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**RESEARCH PAPER**

## **Geopolitical Determinants of Pakistan's National Security: An Strategic Analysis**

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper explores the geopolitical factors that influence national security in Pakistan based on a strategic and historical discussion of some of the major events and policy-making moments since 1947 to date. It also examines key stages such as the problems of Partition, the early alliances, wars with India, the loss of East Pakistan, the nuclearization, the Afghan war, the security environment post 9/11, and the modern problems of geo-economic programs, instability in the region, and hybrid warfare. Researcher used Qualitative method of research through secondary resources. The findings note that the security policies in Pakistan are mostly reactionary to the external geopolitical pressures with the necessity of having a balanced and adaptive national security approach in a regional and global environment that has become very complex.

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**KEYWORDS** Geopolitical Determinants, National Security, Strategic Analysis

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**Introduction**

National security is a way to secure the land and the people if land from internal and external threats such as war or terrorism. Geopolitics in this sense a rout how a geography shapes the political power behavior of state and how a state interact with other state in international way. For a country its geographical location have importance to guide its national security Pakistan emerge as independent state in 1947 with unique case of location. At the time of its creation, Pakistan consisted of two geographically separate regions located in the Northeastern and northwestern parts of the Indian subcontinent, with India positioned between them. The northeastern region was known as East Pakistan, which later became the independent state of Bangladesh in 1971. The northwestern region, referred to as West Pakistan, constitutes present-day Pakistan .however the first responsibility of any country is to protect its landscape and sovereignty

With the same ethnic groups in Northern and southern Afghanistan, Pakistan also has border problems with Iran. Since the United States and its allies withdrew from Afghanistan in August 2021, the complicated Relationship between the Pakistani government and the Taliban has evolved. Conflict and Deportations resulted from Pakistan becoming the primary host nation for Afghan refugees. The country has been the target of border bombings by Iran, Pakistan's second-largest Neighbor, which they have justified in the fight against Baloch independence or to combat Organized crime. Pakistan has refused to accept the arrival of an Iranian ambassador in Islamabad and has withdrawn its ambassador from Tehran (Fakhar, et al, 2023).

According to the NSP, Pakistan must have a place in the complex world geopolitics that are Governed by shifting multilateralisms. It therefore swings between being close to the West and China, even if this causes reluctance on both sides. Since Pakistan is China's largest Arms buyer and supports China's diplomatic efforts in the

Muslim world, the port of Gwadar, Which is at the entrance of the Strait of Hormuz and could serve as a Chinese Navy Launchpad, is currently China's best option for an Indian Ocean outlet. The two countries have maintained a strategic partnership for decades. The vast majority of arms sales to Pakistan 82 percent come from China. However, there is a decline with the United States and Its allies (Pande, 2021)

## Literature Review

Khan et. al, (2019) explore the importance of south Asia in the region how the countries of south Asia have influence and importance for the major powers like china ,USA, and Russia. They also explore how the interest of major power create conflicts in the region and how Pakistan suffered in compulsions from these conflicts. They also says that as the demand of realism accept the reality and search the ways how to tackle the problems . For the security of the country from external threats this is the responsibility of the people of Pakistan to be very vigilant as idol in way to secure the country

As stated by Shahzad et.al., (2021) how the security policy of Pakistan impact on its country and which security challenges has faced the citizens of Pakistan. How ammunition, money laundering the role of non-state actors create serious problems for the national security of Pakistan. They also explore that how the implementation of defense polices on the edge of weakness because of lack unity and leadership. They basically states for the better security policy there must be need of identification of problems and how to solve that problems.

Ashraf, et. al., (2023) examine the national security policy of Pakistan and make an analysis With the passage of time the policy makers realize the real weak points which we need to improve and policy makers make polices which makes these weakness remove from society by introducing strong policies . As stated by author if the implementation will be accurate then these policy have stronger power to make better the climate of whole country.

In essence, the idea of national security is still dominated by and centered on the West. Meaningful scholarly advancement in the field is hampered by the paucity of work Done in the South Asian context. National security is sometimes confused with regime Security in Third World nations. Although the United Nations Organization (UNO) was being Established at the time of Pakistan's independence, the world intellectual scene was Dominated by power politics and realism theory. Pakistan, however, chose to adhere to the Realism doctrine. Presumably, existential concerns compelled the young state to align itself With either Russia or the United States, the two world power centers at the time. People From Pakistan (Khan, n.d)

Pakistan, a below middle-income South Asian country with a fragile economy, faces Sociopolitical, geopolitical, socioeconomic, and socio-religious challenges affecting its National security. The country's National Security Policy (NSP) was developed to counter these challenges. This research aims to identify significant threats to national security, Such as fear of fundamental Islamist terrorism, tourism industry overseas pressure, and planned crime, and examine the current NSP and related documents. (Shahzad et. al., 2021)

Realist theories and rationalist methods have always served as the foundation for security studies. However, state borders became hazy, and the perception of military threats was somewhat undermined following the end of the Cold War and the rise of

globalization. By coining the term "human security" in 1994, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) broke the monopoly of realism in security studies, disproved the notion that the state was the sole referent of security, and viewed people as the primary referent of security (Dyck, 2013).

## Material and Methods

In this research, the qualitative method was used. Qualitative methods used to explore how Geopolitical determinants of Pakistan play role in its national security. Qualitative method with descriptive, Historical and Analytical approach has been used in this study to explore the geopolitics of Pakistan in South Asia. This study relies on secondary data which involves official documents, official websites, and articles. To approach data, the main source was the internet

## Results and Discussion

14 August 1947 was day in which Pakistan emerge an Sovereign and independent state on the map of world in two parts one was the east Pakistan and other west Pakistan . East Pakistan was called North west frontier. Pakistan was consist on four provinces Punjab, Sindh, , Balochistan, Northwest frontier. The total area of Pakistan was 796095 km which inherited 18.78% if south Asia and 0.06 % of the world. In strategic way Pakistan have an weakly location in South Asia. Its location have strongly weak in the region of South Asia. Its span of mountain and climate make its link minimal from the north and northwest. Pakistan have access to warm water of indian ocean because of this it has great importance for the major powers Pakistan have great significance because of its position in south Asia. In Gilgit baltistan the kohe Karakorum is connected through 596 km border with Xinjiang region of china. Because of access of warm water major power like Russia and chin have great influence on Pakistan , on the east it connected with India through 3,323 km border. Iran is situated in the south west side of Pakistan which is connected through 909 km border and Afghanistan was situated in the west which is connected through 2640 km durand line. In the south Pakistan lies with Arabian sea. Because of its great position in the region it has great importance for the Western country. Like Russia want to access of warm water for its oil supply benefits if it will be happened. This is the major threat for USA because Russia have reach in its resources that's also the reason USA and other countries desire of Pakistan to be strong country. On the other Pakistan has great importance fir china by giving it access in the indian Ocean through Gwadar port and connect it with south Asia . Middle Asia. Central Asia. Along with this in Central Asia have five countries which are totally landlocked. Pakistan play role as crossroad for central Asia.

## Topography

Pakistan's geography has a diverse range of landscapes, including plains, deserts, timbers, hills, plateaus, coastal areas along the Arabian Sea, and majestic mountains in Central Asia. Pakistan is home to the Himalayan along with Karakoram Mountain ranges, with the Karakoram being the most glaciated region outside the Polar Regions. Pakistan possesses five mountains exceeding 8000 meters, including the world's second highest summit, K2. In the north, the Hindu Kush mountains range spans 800 kilometers between central Afghanistan and northern Pakistan. Tirich Mir, at 7708 meters, is the highest peak in the region. It resides in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province that splits Central Asia from South Asia (Baig, et al,2022).

Pakistan raise as independent state in 1947 in the map of the word from its independence But quickly discovered that it faced significant security threats from India, its neighbor, particularly with regard to the state of Kashmir. Regarding to Kashmir issue there have been four wars between two states (Masood et. al., 2020).

### **Security challenges after independence**

From the independence of country Kashmir issue always dominate in the history of Pakistan and still it is unresolved. In history this issue started when two countries of subcontinent have become independent states there were princely states remaining. These states had a right to choose their country independently. At that time Kashmir was ruled by an Indian ruler Maharaja Hari Singh he was neutral to join the country. But the most of the population of Kashmir was Muslims. But having strong defense and military capabilities control over Kashmir and the ruler signed an agreement of accession of Kashmir with India. Because high strength of Muslim in Kashmir and Pakistan wants it will be part of the country because of majority of Muslims. The first war between two countries took place in 1948. India mention this conflict in the UNO and the results come in the sense the 65 % part of Kashmir under Indian government and remaining part of Kashmir grew in part of Pakistan (Masood& Muzaffar, 2019).

### **Alliances era of Pakistan from 1954 to 1962**

After first war with India, Pakistan went to strengthen its national security and strategies. Pakistan join Seato (south Asia Treaty Organization) in 1954. The main purpose of this alliance to make national security strong. Basically SEATO was made for protection of South Asia from Communism. In manila conference the foreign minister of Pakistan refused on the point that treaty was only applicable on communist aggression. In that situation Pakistan Pressurize that it leave that treaty if USA deny to help to resolve conflict of Kashmir between India and Pakistan. Earlier USA denied to help Pakistan in that case. Later ambassador if USA want to work on it but the American ambassador to India was to refuse to accept that USA help Pakistan in the case of Kashmir.

### **Baghdad Pact.**

The Baghdad Pact was created with the aim of reinforcing the political and security cooperation among regional states, particularly at a time when the Suez Canal crisis had weakened Western European influence in the Middle East. In the aftermath of that crisis, resentment toward traditional colonial powers created a strategic gap in the region. The pact sought to address this vacuum by promoting collective security and stability, while limiting the spread of rival influences and encouraging regional countries to take a more active role in safeguarding their own strategic interests. Baghdad pact was laid by two state Turkey and Iraq for joint national security was signed 26 February 1955 Pakistan become part of this pact on 23 September 1955. In 1958 after Iraqi revolution the name of the treaty was changed into CENTO (Central treaty Organization)

### **Pak\_ USA relations**

After signing CENTO Pakistan and USA relation strengthen its USA. In that phase of good relationship make strengthens the military assistance and USA give over 1.3 % billion economic and military assistance to Pakistan that ultimately strengthen the military which make strong the national security of Pakistan.

## Kashmir Dispute

In 1962, there was a war going on between India and China. And India won this war and gain victory over China. This made a major reason Pak USA moved towards worsen and America was going to in favor of India when it won the war and strong its strategic strength by the massive military aid of America. The situation was worsen when the holy hair of prophet Muhammed (PBUH) theft by India without permission. Ceasefire violated by Indian Army when crossed border line of Kashmir and cover the place of kargil .

## War of 1965

Along with this Indian Army has attacked in 6 Sep 1965 on Pakistan this war was going to 17 days and end on 23 sept 1965 . With the mediation of UNO this matter was solved in Tashkent with singing of both states PM on agreement on 5 August 1965 both states withdrawal their forces from each other state.

## War of 1971

Again conflict raised between two states when 1970 election held in the country and military trying to repression Bengali nationalism in East Pakistan. India dressing huge invasion of refugees and military courage Bengali movement in east Punjab. This war was closed when 90000 Pakistani military troops defer and the results was emergence of new state which name is Bangladesh. Both countries singed Shimla deputation to resolve this issue and later that it was failed to maintain peace between two countries. It was the major national sorrow for Pakistan to Separation from East Pakistan and it shows the military capabilities of Pakistan and also show the need of military Improvement in national security. Because of this Pakistan move towards an nuclear deterrence as strength its security.

## The role of Pakistan in Russian involvement in Afghanistan

In the era of Zia ul Haq when the Western refused to accept the dictatorship by replacing Authoritarianism and also refused to help Pakistan's military . On 1979 when everyone dazzled by the invasion of Soviet Union In Afghanistan. the United States reassessed its regional strategy and identified Pakistan as a key strategic partner to counter expanding Soviet influence. This pragmatic partnership continued until the collapse of the Soviet Union. In 1990, however, U.S. lawmakers once again imposed sanctions on Pakistan, though limited exemptions were later granted in 1995 to permit the acquisition of essential military equipment. The situation further deteriorated after the nuclear tests conducted in South Asia in 1998, when the United States imposed comprehensive sanctions on both Pakistan and India, effectively bringing military and civilian cooperation to a halt.( zaman )

The Soviet involvement in Afghanistan proved a miracle for strengthens Pakistan its national security. in this era Pakistan become more strong in military capabilities and national security

## Islamic government and its impact on national security

Historically Militancy era of 1977 to 1988 have been serious effects of Pakistan's national security as geopolitical determinant. It completely transformed Pakistan's internal and external security. The policies of islamization which introduced by General

Zia ul Haq changed the whole country into theological center. Because border line of Pakistan was completely into favor USA and against Russia. Along with this Pakistan was also supporting Saudi Arabia against Iran in religiously. Pakistan's collaboration with the USA proved to be very good for Pakistan's national security. Its alignment also helped Pakistan in the Kashmir issue. The policy of nuclear potential development of Pakistan can never be a vacuum of its security situation:

### **Indian nearby competition concerning security:**

The nuclear test of 1974, with India and its conventional military strength being in the lead, was what made Pakistan most likely to desire the nuclear ambition since 1970s due to their insecurity feelings by India. Nuclear capability was also believed to be the only weapon that could be used to counter the hegemony of India.

### **Strategic Autonomy/Deterrence**

The necessity of deterring the India coercion in the traditional method was seen by the nuclear weapons by Pakistan. The nuclear weapons were assumed as the leveling - prevention tools not the actual full-throttle attacks on the conventional omnipresent Indian force.

### **Regional Balance of Power**

The other purpose of the nuclear weapons was to stabilize the strategic equilibrium in South Asia by ensuring that war between the two states was unlikely in case one of the companies murdered another. This is reminiscent of the cold war world war deterrence reasoning.

### **Senior Leaders and Organizational Drivers**

#### **Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto**

He had initiated the nuclear push in the early 70s in Pakistan and in retaliation to this, he once said that we will eat grass even starve but we will have one of our own and that is nuclear capability will take care of existential security. Decades of development of the nuclear were pre-destined by his policy.

#### **Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan**

It was among the most significant scientific actors that came up with indigenous uranium enrichment options that were highly advantageous in augmenting the powers in Pakistan to generate explosive devices.

### **Strategic Implication on the National Security.**

#### **Deterrence Stability**

The idea of nuclearization in Pakistan was to build a sincere deterrence to the aggression of India. Nuclear weapons could potentially help to deter a full-fledged war since 1998, they could potentially help in times of acute crises (e.g., Kargil, Balakot).

### **International vs. Strategic Requirement Standards:**

The non nuclear weapon state Pakistan had not signed Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) since it believed that such norm was biased since India was the favourite state of other international powers (Civil Nuclear Agreement). This has complicated the fact that there is a good association between Pakistan and the world non-proliferation regimes.

### **Impact of nuclearization**

Although ambiguity and crises still make full war a risk, at the nuclear level the dangers of miscalculation, the so-called stability-instability paradox, is that strategic deterrence of nuclear war may encourage conventional or asymmetric war in response: although the 2008 U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Agreement (making no concessions to Pakistan) was viewed as encouraging Islamabad to take risks in conventional conflicts, it would not face identical incentives to respond with nuclear conflicts.

The Cold War End and its Effects.

Shifts in Regional Power Politics.

### **Collapse of Bipolarity**

As the Soviet Union came to its end in 1989 and the Soviet Union pulled out their troops in Afghanistan, the world disintegrated into a U.S. unipolar moment and a new multipolarity. To Pakistan, this represented the cost of losing a strategic value to the United States as a front line partner against the USSR, which greatly reduced the motivation of the Washington to offer economic and military aid. Pakistan was forced to reconsider its strategic position in the world which was no longer characterized by superpower rivalry.

Contrary to the 1980s, when the allied relations between the U.S and Pakistan against the Soviet Union ensured the economic/military assistance, the post-Cold War period led to the decline of American concern with the stability of Pakistan other than to offset Indian influence. The US bias towards India in the 1990s (and subsequent U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Agreement), further undermined the strategic position of Islamabad.

### **Emergence of New Security Menace: Terrorism and Extremism.**

The Pakistani participation in the Afghan politics and planning to use proxy groups strategically led to the domestic extremism which was later directed to Pakistan itself. During the 1990s, militant groups which initially aimed to fight proxy wars (e.g., in Kashmir) are consolidated and transformed into transnational security threats. Such groups eventually led to sectarian violence, revolts and attacks throughout the territory of Pakistan.

### **Kargil war of 1999**

#### **Causes**

The cause of the Kargil conflict has been due to the historical differences over Kashmir, military policy, and the ambitions of Islamabad to make the issue international and gain bargaining power at the expense of New Delhi. In early 1999, Pakistani forces and militant allies of the country crossed the Line of Control (LoC) to occupy high ground on the Indian side.

Unluckily, the Kargil operation ended up being a strategic and diplomatic liability. The Pakistani military did the operation mostly without civilian control resulting in tactical failures, exposure to operations and international demands on withdrawal.

### **Impact on international relations**

Kargil on the one hand rekindled tensions with India and sabotaged some peace initiatives after the Lahore Summit (Feb 1999). The war made the level of mistrust higher and hardened security positions on both sides.

The international community and particularly the U.S. placed diplomatic pressure on Pakistan to withdraw itself and this exposed Islamabad to isolation of India on Kashmir as well as restricted foreign aid in times of crisis escalation. This weakened the internationalization of the dispute of Kashmir by Pakistan.

### **The Strategic Decision of Pakistan after 9/11**

The events of September 11, 2001 changed the world politics. U.S required collaboration to counter terrorism. Pakistan - with Afghanistan having long border - decided to be on the U.S. side because of strategic reasons: the need to get foreign aid, not to be isolated, and control relations with Washington.

### **Strategic Imperatives**

Islamabad had the following reasons to participate:

The necessity of economic and military support.

Sanctions or international isolation avoided.

Preservation of geopolitical relevance in a novel security paradigm.

### **Militant Blowback**

Following their involvement into the War on Terror, the militants like TTP (Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan) started to mount internal insurgencies, targeting the Pakistani security forces and civilians. The terror attacks of 2001-2008 have soared tremendously undermining internal stability.

### **Internal Security Crisis**

The wave of militancy placed a heavy strain on the military and administration systems of Pakistan, creating the need of massive counter-insurgency efforts, resource redirection, and massive displacement of civilians. Rise of Militancy and Internal Security Impact.

### **Drone Strikes**

Unilateral application of U.S. drone attacks in Pakistan tribal regions (particularly since 2004) was extremely controversial, and caused massive civilian death and questioned the territorial sovereignty of Pakistan. These strikes contributed to the anti-American feelings of the population and made bilateral trust difficult.

## China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

By changing Pakistan into a regional connectivity centre, CPEC has become a geo-economic determinant of the national security in the country. It is strategically advantageous in strengthening Pakistan-China alliance and giving the country a presence into the Arabian Sea and increasing the relevance of Pakistan to the China-US great power conflict. Economically, CPEC contributes to the infrastructure development and energy security that are very critical in the internal stability. Nonetheless, the issue of security threats on Balochistan and opposition in the region, especially by India, has made CPEC a direct national security priority, which requires military support and diplomatic balancing (Shah, et. al. 2020; Rahim et. al., 2018; Muzaffar, et. al., 2018)

## Relations with Afghanistan

Afghanistan has been an issue of critical external security determination in Pakistan because of its porous western border. The instability after 2010 and the 2021 US withdrawal added to the cross-border militancy, refugee pressures and the reactivation of such groups as TTP. Pakistan participation in the Afghan peace process is a geopolitical goal of attaining the western flank to facilitate trade in the region and to achieve internal stability. The ongoing unrest in Afghanistan still poses a threat to the domestic security of Pakistan and connectivity goals of the region.

## Information warfare and hybrid warfare

The emergence of hybrid warfare is a non-conventional geopolitical danger to the national security of Pakistan. It consists of disinformation operations, cyber operations, diplomatic pressure, and proxy wars that target weakening of Pakistan both internally and internationally. Information warfare, particularly narrative-building against CPEC and Kashmir is an issue that Pakistan believes is a major concern. As a reaction, Pakistan has enhanced cyber security, strategic communication, and doctrinal awareness of hybrid threats, an expanded understanding of the term national security that goes beyond the conventional warfare.

## Conclusion

This paper finds that the determinants of national security of Pakistan have been deeply rooted in the geopolitical determinants that have persisted over the years, such as its geographical positioning, regional politics and the changing global balance of power. The security policies of Pakistan have most likely changed in reaction to the perceived threats by other nations and even in reaction to the traumas of Partition and early alliance formation, the wars with India, the loss of East Pakistan, and the need to have nuclear deterrence. The Cold War and post-Cold War periods also buttressed the need of Pakistan to depend on strategic alliances and asymmetric security approaches especially in the Afghan war and the War on Terror that generated extreme internal security dilemma.

In the modern era, the national security of Pakistan has broadened beyond conventional military issues to geo-economic projects like CPEC, the internal instability in Afghanistan, and the future issues like the hybrid warfare and information operations. Such trends underscore the transition to a new security approach which incorporates military readiness with economic strength, international interaction, and domestic security. Altogether, the security trajectory of Pakistan is characterized by the constant

adjustment to the altering geopolitical reality, which stipulates the necessity of the balanced and prospective national security policy.

### **Policy Recommendations**

Pakistan should improve its relations with all neighboring countries instead of depending on any one country. Pakistan should be built up its good relations with central Asia, the middle east, Asian States and also with Russia.

Geo-economics is a key factor through which national security framed instead of military deterrence. Pakistan should start more projects like CPEC so that we can improve relations with our neighboring countries, which will improve the country's economic growth

Cooperation of civil and military relationship is key element to require better national security policymaking. For the strengthen the international credibility of Pakistan it should be compulsory to adopt Parliamentary oversight, policy continuity, and consensus-based decision-making . It ultimately reduce policy exchange or strengthen its strategic coherence.

The national security of Pakistan should be handled according to charging dynamics of the region and all neighborhood of the country. Policies will only benefit us if their implementation is not monitored

Given the rise of hybrid warfare, disinformation campaigns, and cyber threats, Pakistan should invest in cyber security infrastructure, strategic communication units, and digital diplomacy. Countering information warfare is essential for safeguarding national narratives and social cohesion

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