Union. Independence of the region led it to operate separately in different countries. Uzbek authorities banned it after the Namangan crisis. However, it was able to operate in Tajikistan. The political crises in Tajikistan, which led to the demise of Rahmon Nabiev's regime and ultimately to civil war, forced the

IRP to resort to armed struggle against Emomali Rahmon's regime. Since the conclusion of the civil war in 1997, the IRP has integrated into the Tajik political system. Nevertheless, the Tajik regime has banned it in 2015 and its current leader Muhiddin Kabiri is living in Tehran in exile.

There are certain other smaller Islamist groups operating in the region. They include *Akromiya*, *Jandul Ansar*, *Jaish-e-Muhajireen wal-Ansaar*, *Imam Bukhari Brigade*, and *Katibat Taoheed wal Jamat*. Despite their numbers, the Political Islamist groups have not achieved anything substantial. The major reasons for their failure are the Central Asian regimes' strict policies, support of other 'world orders' in Central Asia, their internal differences, and the social structure of this region. The most important reason for their failure is the convergence of interest among the 'world orders' to contain Political Islam in the region. The following section discusses in detail the strategies the 'world orders' have charted out against Islamists in the region.

### **Russian Slavic order and Political Islam**

The Russian Slavic order is really concerned about the activities of Islamists in the North Caucasus. Moscow has faced armed resistance in this region in the form of Chechen uprising. A large number of Central Asian Muslim migrant workers are already in Russia and more are pouring into the Russian cities. Moscow thinks that such a situation can spark Islamist resistance in the whole of the Russian Federation. Therefore, it considers it essential to cooperate with the other 'world orders' in Central Asia to contain the influence of Political Islam within Russian territories. The Russian Muslims are closer to Central Asia in their beliefs, rituals, and social values than the Arabs or Turks. Moscow is so concerned about the Islamists of the region that a Russian analyst points out that "preservation of Russia's wholeness begins in the Fergana valley."<sup>20</sup> Recent accumulation of Islamists, especially the Islamic State of Khorasan in northern Afghanistan has raised eyebrows in Moscow because Russian decisionmakers fear that the penetration of Islamists into Central Asia will have dire consequences for the Russian security as a whole.

Since the IMU and the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) have joined Daesh in Afghanistan and Iraq, Moscow can predict the consequences once these Islamists get involved in the Central Asian

region. President Putin has called for “coordinated actions to address the Islamic State (IS) threat to the region.”<sup>21</sup> However, it is the Chechen issue and the rise of Political Islam in broader North Caucasus region that has forced Russian Slavic order to cooperate with Western Liberal, Chinese, and the Residual Socialist world orders to combat the Islamic World Order in the region.

In order to combat the Islamic World Order in the region, Russia has signed security agreements with the Central Asian states. The most important out of them is the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) signed in 2002 to combat terrorism. As almost all the Central Asian Republics do not have modern high-tech security forces, the Residual Socialist Order has to rely on Russia for this need. This reliance has been described by the late Uzbek president Islam Karimov in the following words, “We have centuries-old relationship of friendship, brotherhood, and mutual assistance with that [Russia] country and its great people.”<sup>22</sup> Russian role in maintaining the so-called peace during the Tajik civil war is another example of the Central Asian Republics’ dependence on Russia for their security. The most important security measure of the CSTO is the creation of Collective Rapid Reaction Force. The major purpose of this Reaction Force is to counter any internal threat to the stability of any member state if requested by the concerned state. It is feared that this force will be used against any possible political or religious opposition or insurgency. According to AbduJalil Boymatov, Chairman of the Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan (HRSU), “Most of the security measures taken by the Central Asian governments in general and Uzbekistan, in particular, to deal with the internal crisis are fake and aimed to counter the opposition, both religious and secular.”<sup>23</sup>

### **Countering Political Islam in Chechnya**

Like their counterparts in the Central Asian states, Chechen Muslims had similar socio-political and religious experiences during the Soviet rule. Having very little modern education, no religious reconstruction due to a strict ban on religious activities, and the influence of Afghan Jihad, Mullahs in Chechnya got influenced by Islamists. In order to keep them away from Political Islam, Moscow even introduced *Sharia* Courts in Dagestan and Ingushetia.<sup>24</sup> The state failed to achieve its objective as it had banned all kinds of religious materials in these



regions. The *Sharia* Courts could not fulfil the demands of the local Muslim majority population.

An uprising started that led to the First Chechen War in 1994. The war lasted for two years. Almost 4,000 Russian troops were killed during the war. It was one of the greatest losses to the Russian military after the Second World War. In response, Moscow used ruthless force to crush Islamist resistance. This strict policy against Political Islam by the Russian Slavic order encouraged the Residual Socialist order in the Central Asian Republics, especially in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, to chart out similar strategies against the Islamic World Order. The second Chechen war of 1999-2001 was a direct outcome of the rise of Political Islam in Afghanistan in the form of the Taliban regime. This war started right after the creation of the IMU as well. Moscow declared that the Chechen rebels had contacts with Islamists in Central Asia and Afghanistan and that they were getting support and training from them.<sup>25</sup>

The increased activities of the Islamists in the Caucasus have forced Moscow to declare this region as a "new haven for separatism."<sup>26</sup> To combat this menace, besides countering the Chinese and Western Liberal orders in the region, the Russian Slavic order created the CSTO in 2002 and a Rapid Reaction Force in 2009. It has established its military bases in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and is negotiating with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan for the establishment of its military bases to assist regional states in improving their security measures as well as to counter the US influence. Russia is operating Kant Base in Kyrgyzstan, which is only 30 miles away from the US base in Manas, Kyrgyzstan.

### **China and the rise of Political Islam on its western borders**

Although ethnic Uighurs are of Turkic origin, they have been dominated by the Chinese from time to time. This dominance has been declared as 'colonialism' by the Uighurs of Xinjiang, the Muslim majority region of China bordering Central Asia.<sup>27</sup> Due to this thinking, there have been several independence movements in Xinjiang. The prominent among them took place before and after the Second World War and after the Soviet disintegration in 1991. In order to alter the ethnic demography of Xinjiang, Beijing has introduced the policy of ethnic Han Chinese migration and settlement into the Xinjiang region. Han migration to this

region has created a huge demographic imbalance that has resulted in the Uighurs' discontent. Han population in Xinjiang has increased from merely 6 percent in 1953 to 40 percent in 2010<sup>28</sup> and is increasing every year. After failing to achieve their objectives politically, Uighurs blended their struggle with ethnicity and later on with Islam. They created the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM). This struggle got violent when it joined the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.

The independence movements around the Second World War led to the creation of two independent Turkestan Republics in 1933 and 1944. The republics were recaptured by the Chinese military shortly thereafter. Impacts of the creation of these republics on the lives of Uighurs, however, were immense. Since the republics implemented *sharia* as state law, it had profound effects on the Uighur society. It also clearly showed the world that the people of this region adhered to their religion. The Basmachi Movement against the Soviet rule in Central Asia is considered one of the major causes for the establishment of the first East Turkestan Republic in 1933. Creation of the second East Turkestan Republic was also influenced by the religious and social freedom Central Asia got during the Second World War.

The post-1970 era witnessed an ethnic cleansing of the indigenous people from the region. Mao's wife, Jiang Qing declared "the non-Hans as alien in the Chinese lands. A systematic campaign against the Uighurs was started by the Chinese authorities with incidents like defaming religious leadership, parading them in the streets and in extreme cases, burning the Quran."<sup>29</sup> Such practices increased hatred towards Hans amongst the Uighurs. Although the Uighur struggle had remained political in nature, Beijing's religious persecution made it more religious than political. Afghan jihad reinforced the political struggle of Uighurs.

### **Countering Political Islam in Xinjiang**

The Chinese World order has dealt harshly with the rise of Political Islam in the Xinjiang region. This no tolerance policy strengthened after 9/11 and the start of the Operation Enduring Freedom, as ETIM had joined hands with the Taliban regime in Kabul and Al-Qaeda. Different agreements have been signed with the Residual Socialist Orders in the Central Asian Republics to counter the Islamists in Xinjiang. The ethnic Uighurs also live in the Central Asian Republics—

notably in Kazakhstan, besides Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. An estimated 300,000 Uighurs live in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan alone.<sup>30</sup> Uighurs in Kazakhstan are under a perpetual eye of the authorities. In order to keep the Uighurs under control, Beijing has concluded an extradition treaty with Astana. Kazakh authorities frequently extradite the wanted Uighurs to China. For example, a school teacher who fled to Kazakhstan from Xinjiang in 2009 was extradited by the Kazakh authorities.<sup>31</sup>

The traditional social and religious practices are put under strict control by the Chinese government in Xinjiang. A complete ban on fasting and offering prayers has been imposed in educational institutions and workplaces. Dress code for students in educational institutions also forbids them from wearing their traditional dresses. *Wahabi* is the common pejorative term used against the practising Uighurs. Kids under 18 years of age cannot attend religious studies. Such state policies have strengthened the Uighur hatred towards the state and the Hans living in Xinjiang. It has also escalated ethnic tension and violence in Xinjiang.

### **Central Asia-Xinjiang connection of Political Islam**

History shows that Islam in Xinjiang remained influenced by the developments in Central Asia (Turkestan). The religious figures of Turkestan led rebellious movements against the Qing dynasty in Xinjiang. Similarly, the creation of two East Turkestan Republics in 1933 and 1944 was also influenced by the developments in Central Asia. It is said that "Kashgar is closer to Baghdad than to Beijing."<sup>32</sup> Chinese authorities fear that religious and ethnic developments in neighbouring Central Asia have deep impacts on Xinjiang. Therefore, it is considered important to have joint mechanisms with the Central Asian Republics to counter their influence in Xinjiang.

The concentration of Islamists in Afghanistan before and after 9/11 provided an ample opportunity to the Islamists of Central Asia and Xinjiang to cooperate with each other. Creation of the Islamic Movement of Turkestan (IMT) in 2002, which was a blend of the IMU, ETIM, and the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU) is a good example in this regard. Chinese authorities claimed in 2002 that they had intercepted 50 Uighurs who were trained in Afghanistan and were sent to Xinjiang through Central Asia. In response, Beijing came out with stricter policies in Xinjiang.<sup>33</sup> China has warned the bordering Central Asian states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan not to "harbour or give sanctuary to any of the

ETIM's dissidents; otherwise, Chinese investments will be in jeopardy."<sup>34</sup> The Residual Socialist order is cooperating with Sinic Order in this regard.

### **World orders and Political Islam in Xinjiang**

ETIM's transnational linkages with other Islamists of the world, especially Al-Qaeda, has brought Chinese, Western Liberal, and the Russian Slavic Orders on one page against Political Islam in western China. After 9/11, spokesperson of Chinese foreign ministry stated, "[Uighurs] have been trained by the international terrorists, so, the fight against separatists in Xinjiang is part of the fight of the world against terrorism."<sup>35</sup> The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) dominated by Russian Slavic and Chinese orders adopted a resolution in 2002, which says that activities "threatening the peace, stability and security of the member states of the SCO or the entire world be dealt jointly."<sup>36</sup> This statement invited other world orders to cooperate with each other against the Islamic order.

China has provided millions of dollars in aid to Central Asian states to counter terrorism. There was a Counter-Terrorism Centre in Bishkek under the Shanghai-5. The SCO has established Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS) in Tashkent. The charter of SCO is quite clear against the Islamic order as it states, "perceived potential danger of Islamist militants is the main threat that binds regional security strategies of the SCO countries together."<sup>37</sup>

Prior to 9/11, the US was focused on eliminating human rights violations in Xinjiang, but it took a U-turn after 9/11 and softened its policy on human rights abuses in Xinjiang. The US State Department declared ETIM as a terrorist organisation in 2002 on the charges that it was planning to attack the US embassy in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. The Western Liberal order was in dire need of cooperation from the Chinese, Russian Slavic, and the Residual Socialist orders to combat Political Islam in Afghanistan. Since all these world orders were united against the Islamic world order, they joined their hands for this purpose despite their divergent interests in Central Asia and Afghanistan.

### **US: only countering militant Islam in Afghanistan and the Central Asian Republics?**

Washington provided millions of dollars in aid to Afghan Mujahideen against the Soviet forces. Mujahideen fought for ten years against the Soviet forces in Afghanistan and forced Moscow to withdraw from Afghanistan. Mujahideen from across the globe were encouraged to join that jihad. They were trained, equipped with arms, and kept very close to the 'drivers' of that jihad. However, Mujahideen of the 1980s and their heirs became terrorists right after 9/11 and a global war against terrorism was started by Washington against the so-called terrorists (Islamic order) in Afghanistan. From 2001 onwards, the US forces are in Afghanistan trying to win an inconclusive war.

The US administrations had to rely upon the neighbouring countries of Afghanistan in order to continue its activities in Afghanistan. The central Asian region is very important for the US in this regard. Despite having reservations about the US stay in this region, all the orders have supported the Western Liberal order's Operation Enduring Freedom and its efforts to combat Political Islam. The Central Asian Republics are in favour of US stay in Afghanistan as they think that it will guarantee security to their southern and most fragile borders. The late Uzbek president Islam Karimov stated in April 2013 in Moscow, "Next year's planned exit of NATO troops from Afghanistan will create dangerous conditions in Central Asia, and Russia's presence will help maintain peace in the region."<sup>38</sup>

### **US strategy to counter Islamic world order in Central Asia**

Washington knows that in order to control the Islamic order in Afghanistan, it is necessary that it must not have contacts with its neighbouring networks. The White House's National Strategy for Counter-Terrorism states:

The US does not face a direct terrorist threat from Central Asia but has interest in maintaining the security of the US logistics infrastructure supporting operation in Afghanistan, key strategic facilities and in preventing the emergence of Al-Qaeda's safe heavens in Central Asia. It remains vigilant to warning signs in the region and continues to support local

efforts to ensure that the threats against the US and allied interest from terrorist groups in Central Asia remain low.<sup>39</sup>

Central Asia is still important to the US. The importance has been manifested in the 2014 statement of the US CENTCOM commander General Lloyd Austin who stated the following to the Congressional Committee of Armed Services:

Central Asia's position bordering Russia, China, Afghanistan and Iran assures its long term importance to the US. By improving upon our military to military relationships we will be better able to maintain influence and access, counter malign activities, protect lines of communication and deny [violent extremist organisations] access to ungoverned spaces and restrict their freedom of movement [in Central Asia].<sup>40</sup>

Central Asian states were quick to provide support to the US in Operation Enduring Freedom. They offered them basing rights on easy conditions. Karshi Khanabad base, the largest in the whole of Central Asia had been under the use of US forces until 2005 when it was vacated by the Uzbek regime in response to the human rights violation charges by the US. Other bases used by the coalition forces were Dushanbe (Tajikistan) used by French forces, Termez (Uzbekistan) used by the German forces, Shymkent (Kazakhstan) used by the ISAF forces, and Manas (Kyrgyzstan) used by the US forces.

When NATO's supply to Afghanistan was disrupted in Pakistan by terrorists' attacks on NATO convoys, the US administration established the Northern Distribution Network (NDN) in order to carry the NATO supplies from Russia and the Central Asian Republics to Afghanistan. Since the creation of the NDN, Western Liberal Order does not bother about the human rights violations by the Residual Socialist Order against Political Islam. As most of the Central Asian regimes are highly authoritative, genuine opposition is not allowed. Hence, people join underground Islamist organisations in order to show their discontent against the regimes. Human rights activists in the region are disappointed by the recent rapprochement between the US and Uzbek authorities against Political Islam. They think that it is just for political

purposes and has strengthened the human rights violations in Central Asia.

The American double standards on the Central Asian Republics are exemplified by its U-turn on the Andijon incident of 2005, where the Uzbek security forces killed hundreds of non-combatants including women and children. Initially, Washington not only criticised the actions of the Uzbek regime, it also demanded an international inquiry into the incident, which was rejected by Tashkent with the help of Moscow and Beijing.<sup>41</sup> However, later on, the Pentagon said that "Andijon massacre was passé. It's gone, got over it."<sup>42</sup> Washington has provided the Central Asian Republics with millions of dollars to train their security forces to combat Islamists in the region. The assistance amount in this regard rose from \$188 million in 2002 to \$247 million in 2010.<sup>43</sup> "US has also proposed to establish military training centres in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan that have an estimated cost of \$17.5 million."<sup>44</sup> 'Exercise Regional Cooperation 10' in Tajikistan was an initiative of Washington with an objective to counter the menace of terrorism collectively at the regional level.

## **Conclusion**

Major reasons for the rise of Political Islam in Central Asia are the Afghan issue and the lifelong authoritative regimes of the region. In Xinjiang and the North Caucasus, it revolves around anti-religious policies of the states and a quest for independence. The Islamic order is also very much concerned with global issues of the Muslim world, especially Palestine and now Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, etc. Islamic order also propagates the cooperation of other 'un-Islamic' Orders against itself in the region. Central Asian societies, especially those of living in the Fergana Valley,<sup>45</sup> are closer to religion. Therefore, they also think that the non-Muslims (orders) are a curse for them. The Islamic order says that there is a consensus of the enemies of Islam on eliminating religion from the Central Asian states. Political Islam considers Residual Socialist, Chinese, Slavic, and Liberal world orders to be on the same page as far as human rights violations, political oppression, and religious persecution are concerned.

Despite having divergent political and economic interest in the region, Russian Slavic, Chinese, Western Liberal, and the Residual

Socialist orders are at one page against the Islamic order in Central Asia. It is considered as a common threat. Several bilateral, as well as multilateral agreements, have been signed to counter Political Islam. The situation in Afghanistan has also provided the Islamists with a safe haven. But it is very important to note that there is no single variant of the Islamic order operating in the region. The world orders need to rethink their policies by demarcating the violent Political Islam from the peaceful and constitutional Political Islam. Double standards of the Western Liberal ORDER on democracy and human rights are also an important reason for the rise of Political Islam.

Beijing's and Moscow's policies are considered responsible for the blending of comparatively secular political movements with religious extremism. Having a weak security apparatus and fragile borders, the Central Asian Republics favour the staying of the US in Afghanistan, which more or less guarantees the security of their southern borders. Although Islamists in the region have failed to unite or chart out a collective strategy to achieve their common goal, it is the world orders' alliance against Political Islam that is a major blow to their activities. The emergence of the Islamic State of Khorasan in Afghanistan has again brought the world orders closer against the Islamic order. It can be estimated that this cooperation against the Islamic order will last for the near future because, with the initiation of the Belt and Road initiative, Beijing is very much concerned with the security of Central Asia. It is very important for the US to conclude the war on terrorism in Afghanistan as soon as possible, otherwise, Political Islam will get further strengthened as it will gain time to re-establish itself. Moreover, a US defeat will not only legitimise Political Islam in this region but in the broader Muslim World as well.



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# AN ASSESSMENT OF INDIAN FACTOR IN PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS

MIRAJ MUHAMMAD\* AND JAMAL SHAH\*\*

## Abstract

*Pakistan and Afghanistan—being neighbours with a long, porous, and not effectively managed border—influence each other strongly due to their common history, culture, and religion. Their relations have been mostly hostile rather than friendly due to political and territorial issues and, more significantly, because of a trust deficit between them. This state of affairs has been galvanised because of the Indian factor, which, in turn, has greatly influenced Pakistan's foreign policy in general and towards Afghanistan in particular. The Indian factor is considered to be mainly responsible for the strained relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Pakistan's adoption of the policy of 'strategic depth' was a move in that direction. Both Pakistan and India are busy in achieving maximum political gains in Afghanistan. The main interests of Pakistan and India are to circumvent the installation of a pro-India and pro-Pakistan government, respectively, in Afghanistan. The main objective of this paper is to show how and to what extent India influences Pak-Afghan relations. It briefly explores the main stages of the Pak-Afghan relations and also looks into the Indian interests in Afghanistan and the means New Delhi has employed to realise them.*

## Introduction

Afghanistan, a landlocked country that heavily depends on neighbouring Pakistan for trade with the outside world, shares a 2,250 km-long porous border with it. The two states also influence each other strongly due to their common history, culture, and religion. Their

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relations, however, have a chequered history due to political issues, especially a longstanding trust-deficit. When Pakistan attained independence from the British colonial rule in 1947, Afghanistan took a tough stance on the Durand Line, which Sir Mortimer Durand had demarcated in 1893 as the border between Afghanistan and British India, and which also divided the Pashtun community between the two. Afghanistan, thus, did not recognise Pakistan as an independent state at the UN at its birth in 1947. Afghanistan still refuses to accept the present international border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. It claims that since this agreement was imposed by the British, the then Afghan government was compelled to accept it under duress.<sup>1</sup> Pakistan's position is that it is a settled issue and that the Durand Line Agreement was signed by the ruler of Afghanistan with the understanding of the British government and the subsequent governments of Afghanistan ratified it in 1905, 1919, 1921, and 1930.<sup>2</sup> Half a century afterwards, each and every Afghan ruler reaffirmed the validity of the Durand Line as an agreed frontier between Afghanistan and India.<sup>3</sup> On the Pashtunistan issue, the stance of the Afghan government is that the Pashtuns of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan have the right to form their own independent state under the name of Pashtunistan as the Pashtuns of these areas are not adequately represented in Pakistan's government.<sup>4</sup> Pakistan considers this an act of interference in its internal affairs and believes that the people of KP and Balochistan have exercised their right to live in Pakistan according to the Indian Independence Act of 1947. Nevertheless, these two issues have often proved to be serious stumbling blocks in the way of brotherly relations between the two countries.

Pakistan tried its best in the beginning to maintain good neighbourly relations with its western neighbour.<sup>5</sup> The main reason for this approach was Pakistan's strained and hostile relations with India, which compelled Pakistan to avoid another unfriendly neighbour. Pakistan, throughout its history, strived to establish cordial relations with Afghanistan due to the fear of being encircled by India and Afghanistan. Pakistan's fear continues to this day, with Islamabad's constant struggle to install a pro-Pakistan—if not an anti-India—government in Afghanistan. However, Afghanistan has always shown its readiness to play along with the Indians for its own benefit. In order to press

Afghanistan, Pakistan has exploited the landlocked location of Afghanistan and on a number of occasions has stopped the supply of goods to Afghanistan from the port of Karachi.<sup>6</sup> Besides exploiting the Durand Line and Pashtunistan issues between Afghanistan and Pakistan, India has consistently tried to become a friend of Afghanistan by cultivating warm relations with all governments of Afghanistan, except the Taliban. These developments have exacerbated the worries of Pakistan vis-à-vis India regarding its security, territorial integrity, foreign policy, and economic wellbeing.

The Indian factor has greatly influenced Pakistan's foreign policy in general and towards Afghanistan in particular. It is greatly responsible for the strained relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The adoption of the policy of 'strategic depth' is a move in that direction. Both Pakistan and India are busy in achieving maximum political gains in Afghanistan, which has resulted in a cold war between them regarding Afghanistan. The main interest of Pakistan in Afghanistan is to circumvent the installation of a pro-India government in Afghanistan—a state in the grip of civil wars, militancy, and extremism since 1979. The main objective of this paper is to show how and to what extent India influences Pak-Afghan relations.

The paper analyses the interests of Pakistan and India in Afghanistan, as well as the means employed by the two countries to realise them. The first section of the paper shows that Pakistan and Afghanistan are politico-strategically important for each other and their good relations are not only vital for them but also for the whole region. In this section, the military concept of strategic depth is also explained. In order to fully understand the Pak-Afghan psyche, section two of the paper gives a brief timeline of Pak-Afghan relations. The section shows that their relations have experienced major ups and downs during the course of history. Section three explores the importance of Indian factor in Pak-Afghan relations and the all-out efforts of India to install an anti-Pakistan government in Afghanistan. The section shows that the main foreign policy concern of India with regard to Afghanistan is to resist the installation of a pro-Pakistan government in Afghanistan. Section four concludes the paper.

### **Islamabad and Kabul need each other**

As mentioned earlier, Pakistan and Afghanistan have religious-cultural and linguistic commonalities, besides sharing a long porous border. The Durand Line and Pashtunistan issues<sup>7</sup> are the bones of contention between them. However, their progress, development, and stability (both economic and political) lie in having good fraternal relations. They need each other. Afghanistan is a landlocked state and heavily depends on Pakistan for trade with other states. It is one of the reasons India is constructing the port of Chabahar in Iran to ease Afghanistan's dependency on Pakistan. Good relations provide good opportunities for Afghanistan to benefit more from Pakistani routes. Again, being a neighbour, Pakistan can play a very constructive role in bringing stability to this war-torn country. Similarly, a stable Afghanistan will prove to be a boom for Pakistan. Only a stable Afghanistan can guarantee Pakistan access to the natural resources and energy from the Central Asian Republics. A stable and pro-Pakistan government in Afghanistan can relieve Pakistan of Indian hostile designs and entanglement.

Pakistan has followed a policy of 'strategic depth' towards Afghanistan. Khalid Masood Khan explains the concept of 'Strategic depth' as follows:

The internal distance within a state...the distance from the frontline to its centre of gravity or Heartland, its core population areas or important cities or industrial installations. It refers to the consideration relating to the vulnerability of the centre of gravity of a country to the enemy's onslaught in case of war as against the capability provided by the space available within the territory to halt enemy's advance, counter attack and restore the balance. Militarily, a country having more strategic depth is considered to be at a greater advantage as compared to the one having lesser space. Strategic depth...naturally strengthens the defence capability of a country and...places great challenges on the aggressor; it reinforces the natural capacity to absorb a military aggression from the defender's point of view... Thus the strategic depth of a country is directly proportional to its national security, especially in case of hostile neighbours.<sup>8</sup>

Strategic depth, in politico-diplomatic terms, is the capability of a state to decrease threats by a number of strategies like improving relations with neighbours and bringing the likelihood of an armed conflict to zero, thus, creating additional space for economic growth, development, and soft power projection.<sup>9</sup> Strategic depth, as a security concept, is believed to be essential for Pakistan because our country is a bit narrow at its middle and could be forcefully bifurcated by an Indian attack. It is also believed that strategic depth will give respite to our military by withdrawing into Afghanistan, regroup there, and mount counter-attacks on Indian armed forces in Pakistan. Islamabad is also thinking that the greater the strategic depth it develops towards its north and west, the more emboldened and strengthened it becomes vis-à-vis India. A pro-Pakistan government in Afghanistan is thought to be necessary to give Islamabad the much needed strategic depth for launching a counter-offensive from Afghan territory. Pakistan's search for energy, market, and natural resources is also linked with deepening its strategic depth towards its north and west. These are the broad considerations under which the concept of strategic depth evolved.

It is believed that in a broader perspective, Pakistan takes strategic depth more comprehensively than gaining military depth exclusively and is more related to Pakistan's extension of influence towards Afghanistan and the Central Asian Republics.<sup>10</sup> Pakistan followed active policies towards Afghanistan for not only securing a friendly government there and acquiring military depth against India but also for expanding its influence into the resource-rich Central Asian Republics to acquire economic and political depth against India. Economic depth is thought to allow Islamabad to access to natural resources from the Central Asian Republics at the expense of India, while the political depth is thought to allow Islamabad access to political support against India and to raise its international standing among the Muslim world.<sup>11</sup>

However, the notion of strategic depth is thought to be lacking a sound military appraisal of the real situation. Afghanistan has always remained too unstable, quasi-hostile, and tribal for any sane leader to consider putting the country's strategic assets there. General Aslam Beg, a former Pakistani army chief who is considered the originator of the term, clarified the term in a statement at a conference in Tehran:



The need for strategic depth—a strategic partnership between Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan—was misunderstood as an imperative only for geographical space ... to say that the strategic depth concept was developed to gain territorial space in case of war with India has no military logic, nor does it conform to the operational policy of Pakistan, which is to defend its borders and defeat the enemy if he attempts to violate Pakistan's territory."<sup>12</sup>

Through its security prism, Pakistan news India as following a policy to manipulate events in Afghanistan and Iran to instigate anti-Pakistan feelings, which may cause political and security problems for Pakistan. So installing a friendly government in Afghanistan has been the main objective of Pakistan. Feroz Hassan Khan mentions two misunderstandings about Pakistan's security objectives in Afghanistan. The first one is that Pakistan will use Afghanistan as 'strategic depth' in case of an Indian attack on Pakistan and Pakistan would utilise this 'depth' as a 'safety deposit' for strategic assets and arsenals that may be susceptible to Indian strikes. However, Feroz Hassan argues that military strategy in the present nuclear context has altered the concepts of fighting. Pakistan may, at best, find a friendly Kabul providing a 'strategic relief zone' for restricted logistic sustenance and support in a future war with India.<sup>13</sup> The second misunderstanding is that Pakistan has an ideological agenda: that Pakistan seeks a forward policy with the purpose of "recreating a Sunni Muslim space between infidel 'Hindustan', heretic Iran and Christian Russia."<sup>14</sup> But this forward policy has not remained part of its stated policy objectives and directives. This policy was not even proclaimed by Zia, the man to whom this policy is mainly attributed. Zia was mainly concerned about security threats from India in addition to some serious domestic challenges and it seems quite unlikely that his regime would have seriously considered a 'Sunni space' towards central Asia.<sup>15</sup> After the disintegration of the USSR, Pakistan saw Afghanistan as an essential channel for Central Asia's natural resources.

### **Pak-Afghan relations: a review**

Pak-Afghan relations have witnessed various troughs and crests since 1947, which are briefly presented below.

### **The cool start era (1947-1963)**

This era witnessed the start of relations in a haphazard manner. In fact, the era marks the beginning of tensions rather than normal relations. The first serious incident occurred on 30 September 1947 at the UN, where Afghanistan was the only Muslim country in the world opposing the membership of Pakistan in the UN. The Afghan delegate, Husain Aziz said, "We cannot recognize the NWFP [the present KP] as part of Pakistan so long as the people of NWFP have not been given an opportunity free from any kind of influence and I repeat, free from any kind of influence, to determine for themselves whether they wish to be independent or to become a part of Pakistan."<sup>16</sup> However, despite the aforementioned fact, the two countries established diplomatic relations in 1948.<sup>17</sup> Meanwhile, Afghanistan's state-controlled radio continued the claim of Afghanistan on Pakistan's territory from the Durand Line up to River Indus. The most serious event in Pak-Afghan relations occurred when Afghanistan's parliament rejected the Durand Line Agreement in July 1949.<sup>18</sup> The situation further worsened in 1950, when an Afghan official made anti-Pakistan speeches in a large gathering in Kabul with Pashtunistan flag hoisted and anti-Pakistan leaflets dropped by the Afghan Air Force.<sup>19</sup>

The introduction of One Unit scheme<sup>20</sup> in Pakistan in 1955 further destabilised the already fragile relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Pakistan Embassy in Kabul was attacked and Pakistani flag was put on fire after the introduction of One Unit in the then West Pakistan.<sup>21</sup> In retaliation, Afghanistan's consulate in Peshawar was also attacked and Afghan transit trade was stopped for all practical purposes.<sup>22</sup> However, with the use of the good offices of the Shah of Iran, trade activities were resumed.<sup>23</sup> Relations between the two countries began to improve when they signed an Air Services Agreement on 23 June 1957 in Kabul and the subsequent high-level exchange of visits by the officials of both the countries.<sup>24</sup> However, the U-2 incident on 1 May 1960<sup>25</sup> altered the situation and the USSR joined hands with India and Afghanistan against Pakistan on international issues, which naturally worsened Pak-Afghan relations. The USSR started to support Afghanistan on Pashtunistan issue because of the incident. In these circumstances, a number of raids were conducted from Afghanistan into

the Pakistani territory. In response, Pakistan terminated diplomatic relation with Afghanistan, followed by suspension of trade.<sup>26</sup>

### **The era of rapprochement**

With the political change in Afghanistan, relations between the two countries started to improve due to the intervention of the Shah of Iran, who invited both the countries for talks in Tehran on 23 May 1963. As a result, diplomatic relations between the two countries were restored, the frontiers were reopened after a closure of 22 months, and trade was resumed.<sup>27</sup> Afghanistan remained neutral during the Indo-Pak war in 1965, even though India and the Soviet Union provoked the Afghan government to attack Pakistan during the war. President Ayub Khan of Pakistan went to Kabul after the war and thanked Zahir Shah, the then King of Afghanistan, for keeping neutrality during the war.<sup>28</sup> In response to Ayub Khan's visit, Afghan king was also warmly received in Pakistan during his visit to Islamabad in 1968.<sup>29</sup> The next step towards normalisation of relations was the abolition of One Unit scheme by Pakistan and the reconstitution of the old provinces in 1970. During the 1971 Pak-India war, Afghanistan once again remained neutral and did not create problems for Pakistan on its western border.<sup>30</sup>

### **The end of the honeymoon**

Pak-Afghan relations took a new turn for the worse when Sardar Daoud took over as the president of Afghanistan in 1973. He took a staunch stance on Pashtunistan and Durand Line issues and, from the very beginning, showed a very aggressive attitude towards Pakistan. He once said, "Pakistan is the only country with which we still have political differences. On the question of Pashtunistan our constant efforts to find a solution will continue."<sup>31</sup> The elements that brought Daoud to power were all leftist, ideologically close to the USSR and India, which was a matter of great concern for Pakistan. Consequently, Pakistan decided to resort to a forward policy in dealing with Afghanistan. Pakistan, in response to Afghan government's support to Baloch and Pashtun nationalists, invited Afghan Islamists who were struggling against Daoud's government.<sup>32</sup> The idea was to support the radical Islamist movement in Afghanistan to neutralise Afghanistan's propaganda about the Durand Line and Pashtunistan issues. Pakistan started establishing good relations with Islamist leaders like Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Burhanuddin Rabbani,

Ahmad Shah Massoud, etc. in 1975.<sup>33</sup> The first uprising against the Afghan government was organised in the Panjshir Valley but failed.<sup>34</sup> These developments created serious tensions between the communist and Islamist elements in Afghanistan for which Pakistan was constantly accused.

The situation further aggravated by the then prime minister of Pakistan Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's decision to launch a military operation in Balochistan in 1973. Due to the military operation, some elements went to Afghanistan where they were warmly received.<sup>35</sup> In retaliation, Pakistan also extended support to Afghan Islamists harboured by the Pakistani establishment and, according to one estimate, at least 80,000 Afghans were properly trained and equipped to start a resistance movement in Afghanistan.<sup>36</sup> These elements were able to pose a challenge to the Afghan government, especially in the Panjshir Valley. On the other hand, Afghans provided support to Baloch dissidents for raids in Balochistan.<sup>37</sup> These reciprocal activities in one another's internal affairs worsened relations between the two countries. However, Iran and the Secretary-General of OIC intervened and put things back on track.<sup>38</sup> Pakistan provided help to the victims of the 1976 earthquake in Afghanistan. That was when President Daoud realised the importance of normal relations with Pakistan and invited Bhutto to visit Afghanistan. Bhutto readily accepted the invitation and visited Afghanistan on 7 June 1976, where he was received cordially.<sup>39</sup> But the change of governments both in Pakistan and Afghanistan marked another era of Pak-Afghan relations.

### **The era of Afghan Jihad**

After the invasion of Afghanistan by the USSR, Pakistan decided to openly support Afghan Islamists against the communist government of Afghanistan and the USSR with the help, primarily, of the US and Saudi Arabia.<sup>40</sup> Pakistan became the frontline state against the USSR. Islamist militants, the so-called Afghan Mujahideen, were gathered, trained, and equipped by Pakistan, the US, and Saudi Arabia.<sup>41</sup> The Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and KP witnessed the training camps of these Afghan jihadists.<sup>42</sup> A proxy war between the USSR and the US on the one hand and India and Pakistan on the other started in Afghanistan.

After the overthrow of Daoud, a communist government under Nur Muhammad Taraki was installed in Kabul. The radical changes brought about by the new government faced stiff resistance from Islamists and other conservative sections of the society.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, there was no unity among the ruling junta. Soon, Taraki was overthrown by Hafiz Ullah Amin. But the situation was going from bad to worse. In order to control things in Kabul, the USSR entered Afghanistan on 27 December 1979. Amin was deposed while Babrak Karmal was installed as the Afghan president. These developments were of grave concern for Pakistan because the USSR, a friend of India, was on its western border with its long-cherished dream to reach the warm waters of the Arabian Sea through Pakistan. The US offered Pakistan with the idea of jointly supporting Afghan Islamists for countering the situation to which Islamabad agreed. Thus, Pakistan became the frontline state against the USSR and provided active military and political support to Afghan Mujahideen and accommodated over than 3.7 million Afghan refugees along with their 2.5 million of livestock.<sup>44</sup> They settled in 386 camps situated mostly in rural areas of KP and Balochistan, the provinces with which Afghans have religio-cultural and linguistic affinities. These refugees posed a number of socio-economic, political, environmental, and security problems for Pakistan. The drug trade and Kalashnikov culture are the outcomes of this refugee policy.<sup>45</sup> Most of the refugees have returned to Afghanistan since 2002 but still there are 1.6 million refugees in Pakistan.<sup>46</sup>

Afghanistan consistently complained against Pakistan's anti-state activities in Afghanistan, while Pakistan charged Afghanistan of its violation of Pakistan's airspace and cross-border shelling.<sup>47</sup> At last, through the Geneva Accords, the USSR decided to withdraw from Afghanistan. However, the Accords did not provide for a strong government in Kabul and left a power vacuum, which resulted in a civil war among Mujahideen factions and the USSR-backed government in Kabul under Mohammad Najibullah.

During the rule of Najibullah, Pak-Afghan relations were at the lowest ebb. Afghanistan was not happy with Pakistan's support to Afghan Mujahideen and its interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs. After the overthrow of Najibullah, Pakistan-backed Mujahideen entered into Kabul but only to start a new civil war in Afghanistan. Pakistan,

however, was fed up of Afghan Mujahideen's infighting and lust for power. Hence, Pakistan decided to support another group of Islamic militants in order to bring peace and install a friendly government in Kabul. That group emerged with the name of the Taliban on Afghanistan's political horizon.

### **The era of the Taliban**

The long civil war in Afghanistan and the cruelties of Mujahideen groups gave rise to the militant force of the Taliban.<sup>48</sup> The Taliban were organised by a cleric and Afghan jihadist leader Mullah Mohammed Omar in Kandahar, Afghanistan. They were the students of *madrassas*, religious schools, who were warmly welcomed by the Afghan people as a third option. The Taliban emerged from Kandahar and swept over all the territory up to Kabul within no time. Pakistan established cordial relations with this force and fully supported it, while India was quick to choose and help the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance of Afghanistan.<sup>49</sup> A proxy war again started between India and Pakistan to control Kabul. Taliban were able to control 90 percent of Afghan territory,<sup>50</sup> which was a great source of annoyance for India. Pakistan supported the Taliban because it wanted to end the civil war in Afghanistan and an early repatriation of Afghan refugees to their homeland. On 26 September 1996, the Taliban took control of Kabul and imposed the strictest Islamic system. All women were banned from work, girls' schools and colleges were closed down, and a strict dress code of head-to-toe veils for women was imposed.<sup>51</sup> As the Taliban were considered pro-Pakistan, India wasted no time in challenging Pakistan's supremacy in Kabul. India and Iran actively supported the Northern Alliance headed by Ahmad Shah Massoud, a one-time friend of Pakistan.<sup>52</sup>

### **The era of 'war on terror'**

Things dramatically changed when on 11 September 2001 the twin towers in New York were razed to the ground in a terrorist attack that left over 3,000 people dead and caused \$10 billion worth of property damages, besides engulfing the US in a state of terror. The US declared Osama bin Laden, then settled in Afghanistan, responsible for these terrorist attacks and demanded his extradition to the US. Upon the refusal of the Taliban, the US decided to attack Afghanistan.

The incidents of 9/11 turned the tables against Pakistan and in favour of India. Pakistan's position was very awkward because the force it had raised and supported during the past years had to be abandoned. Due to enormous US and international pressure, Pakistan decided to desert the Taliban and join the US in the war against the Taliban, the so-called 'war on terror'. The US-led NATO/ISAF forces started military operations against the Taliban in Afghanistan under the name of 'Operation Enduring Freedom' on 7 October 2001 and, as a result, thousands of Afghan and other Islamist militants escaped to Pakistan and settled in different parts of Pakistan.<sup>53</sup> This policy shift of Pakistan annoyed the Pakistani militants and they decided to stand with their comrades, the Afghan Taliban. The war on terror resulted in an increased militancy and radicalism in Pakistan, especially in FATA. Pakistani Islamic militants, with the working support of the Afghan Taliban, formed a militant organisation named the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which has adopted terrorism as a strategy to achieve its objectives. Pakistan army was called into FATA for the first time in its history as a policy shift. The TTP, along with other militant organisations, declared a war of vengeance against Pakistan and its state institutions. These developments have brought Pakistan into a whirlpool of militancy and extremism with a deteriorated law and order situation in the country in general and KP in particular. The TTP has turned out to be a nationwide terrorist organisation operating across Pakistan and has very close relations with the Afghan Taliban, as they share the same overall ideology.

The war against terrorism has created an atmosphere of mistrust between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Afghanistan has toughened its stance on the two main issues—Durand Line and Pashtunistan. When Kabul fell to the US-sponsored United Front Forces of the Northern Alliance on 12 November 2001, it was a very serious situation for Pakistan because it had supported the Taliban against the Northern Alliance headed by a Durrani Pashtun, Hamid Karzai, educated in Simla, India, and considered a good friend of India.<sup>54</sup> Pakistan tried its best to minimise the control of the Northern Alliance in Kabul.<sup>55</sup> The entry of the Northern Alliance into Kabul was perceived by many in Islamabad as the failure of Pakistan's diplomacy and a victory for India.<sup>56</sup> Musharraf welcomed the Bonn Agreement.<sup>57</sup> However, Islamabad was deeply

concerned over the under-representation of Pashtuns and overrepresentation of the Northern Alliance in the new political setup in Kabul.<sup>58</sup> The post-Bonn administration in Kabul was not sympathetic to Pakistan because of the long-standing rivalry between the groups that controlled Kabul and the Taliban. That is the reason relations between the two countries are not friendly and there exists some mutual suspicion, mistrust, and even hatred.

Pakistan and Afghanistan are both partners in the war against terrorism but due to their mutual mistrust, their roles seem to be of rivals rather than allies. Both the countries are not on the same page the way it ought to be. Afghanistan accuses Pakistan of cross-border movement of militants and support to the Afghan Taliban insurgents in Afghanistan, who are led by top Taliban leaders allegedly having offices in Quetta known as the 'Quetta Shura'.<sup>59</sup> Pakistan is also accused of supporting the Haqqani Network and Taliban militants for the insurgency in Afghanistan. Kabul believes that Pakistan is actively involved in its internal affairs through its intelligence agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI).<sup>60</sup> Pakistan rejects the allegations and instead accuses Kabul of providing sanctuaries to Pakistani outlaws in Kunar and Nuristan provinces. Islamabad believes that Kabul has provided active support to TTP's Emir of Mohmand Agency, Abdul Wali, better known as Umer Khalid, Emir of Bajaur Agency, Maulvi Faqir Muhammad, and Emir of Swat Mullah Fazlullah.<sup>61</sup> Since June 2010, 223 attacks have been carried out in Pakistan from across the border in Afghanistan, including 14 major ones in which up to 200 militants were involved. Dozens of security personnel have lost their lives in such attacks. The attacks are believed to have originated from Kunar and Nuristan provinces of Afghanistan from 18 to 20 camps run by militants Mullah Fazlullah and Abdul Wali.<sup>62</sup> Pakistan also accuses Afghanistan of abetting the Baloch insurgents and accuses the Indian consulates in Jalalabad, Herat, and Qandahar of supporting militants conducting sabotage activities in Pakistan.<sup>63</sup> Pakistan also believes that India is going to encircle it in Afghanistan. Pakistan has continuously pointed out the negative role of Indian consulates along its border area.



### **Indian factor in Pak-Afghan relations**

The relations between Pakistan and India have remained strained since their independence in 1947. The two countries have fought three wars. Tensions between them have influenced their relations with other countries as well, which is manifested in their relations with Afghanistan. India and Afghanistan have enjoyed cordial relations, except for a brief interlude during Mujahideen and Taliban eras. Both the countries have supported each other on many issues on international forums and, in fact, are still sharing each other's point of view.<sup>64</sup> This India-Afghan nexus has always affected Pakistan's Afghan policy. In recent times, this annoyance has turned serious and the security establishment in Pakistan has perceived the Indian presence in Afghanistan as a serious threat to its national interest and foreign policy objectives. Keeping in view this development, Islamabad has started efforts to attain maximum influence in Afghanistan.<sup>65</sup> Pakistan has been actively engaged in Afghanistan to have a pro-Pakistan government in Kabul and ultimately to reduce the Indian influence in Afghanistan.

Although Kabul has pretended to have balanced relations with both India and Pakistan, the rivalries between Pakistan and India are so deep-rooted that Afghanistan has no choice but to face a Pak-Indian proxy war for most of the time. While signing a strategic agreement with India on 4 October 2011, former Afghan president Hamid Karzai said,

This strategic partnership is not directed against any country. Pakistan is our twin brother India is a great friend. The agreement we signed with our friend will not affect our brother.<sup>66</sup>

However, this surety hardly removes the suspicion of Islamabad as it has always seen the India-Afghanistan nexus as a threat to its national interests. Increasing control of Northern Alliance over Kabul under former Afghan president Hamid Karzai was a matter of great satisfaction for India but of annoyance for Pakistan. Pakistan's choices were limited at the beginning of the war on terror, i.e., either to support the Taliban and face the wrath of the US or to abandon the Taliban and stay with the US. Pakistan chose the latter option—a position often termed as a U-turn of Pakistan's Afghan policy. Although Pakistan tried its best to have good relations with the Karzai government, relations

between the two countries were far from friendly. Afghanistan believed that Pakistan supported the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan and the Taliban leadership continued enjoying the protection of Pakistan in Quetta.<sup>67</sup>

Pakistan's Afghan policy must be viewed in light of Pak-India relations as both the countries have a long history of a struggle for influence in Afghanistan. The conflict of interest is multidimensional and extends to various fields and subjects. There are many areas in which the national interests of both the countries clash with each other. Although their mutual interests far outweigh their mistrust quotient, each country is struggling against the other to achieve and safeguard its national interests in Kabul at the expense of the other. In order to understand this competition, a detailed description of the areas of conflict is given below.

### **Political rivalry**

The rivalry between Pakistan and India started right from the independence of the two countries in 1947 over various issues arising as a result of the partition of colonial India into two states. This aspect can also be found in relation to Afghanistan since 1947. India, though not a neighbour of Afghanistan, is an important regional power and enjoys warm relations with Afghanistan since 1947, except for a brief period when the Taliban were in control of Kabul. Both countries are supporting each other on many issues on various international forums. India has fully supported the Afghan government politically and materially. India even supported the unjustified invasion of Afghanistan by the USSR due to its good relations with the anti-Pakistan government in Kabul.<sup>68</sup>

Both Pakistan and India have tried to establish warm and cordial relations with Afghanistan with the exclusion of the other. In this respect, India has the upper hand because—in comparison with Pakistan, which has the issues of Durand Line and Pashtunistan with Afghanistan—India has no dispute or issue with it. Afghanistan's negative vote against Pakistan's membership in the UN has also deteriorated relations between the two countries. This situation has provided an opportunity to New Delhi to have cordial relations with Kabul.

Afghanistan, being a land-locked country, has used Pakistani ports for trade with the outside world. Pakistan has used this strategic

asset to influence the Afghan governments and serve Islamabad's interests from time to time. This policy has, however, increased mistrust and suspicion of Afghanistan towards Pakistan. Pakistan and India, which are always seeking political influence in Kabul, view each other's efforts of friendship with the Afghan government with suspicion.

The capture of Kabul by the Taliban was a great setback for India because the Taliban were friendly towards Pakistan. India was compelled to close its embassy at Kabul during the Taliban rule, while India fully supported anti-Taliban Northern Alliance politically and materially.<sup>69</sup> The injured commander of the Northern Alliance, Ahmad Shah Massoud died in an Indian hospital in Tajikistan. This hospital was established for the support of Northern Alliance forces by India.<sup>70</sup> After the US attack on Afghanistan and with the defeat of the Taliban, India entered into Kabul with the support of the Northern Alliance, the force it had supported against the Taliban.<sup>71</sup> India welcomed Hamid Karzai's presidency who had very good personal relations with India and naturally had sympathies for its cause in Afghanistan. Moreover, his father was killed by the Taliban in Pakistan in 1999,<sup>72</sup> which placed Pakistan in his bad books right from the beginning. India, through its 'soft power' approach, spent nearly \$4 billion on the reconstruction of Afghanistan and initiated projects for the uplift of the Afghan society.

Soft power takes the utilisation of positive attraction and persuasion to realise foreign policy objectives instead the hard power of military and economic might, deployed in the shape of coercion, the threat of force, and economic sanctions. Soft power has been variously defined. For example, it is understood as the "non-material capabilities such as reputation, culture, and value appeal that can aid the attainment of a state's objectives."<sup>73</sup> Breslin says that "soft power is conceived as the idea that others will align themselves with you and your policy preferences because they are attracted to your political and social system, values and policies."<sup>74</sup> Soft power tries to gain influence by constructing networks, communicating persuasive and compelling narratives, and creating attraction. It has ideational and cultural attractiveness, which is intentionally or unintentionally employed by states in international relations for gaining strategic interests. Joseph Nye, to whom the concept is attributed, has mentioned political values, culture, and foreign policy as the three fundamental sources of soft

power. When other states are convinced that a state's values, ideals, or policies are legitimate and desirable, its 'soft power' is increased.<sup>75</sup>

India did not send its military to Afghanistan for the US's 'Operation Enduring Freedom' against the Taliban and decided to use its 'soft power' to influence Afghan people and government. India initially provided \$1.3 billion in economic assistance to Afghanistan, which was increased to \$2 billion later on.<sup>76</sup> The use of soft power has brought very good results for the Indian government and today India is highly respected in the government circles as well as by the people of Afghanistan.<sup>77</sup> Most Afghans consider India a reliable and sincere friend of Afghanistan as compared to Pakistan. The construction of roads, free education to Afghan youth, efforts to improve agriculture, and monetary assistance of Afghan government gave India an important political clout in the present setup.

Indian media is busy in presenting an Afghan-friendly image of India as against Pakistan. This social construction has turned a great majority of Afghans into fans of India. On the other hand, Pakistan is portrayed as an aggressor responsible for all of Afghans' sufferings.<sup>78</sup> Despite the fact that Pakistan hosts millions of Afghan refugees, India, with its huge capability of financial investment, has earned a good name for itself in the government circles as well as among the general public.

Both India and Pakistan consider Afghanistan vital to their national interests. Each country considers the engagements of the other in Afghanistan against its national interests. Pakistan considers India-Afghanistan nexus as the encirclement policy of India. Similarly, Pakistan's active engagement is viewed by India as a threat to its national interest. Both countries want a strong diplomatic presence in Afghanistan against each other. After the Bonn conference, India took a number of steps to increase its influence in Afghanistan. After the formation of the interim government in Kabul, India immediately started to strengthen its political position in Afghanistan and reopened its embassy in Kabul, which had remained closed during the Taliban rule.<sup>79</sup> The Indian government has also re-opened consulates in Jalalabad, Herat, Kandahar, and Mazar-i-Sharif<sup>80</sup> (see the map showing Pakistan's and Indian consulates in Afghanistan below). These consulates have been criticised by Pakistan for their alleged involvement in the insurgency in Balochistan.<sup>81</sup> Pakistan also challenged the rationality of



regional power and counteracting adverse Pakistani propaganda.”<sup>86</sup> This attempt at broader pan-Asian influence can quickly be interpreted by Islamabad to mean an encirclement policy—something Pakistan feared (and has actively worked to prevent) for decades. However, in order to benefit from the enormous ‘soft power’ of India and minimise its security threats, particularly from the south with the help of Pakistan, Afghanistan has to keep a balance between India and Pakistan.

India wants a politically and economically stable Afghanistan after the US/NATO withdrawal in the future and tries to prevent the Islamic fundamentalist Taliban from taking over Kabul, considering them a threat to its political and other interests in Afghanistan and a tool in the hand of its rival, Pakistan, for sabotaging Indian interests in Afghanistan. The geostrategic and political position of Afghanistan is also very important to India as Afghanistan lies at the door of Central Asia and it has an eye on the Central Asian states to enhance its prestige as a regional power.

Thus, the main concerns of Indian policies in Afghanistan seem to be revolving around Pakistan as it considers Pakistan a threat to its political interests. This mindset of both the countries, especially of India, has created a number of unresolved problems for the region in general and Afghanistan in particular.

### **Strategic rivalry**

Pakistan and India are rivals in Afghanistan for securing better strategic positions against each other. Pakistan considers Afghanistan very important in its security calculations. The geo-strategic position of Afghanistan for India is such that it cannot afford to lose ground in Kabul. Pakistan believes that a friendly government in Kabul can give it a ‘strategic depth’ in case of an Indian attack on Pakistan. Though this idea has been criticised inside and outside Pakistan, it is still a relevant option. In fact, a friendly government in Kabul can minimise security threats to Pakistan, especially at its western border. A pro-Pakistan government in Kabul can be a means to resolve not only political issues with Afghanistan but also to check the India-Afghanistan nexus, which can be dangerous to Pakistan’s national interests in Afghanistan. Similarly, India wants a pro-India government in Kabul for securing its national interests.<sup>87</sup> India would never want to see the Taliban or any

other Islamist militant group controlling Kabul, which can provide some sort of 'strategic depth' to Islamic militants in Kashmir or inside India. The strategic ambitions of the two countries in Afghanistan clash with each other in an endless struggle to outclass the other. Hence a proxy war in Afghanistan is continuing with an accelerated rate and will climax on the eve of US/NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan. The present government in Kabul has better relations with India than Pakistan. India and Afghanistan have signed a strategic agreement for training Afghan security forces<sup>88</sup> to enhance the capability of Afghan national security forces to face any eventuality from pro-Pakistan Taliban after the withdrawal of US/NATO forces from Afghanistan. This factor also draws India nearer to the Afghan security establishment, which is not very friendly towards Pakistan and is still dominated by the pro-India Northern Alliance.<sup>89</sup> Pakistan views the strategic agreement between Afghanistan and India for the training of Afghan forces with serious concern. Pakistan considers it an encirclement of Pakistan by India from east to west. Islamabad believes that RAW is involved in the ongoing Baloch insurgency, drawing active support from Indian consulates in Kandahar and Jalalabad.<sup>90</sup> A former Indian consul general in Kandahar privately admitted that he had met with Baloch leaders at his consulate there, but he claimed that his ambassador gave him strict instructions not to aid them in any way against Pakistan. Still, he hinted that RAW personnel were present among the staff at Kandahar and Jalalabad consulates.<sup>91</sup> A case in hand is that of Kulbhushan Sudhir Jadhav, an Indian naval commander, who was involved in subversive and terrorist activities in Balochistan, Pakistan. He was arrested by Pakistani forces on 3 March 2016 during a counter-intelligence operation in Balochistan. Jadhav was subsequently, sentenced to death by Field General Court Martial on 10 April 2017. However, his sentence was stayed by the International Court of Justice on 18 May 2017 until the final judgement of the case.<sup>92</sup> Both India and Pakistan are worried about the outcome of the US/NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan and want a friendly government in Kabul after the US/NATO transition for strategic purposes.

From the Indian perspective, Afghanistan, since Afghan jihad and the Taliban rule has become the abode of Islamic fundamentalism and radicalism and has boosted the struggle of Kashmiri militants, thus, having a very unfavourable strategic impact on India.<sup>93</sup> In Indian

calculation, the success of Islamic militancy in Afghanistan has not only proved to be a source of inspiration for the Kashmiri militants but has also provided them with 'strategic depth' for training and safe havens. India would be quite averse to the return of the Taliban in Kabul believing that it will encourage the Kashmiri militants further and will prove to be a serious threat to Indian security. The hijacking of an Indian plane by Kashmiri militants and its subsequent drop-scene in Kandahar airport through which the Indian government was compelled to free top militant Kashmiri commanders Mushtaq Ahmad Zargar and Maulana Masood Azhar is still alive in the Indian memory. India is convinced that an Islamic fundamentalist government like the Taliban in Afghanistan will be in the best interest of Pakistan. India thinks that the soil of Afghanistan will be used by Pakistan against the Indian security interests. A friendly Afghanistan, where religious extremism continues to flourish, is considered essential by Pakistan to keep the pressure on India in Kashmir by providing a base where militants could be trained for fighting against the Indian forces.<sup>94</sup> The victory of Afghan Mujahideen over USSR gave tremendous inspiration to the Kashmiri militants and the victory of the Taliban over another superpower will boost the morale of the Kashmiri militants. In the wake of NATO withdrawal, the militants will get safe havens for their militant activities. Indians are aware of this potential threat to its security. According to Henry Kissinger, "In many respects India will be the most affected country if jihadist Islamism gains impetus in Afghanistan."<sup>95</sup>

Thus, India links militancy in the India-Occupied Kashmir (IOK) and elsewhere in India with Afghanistan's geo-strategic environments. Indian security establishment believes that Pakistan will use Afghan territory for militancy in IOK and also in India if there is a pro-Pakistan government in Kabul. An Indian newspaper the *Daily Live Mint* observed that once Islamabad is assured of a friendly government in Kabul, it will unleash the terrorists at its disposal on India.<sup>96</sup> This, it is believed, will only mean more trouble in the IOK and will embolden terrorist groups to attack Indian cities with greater frequency. Consequently, India will certainly hope for a broad-based, multi-ethnic, and powerful government in Kabul after the US/NATO withdrawal. It is in the larger interests of India that the Northern Alliance forces, which have been fully backed by



India in their rainy days, get an upper hand in Kabul after the US/NATO transition.<sup>97</sup>

### **Economic rivalry**

A conflict between Pakistan and India has also been observed in the economic field. Both the countries are in a race to achieve their economic objectives in Afghanistan, which has unexplored natural resources and also lies at the gateway of resources-rich Central Asia. That is why both the countries are interested in having trade with the Central Asian Republics through Afghanistan.<sup>98</sup> India is interested in exploring Afghan copper mines and other natural resources and to invest in agriculture, hotel, medicine, and banking sectors.<sup>99</sup> Pakistan, as against India, has meagre resources and expertise to compete with India in exploring copper mines in Afghanistan but has the potential to outclass India in trade and investment because of its geographical location. Afghanistan is an important recipient of Pakistani exports and the markets of Kabul and Jalalabad are replete with Pakistani goods. Pakistani goods are very popular in Afghanistan, cheaper than the Indian goods, and easily available in Afghanistan due to lesser distance as compared to India. The economic rivalry between India and Pakistan is revealed from the Pak-Afghan trade agreement. One clause (Article 52) of the agreement explicitly says that Afghanistan can use Pakistani territory for exports to India but cannot transport Indian exports to Afghanistan via Pakistan. It clearly shows how conscious Pakistan is about Indian trade and investment in Afghanistan. On the other hand, in order to defeat the intention of Pakistan, the Indian government is trying to create new routes to reach Afghanistan. India has recently constructed a 218 km road from Dalaram to Zaranj in Afghanistan in order to connect Afghanistan to the Iranian port of Chabahar. This project will certainly end the monopoly of Pakistan over landlocked Afghanistan. Presently, Afghanistan uses the Karachi Port of Pakistan for trade activities but the opening of Chabahar port will provide it with more opportunities for trade routes. India will benefit from it because Pakistan will no more be able to monopolise trade between Afghanistan and India. This development shows why India considers Afghanistan so important for its trade and investment to compete with its arch-rival, Pakistan. Delhi also wants to undermine the importance of Karachi and Gwadar ports of Pakistan for

Afghanistan and the Central Asian Republics.<sup>100</sup> Afghans still consider Karachi and Gwadar ports helpful for Afghanistan but think that Chabahar will end the monopoly of Pakistan and will free them from Pakistan's dictation in the economic field.<sup>101</sup> Distance from Kabul to Chabahar is 1,840 km (28 hours of travel time). The distance from the port of Chabahar to Mumbai is 936 nautical miles (4-day travelling) and from Mumbai to Delhi 1,429 km (22 hours of travel time). So the total travel from Kabul to New Delhi is 3,269 km and 936 nautical miles with a total time of non-stop 8 days while the real-time could be two weeks with loading and unloading at three stages. On the other hand, the distance from Kabul to Delhi with one loading via Pakistan is 1,297 km with an estimated time of 16 hours and 40 minutes which is more feasible for both India and Afghanistan. Gwadar is also the most feasible choice as the distance from Kabul to Chabahar is 1,840 km while from Kabul to Gwadar is 1,237 km.<sup>102</sup> Afghanistan has enough to offer in trade and investment sectors and India has the requisites resources and skills to benefit from this opportunity. Currently, India is engaged in exploring the Hajigak iron mine in Afghanistan.<sup>103</sup> The private investors of India have shown interest in the hotel, banking, and many other sectors in Afghanistan.<sup>104</sup> India has paid great attention to improving the infrastructure and other institutions of Afghanistan, which affect the life of the common man. The Indian government has built roads to improve communications and boost trade activities. Important projects undertaken by India include construction of the Afghan parliament building, the expansion of the Afghan national television network, and several smaller projects in agriculture, rural development, education, health, energy, and vocational training.<sup>105</sup> India has also improved the power sector of Afghanistan by enhancing the capacity of power transmission lines.

Kabul will remain high on the priority list of Indian policy not only for security reasons but also for natural resources and regional trade as well as connectivity with Central Asia, a region considered India's extended neighbourhood.<sup>106</sup> According to Rahimullah Yusufzai, "India while anticipating various threats has spent huge money for the reconstruction of Afghanistan and won over the support of the people and the government of Afghanistan."<sup>107</sup> In order to develop technical skills of the people of Afghanistan, India has started a number of

community skills development programmes inside and outside Afghanistan, where basic skills are provided to men and women in plumbing, welding, carpet weaving, fashion designing, marketing, etc.<sup>108</sup> India has also provided hundreds of scholarships to Afghan students for education in India.<sup>109</sup>

Afghanistan is also included in the priority list of Pakistan for trade and investment reasons. Due to its landlocked nature, history of war, limited investment capacity, and little technical know-how, Afghanistan has a poor industrial base and heavily depends on Pakistan from flour to heavy machinery. Afghanistan is one of the largest importers of Pakistani goods in the world and imports rice, cement, vegetables, fruits, electronics, household equipment, medicine, fish, etc. to Afghanistan.<sup>110</sup> Moreover, thousands of skilled workers from Pakistan are working in Afghanistan. Pakistan wants this state of affairs not to be disturbed by any state, especially by India. This competition between the two rivals is likely to increase after the US withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Indian economy is growing at a higher speed and tends to explore new avenues to boost it further. Afghanistan is very important in this respect for India because of its natural resources. Afghanistan's iron ore deposits are estimated to be worth \$421 billion, copper deposits about \$274 billion, niobium \$81 billion, cobalt \$51 billion, and gold deposits are estimated to be worth \$25 billion. Similarly, the US geological survey estimates 36.5 trillion cubic feet of natural gas in the northern region of Afghanistan. Oil reserves of the country are estimated to be around 3.6 billion barrels.<sup>111</sup>

There is also a potential for economic activity between Afghanistan and India in exploring and developing the minerals sector of Afghanistan. Private investment of Indian companies in Afghanistan in the near future is a possibility. A large number of private direct investments in the mineral sector seems to be on the rise. Presently, the Indian companies are busy in exploring the Hajigak mines<sup>112</sup> and will certainly produce millions of tonnes of iron from these mines. India can import Afghan minerals via Pakistan because according to the transit agreement between Pakistan, India, and Afghanistan, Afghanistan can export to India through Pakistan but not vice versa.

There are vast opportunities for Indian entrepreneurs to exploit the Afghan trade. Both the governments are keen to develop trade in

different sectors. India and Afghanistan have concluded four agreements on cooperation in the relevant areas, including small development projects, fertilizer sector, and mineral resources during the visit of the former Afghan president Hamid Karzai to New Delhi on 12 November 2012. Again, apart from Afghanistan, the natural resource-rich Central Asian countries are also important for India and Afghanistan. About 80 percent of the energy consumed in India is imported,<sup>113</sup> which renders Central Asia extremely important for New Delhi to fulfil its energy needs. India shares no border with the Central Asian Republics, thus, compelling it to pass through Afghanistan and Pakistan to reach Central Asia. Due to its fast-growing industrial sector, India's deficiency in energy may increase further. So Delhi is keen to use Central Asian oil and gas reserves, which can only be possible with the help of Afghanistan. Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, and Turkmenistan are partners in a gas pipeline project named as TAPI, stretching from Turkmenistan to India through Afghanistan and Pakistan. The US, being a major player in the region, has welcomed this development and has described it as a 'very positive step forward'.<sup>114</sup> Turkmenistan will supply 90 million metric standard cubic meters per day of natural gas, with India and Pakistan getting 38 standard cubic meters each and 14 standard cubic meters to be received by Afghanistan.<sup>115</sup> The project will be helpful in solving the energy crises in India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. It would transform Afghanistan into an energy bridge between Central Asia and South Asia.

### **Cultural rivalry**

Taliban, during their rule in Afghanistan, had banned all kinds of movies and songs, thus, created a vacuum in the market, which India quickly filled after their fall. India has tried to enhance its cultural influence in Afghanistan through its famous Bollywood movies, songs, and dramas and has poured thousands of CDs of Indian movies, songs, and dramas into Afghanistan's market. Afghan TV and radio channels broadcast Indian movies and songs on regular basis. They have become an integral part of Afghan cultural sphere and have started engulfing the Afghan media entertainment market. Most of the Indian movies propagate anti-Pakistan propaganda and influence Afghan society to a great extent. The influence of the Indian culture can be seen in Afghan weddings and other festivals. Wearing Indian dresses on such occasion

is becoming popular, as Afghan youth idealise Indian film heroes and heroines. On the other hand, the influence of Pakistani movies and songs is rarely felt in Afghan society. Afghanistan and Pakistan share the same cultural traits but the influence of Indian culture is a new phenomenon because of the Indian government's conscious efforts. The popularity of Bollywood music and Indian soap operas hints at India's significant cultural influence in Afghanistan<sup>116</sup> affecting traditional Afghan culture and customs.

The preceding discussion hints at potential Pak-India rivalries in Afghanistan, with each state struggling to downplay the other and achieving its policy objectives to the maximum. To safeguard its interests, India wants a pro-India government in Kabul. India has urged the US not to leave Afghanistan prematurely without the formation of a future setup in Afghanistan, which could provide an opportunity to the Taliban to capture Kabul and sabotage the peace process. Indian Afghan policy is from the very beginning Pakistan-centric while Pakistan has a great weight of Indian factor in its foreign policy. Both India and Pakistan want to see a friendly government in Kabul, which has kept them in a constant competition with each other. This competition will intensify at the endgame of Afghanistan (NATO/US withdrawal). According to Rahimullah Yusufzai, an expert on Pak-Afghan relations, "There is an Indian factor in Pak-Afghan relations and this factor will show its presence with increased velocity after the withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan."<sup>117</sup> Each country tries its level best to lower the influence of the other on Kabul for strategic, economic, and political reasons. India has seen bad days during the Taliban years and has experienced strained and tense relations with them. Consequently, it is against the entry of the Taliban in future Afghan setup. Pakistan, on the other hand, is eager to see the role of the Taliban in a future set up in Kabul. A British diplomat in Islamabad said, "There is an Indo-Pak proxy war, and it is going on right now."<sup>118</sup> Thus, Afghanistan is becoming a zero-sum game for both the countries.

## **Conclusion**

Pak-Afghan relations have remained tense throughout history, mainly because of the Durand Line and Pashtunistan issues. India has successfully managed the situation to its advantage. Although

Afghanistan is a next-door neighbour of Pakistan, its relations are more cordial with India than Pakistan. The fear of Pakistan being encircled by India has remained its main perception and a major determinant of Pakistan's foreign policy towards Afghanistan. Keeping in view this predicament, the foreign policy managers of Pakistan have always desired and actively worked for the installation of a friendly government in Kabul to safeguard its political, economic, and strategic interests. India also works for having a friendly government in Afghanistan to minimise Pakistan's influence there. This struggle for interests by Pakistan and India has turned Afghanistan into a theatre of the Cold War between the two countries, with serious ramifications for the people of Afghanistan in particular and the region in general. Due to the active involvement of India, Pakistan's foreign policy choices in the past have made Afghanistan suspicious of Pakistan's activities and policies towards Afghanistan, thus, compelling it to trust India more than Pakistan. This trust-deficit and suspicion are among the main factors in the strained Pak-Afghan relations—a situation India has turned to its advantage.

Pakistan and Afghanistan are neighbours and neighbours cannot be changed. Good relations bring peace and development, while stained relations bring destruction and miseries. Both the countries must realise the fact that peace and amicable relations are the only guarantees for development. Without peace and stability, there will be no room for socio-economic, political, and industrial development. Afghanistan, being a landlocked country, is heavily dependent on Pakistan for its access to the sea. Similarly, Pakistan depends on Afghanistan for access to the Central Asian natural resources. The construction of the Chabahar port will not alter the vitality of Pakistani routes for Afghanistan's trade with other countries. As said earlier, the distance through Pakistan for Afghan transit trade is much smaller. So both the countries are so interlinked that only friendly relations between them can guarantee the overall development of the region.

Hostile Pak-India relations have severely affected this pattern of relations. Pakistan's major foreign policy objective in Afghanistan is to see a pro-Pakistan government in Kabul while India sees the same for itself and considers Pakistan a threat to its interests in Afghanistan. The main concerns of Indian policymakers in Afghanistan revolve around Pakistan. This Indian mindset has created a number of unresolved

problems for the region in general and Afghanistan in particular. In the current scenario, India occupies a better position because it has very successfully applied its 'soft power approach' in Afghanistan to influence Afghan people and government. The use of soft power has brought very good results for India and today it is highly respected in Afghanistan. What Pakistan needs is to develop a realistic soft power policy towards Afghanistan to counter this Indian approach. Pakistan has the potential to outclass India in trade and investment because of its geographical contiguity with Afghanistan. Afghanistan is an important recipient of Pakistani exports and Pakistani goods are not only cheaper than the Indian ones but are also more readily available in Afghanistan due to the short distance.

Both the countries are so interlinked that they cannot be separated. Both are suffering from terrorism and are partners in the war against terrorism, they have to understand that their roles need to be of allies and not of rivals. Currently, Afghanistan accuses Pakistan of cross-border movement of militants and its active support to the Haqqani Network and the Afghan Taliban. Pakistan rejects these allegations and instead accuses Kabul of providing sanctuaries to Pakistani outlaws in Kunar and Nuristan provinces. Pakistan needs to formulate consistent policy mechanisms to deconstruct this misconception/misunderstanding in the minds of the people of Afghanistan. Both the states need to sit together and resolve their outstanding issues through a continuous process of dialogues and other diplomatic means. Afghanistan needs to keep a balance between the rivalries of India and Pakistan and to prevail on India for the non-use its soil against Pakistan. To achieve a high degree of mutual cooperation, trust, and mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and political independence in bilateral relations, both the countries need to apply sincere efforts to resolve the lingering issues, specifically of the Durand Line and Pashtunistan. Both the countries need to develop a mechanism to resolve misconceptions and trust-deficit. Kabul should recognise and understand the sensitivity of Pakistan about the Indian presence in Afghanistan and should protect Pakistan's interests in Afghanistan. Similarly, Islamabad needs to understand that a stable and broad-based government in Kabul is in its larger interest. An effective border management between Pakistan and Afghanistan can bring highly fruitful results and will be an effective tool in minimising the

effects of terrorism. Pakistan and Afghanistan can help each other in intelligence sharing. Similarly, Pakistan can help Afghanistan in the fields of defence and police. Such policies can help in trust building and removing suspicion in their mutual relations.

The region can develop only through good, normal, and friendly relations and not through suspicion and trust-deficit. Pakistan and Afghanistan ought to establish relations based on mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and political independence. There is a view in Pakistan's policy circles that a stable and broad-based government in Kabul is in the larger interest of Pakistan. Afghanistan also has to ensure that its soil must not be used against Pakistan.



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# ABSTRACTS OF RESEARCH PAPERS PUBLISHED IN VOL. XXXV, NO.2, SPRING 2017

## MARITIME SECURITY OF BANGLADESH: STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES

ABUL KALAM

### Abstract

*In terms of policy destiny, Bangladesh remains committed to a peaceful course, however, the strategic pathways require delicate, even calculated managing. Its maritime policy is largely geared towards meeting the developmental challenges it faces. The maritime security of the country is indivisible from the overall insecurities it confronts. It is, therefore, imperative for Bangladesh to strategize the policy, both internal and external. A credible security system, encompassing both land and maritime, can only be assured by democratic continuity and consensus. Deficits manifested in such areas must be overcome if Bangladesh is to play a credible regional maritime role and enhance its maritime clout regionally and internationally. The paper analyses maritime security concerns of Bangladesh and its evolving oceanic policies from a strategic vantage point. Towards such an end, it reviews the strategic analytical tradition from a maritime perspective and identifies the relevant approaches in this context. It then highlights a conceptual design encompassing applicable notions that look pertinent. The conceptual blueprint is then used for analysing the evolving pattern of the nation's maritime policies in terms of strategy and a secured developmental destiny. The nation's maritime insecurity concerns, both traditional and non-traditional, are reviewed; appraisals are also made of threat perceptions as well as perceptual interests, touching on its maritime clout. The findings of the paper are then summarised, with reflections on the emerging nature of the nation's maritime policies and the prospects that are offered.*



## **ROLE OF DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION IN IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA: TIME FOR MORE AND BETTER AID**

**MURAD ALI**

### **Abstract**

*The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a continuation of the unfinished plan of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). They are, however, more comprehensive in scope, encompassing economic, social, and environmental aspects of development. To implement the agenda, mobilization of substantial resources is needed both at the domestic level and from transnational partners. To this end, the role of development cooperation or Official Development Assistance (ODA) from traditional donors of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), as well as international cooperation from non-DAC aid-providers, is one of the key sources of financing the SDGs. While the agenda does not come up with a new discourse on the role and importance of ODA for the SDGs, aid donors have been asked to achieve the target of 0.7 percent of their gross national income (GNI) as ODA. Aggregate ODA was over \$131 billion in 2015. Averaging about 0.29 percent of the GNI of DAC donors. This level is still noticeably below the internationally agreed target of 0.7 percent of their GNI. This paper examines the role and significance of international development cooperation in implementing the 2030 Agenda and achieving the 17 SDGs. Besides ODA, the paper also reflects on other means of financing such as aid from non-traditional donors, climate fund, and private financing. It argues that in view of the ambitious nature of the SDGs and lack of resources and capacities in numerous countries, there is a need for significant quantitative and qualitative increase in ODA in line with requirements of the SDGs.*

## MUSLIM WOMEN'S SUPPORT FOR FUNDAMENTALISM: COMPARING IRAN AND PAKISTAN

AISHA ANEES MALIK

### Abstract

*Muslim Women's support for Islamic fundamentalism in Iran and Pakistan has its roots in the liberation struggles of their peoples against despotic rulers seen as agents of the West and colonial masters. The rise of Islamic feminism in these countries, once again, is perceived as either an outright support for Islamic fundamentalism or as an apology for its misogynist approach—a case of feminist fundamentalism. This paper draws a distinction between the case of Islamic feminists in Iran and Pakistan using the framework of Kandiyoti's 'bargaining with patriarchy' and Jalal's 'convenience of subservience'. It is argued in this study that the feminists in Iran are engaged in an active debate with the republic, bargaining to negotiate concessions for women. Grounding their arguments in the words of the Holy Quran and Hadith, a language that the fundamentalists understand, they have won considerable ground. In Pakistan, however, owing to their own upper and upper-middle-class status, their failure to attack the roots of the oppressive system, or their accommodations and submission to it, has either been convenient or rewarding for them.*

## **CHINA PAKISTAN ECONOMIC CORRIDOR: THE ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS FOR BALOCHISTAN**

**MANZOOR AHMED**

### **Abstract**

*Unlike transit corridors, economic corridors are explicitly designed to stimulate economic development and uplift social indicators. While the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has been efficiently described as an economic corridor and game changer to the overall economic landscape of Pakistan, its implications for the economy of the Balochistan province of Pakistan are yet to be determined. The fact that 61 percent of the total \$62 billion CPEC-related investments will be allocated to projects in the energy sector, which are situated out of Balochistan, a relevant point worth investigating is whether the CPEC will be just a transit route for Balochistan or it will be a harbinger of a greater socio-economic change to the province. This paper attempts to analyse how CPEC can be instrumental in changing the social and economic landscape of Balochistan. The study, while analysing various aspects of Balochistan's economy, argues that the CPEC enterprise has an enormous significance for the social and economic development of Balochistan. With numerous growth nodes and economic corridors, Balochistan needs Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and greater connectivity. The CPEC will likely provide the much-needed physical infrastructure and help to exploit the trade and other economic potentials of the province.*