

US INDO-PACIFIC ENGAGEMENT: IMPLICATIONS ON PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, Maritime security has become one of the most important mandates in terms of international relations. A major part of the world is covered with water which implies countries with a responsibility to safeguard their passages. Maritime security extends beyond the traditional notion of security as it can mold with current concepts of security and make its relevance. Due to the changing dynamics, the US formed an Indo-Pacific policy that includes India, Japan, the UK, and Australia with other countries signing up. In this thesis, we will discuss the cooperation between US and India and its direct effects on Pakistan's National Security policy because the foundation of such a mandate is born from the competition between states. In this thesis, we are going to apply the lens of Structural realism to solve the puzzle vis-à-vis emerging strategic and geopolitical alliances in the contemporary world. This thesis argues how Indo-Pacific policy is creating Maritime security concerns for Pakistan in the Asia-Pacific region as the world is moving towards multipolarity and rebalancing. Also, we will analyze US geostrategic concerns and its favored policy towards structured alliances.

Keywords: US indo-pacific policy, Geostrategic policy, Indian Ocean, Pacific Ocean, Naval security, Maritime security, US-China relations.

INTRODUCTION

The Indo-Pacific space is one such emerging pivot that has gained quite an eye in recent times. Strategically Indo-Pacific is now seen as a continuum between two oceans joined by its trading channel i.e. interconnectedness space between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. If we look at the bigger picture the interconnectedness and interdependence of the two oceans could result in increasing globalization, trade, changing equations, opening new avenues, and would create an integrated approach (Das, 2019).

Today Indo-Pacific is gaining Washington's attention with its economic heft and important placement in global security. The reason is – among the 10 largest countries that acquire military equipment and armies, 7 of them are in the region and 6 of them contain nuclear technology. Moreover, the world's 10 busiest seaports are in the zone that helps to conduct 60% of maritime trade transit via Asia (Rej, 2021). According to an estimation, a third of global shipping passes through South China Sea route alone. Since the 18th century, America is in the trading business with Asia, Indo-Pacific contributes two-thirds of the global growth in the gross domestic product (GDP) and is responsible for 60 percent of global growth (Kuo, 2018).

Therefore, the US wanted to control the trade line responsible for transporting huge amounts of stocks worldwide. It has been made possible due to the modernized laws and ideologies of open and free trade via air, space, land, and sea. Nonetheless, the future, present, and past of the United States have been interlinked with Indo-Pacific.

US geostrategic concerns to contain China

China and US have two very different approaches to national and regional security. Under the Obama administration, the focus of interest has already been turned over from the Middle East to Asia-Pacific. After Trump came, a newfangled strategy arises announcing Indo-Pacific as a new great game (Zafar, 2022).

US perception of security includes; Hegemonic stability, unilateral security, absolute security, military security, and alignment security. Whereas China is a believer in security cooperation, mutual security, relative security, comprehensive security, and non-alignment security. Therefore, the US has

taken a very pragmatic approach by stimulating Indo-Pacific policy to create a structured alliance that would help maintain the growing footprint to China (Xinbo, 2000). However, it has created imbalances for other regional countries specifically Pakistan due to its rivalry in the region.

To summarize the US narrative of Indo-Pacific - *leaders, diplomats, military forces, laws, and business framework helped in strengthening the transportation & trade ideology that can be seen as a clear sign of prosperity in the region* (Smith, 2021).

In the wake of China BRI and their trade war with China, Donald Trump in 2017 announced the nation's vision of free and open trade, the vision underpinned the existing international order. Firstly, Trump discussed all the countries will enjoy sovereignty and adherence to international laws. Secondly peaceful resolution to all disputes, lastly free and reciprocal trade that will be based on investments and transparent agreements. He further elaborated that it means all the nations will get access to international waters, space, airways, and cyber domains. On an individual level, it will promote transparent agreements, reciprocal trade, and expanded investments between nations (Pardesi, 2019).

In a recent report by Congressional Research Service, Donald J. Trump administration has listed China, Russia, and North Korea as the topmost threats to the US (O'Rourke, 2021). US Navy is not the largest across the world, yet it is the powerful one. US has eleven aircraft whereas Russia and China only have one. As the contemporary world is moving more towards non-traditional concepts of Security for future, the goal of US forces is to build a fleet of 355 ships by the end of 2030.

Theoretically, there have been common prevalence of the notion that China is modernizing in military terms that could sabotage the predominance of the US in the Asian region. The staunch believer of this perception are Samuel Huntington, Richard Bernstein, Ross H. Munro, and John Mearsheimer. The Chinese researchers based their views on the argument that the Cultural and traditional aspects of China are non-expansionist which means they could infuse in the world order without disturbing the status quo in international system.

Geopolitical Scenario in Asia: China and India

In the recent Quad summit, US President Biden along with Yoshihide Suga of Japan, Narendra Modi of India, and Scott Morrison of Australia signed a joint statement that said of protecting the shared values, commitments, and rule-based order. The main focus of the summit was countering China, aligning with India, and revitalizing the alliances. The timing of its emergence is relatively significant as it comes right after the US withdrawal from Afghanistan, it has also turned many heads towards US-China containment policy in the region. On the other hand, India is creating propaganda against Pakistan by calling the Taliban the front face of Pakistan and that the fall of Kabul took place because of Pakistan's military which created a hindrance in the path of Afghanistan's stable government. Furthermore, the phrase the alliance of Pakistan, China, and the Taliban government is Negative for the international community (Bbc, 2021).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

We will study the Indo-Pacific policy and its implications on the National security policy of Pakistan through the lens of Structural Realism. By undertaking all of the current dynamics, we deduce the progressing IPS would create a security dilemma because all the States wanted to protect their national interest at any cost. The emerging strategic partnership between US and India is based on the shared sense of dominant military stance and attaining global power in foreseeable future. Due to the changing dynamics, we will witness the competitive and conflictual side of international relations.

The state is a unitary actor in Realism, they prioritize the national benefits and set forth rational decision-making to gain the edge. Furthermore, realist notions emphasize upgrading and stacking military security. In accordance with US Indo-Pacific engagement, we encounter multipolarity, security dilemma, regional supremacy, and strategic alliance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current geopolitical turnover in Asia has become very crucial in the eyes of the US – Assertiveness of China (BRI, conflict in the South China Sea, Air defense identification zone (ADIZ) declaration in the East China Sea, expanded naval doctrine, debt-trap diplomacy, and port leasing) (Lee, 2019). Washington is taking it as a competition between free and repressive perceptions of the world order.

In the article, we are going to solve the puzzle of the US Indo-Pacific policy and its implications on Pakistan by applying Qualitative Methodology. It will provide us with an in-depth analysis of current and past aspects of security dialogue. In Qualitative Research, we will go for the method of Case Study

to drive an intense and systematic investigation. It will also help us to narrow down the complexities and vast data in more manageable research.

While calculating the impact of Indo-Pacific policy on Pakistan, the first thing that comes is the National security and foreign policy. It is of significant importance to comprehensively go through Indo-Pacific Policy, Military interest, and implications on Pakistan. In this article, we will analyze the Indo-Pacific engagement with respect to the impacts on Pakistan's National Security amidst the changing dynamics. There are two key reasons that explain the recent rise in the strategic implication of Indo-Pacific. First is the growing footprint and investment in the region and second is the relative reduction in the US alliances and its urge to make an upturn as a dominant power (Tow, 2019).

Conceptual Overview

What is Maritime Security?

According to Semiotic way of thinking, if one wants to understand the meaning of a term, they should analyze its relation with respect to another concept. For instance, Maritime security is based on the old, moderate and new ideologies, and we can distinguish at least four themes in it – Sea power, Blue Economy, Marine Safety and Human Resilience. Each of these concepts describe different dimensions of Maritime security. Christian Bueger dissect it further by denoting the sea power and marine safety as centuries old concept while blue economy and human resilience have developed over time. According to (Bueger, 2014), the concept of marine security is strongly infused with traditionalist notion attached with national security to protect the state at any cost.

Sea security discourse further elaborates the 'Maritime Security' as naval warfare, and power projection. (Tertia & Perwita, 2014) As far as the 'marine safety' is concerned, the protection of ships, vessels, marine installation as well as marine professionals and environment is its prime directive. Only in marine safety you can witness security and protection regulations of constructing vessels and installation complying with the mandate. British Naval Historian Geoffrey Till, describes the notion of marine security as a necessary order at the sea. It contributes to protecting the seaborne trade and state transporting logistics from every kind of threats and risks.

In warfare circumstances, the naval power projection strives to secure 'sea lines of communication (SLOC)' and make sure the state's presence in international waters which is the core aim of Traditional Maritime Security (Bueger & Edmunds, Beyond seabindness: a new agenda for maritime security studies, 2021).

Naval Security

Naval security has had three established uses since its inception into security. First is the political purposes – including the use of military power projection, and sea control. Second is the diplomatic use – Which includes gunboat diplomacy as well as constabulary function. Third is peacekeeping and broader maritime security. The theoretical writings of Alfred Thayer Mahan revolutionized strategic thinking. According to him, the naval strategy is reflected in maritime security. The modern strategist thinker believed that sea power is a precondition for a liberal market economy that led to an overseas market (Krause & Bruns, 2016).

Evolution of Maritime and Naval Strategic Outlook

In the 21st century the use of Naval force and broader maritime spectrum followed by an established naval function; strategic deterrence, power projection, sea control, maritime presence, and on top of it, the naval strategic culture which governs the deployment naval forces.

Today, liberal hegemony is losing its cohesion, the two major aspects responsible for it:

- With the emergence of China and other aspiring power, US global supremacy is dwindling which raises the question of whether the US should be or should not be a superpower.
- The nature of maritime challenges is changing (Krause & Bruns, 2016).

US Indo-Pacific Policy: an amalgamation of both Maritime & Naval Security

Now, the concept is evolving and securitizing as the world power is shifting. The concept of securitization is linked with Copenhagen school of security studies – includes some key authors Ole Wæver, Barry Buzan along with other loosely associated researchers. The concept of securitization is an intense debate between those who considered threat is objective (the real threat to international security) and those who suggests it is subjective (what is perceived to be a threat). In our understanding, the rise of China is threatening the superiority of United States, therefore, the agenda to militarily

empower India, Australia and other countries associated with the Indo-Pacific policy is to make US strong in the process (Munster, 2020).

The stronger the alliance the harder it is to beat United States occurrence and impression. According to Buzan, de Wilde and Waever a threat's referent object must be present, it is a specific characteristic of security which involves significant military instruments, military conflicts and a cut back of civil liberties (Munster, 2020).

Apparently, United States is considered a maritime superpower because of its heavily armed warships and advanced military technology. The warships can travel thousands of miles in matter of days, it can also patrol the points without even entering into another country's sovereign waters. This gives United States an upper hand when it comes to the world's dominant state. In the wake of US military might countries like India, UK, Australia, and Japan have joined the US in Indo-Pacific engagement. The key role of US is to provide nuclear armed marine ships and advance military to these countries so that they can protect their maritime space from the growing powers like China (U.S. Department of Transportation, 2020).

United States is one of the few countries that has full access to the blue waters and can operate in the oceans without any hindrance. The naval force of US has an immense capability of threatening, diplomacy and other contributory factors. There are three inter-related constituents that help United States to retain its sea power (Masters, 2019).

First is 'Forward Presence' in which the navy forces deploy to the regions that can provide strategic primacy to US. However, the move of marching forces is not permanent here but rather persistent. Second is the Deterrence, it indirectly discourages all offensive acts against US and its allies. In this scenario, the country is having a potential upper hand due to the ballistic missile submarines that serves as a leg of nuclear triad. Moving on to the Sea Control, it provides a certain influence to sea length for a specific period of time. However, in sea control, one often seeks to attain hidden objectives i.e. Military sealift, blockade, shipping, and protection of trade routes (Masters, 2019).

Power projection – the term itself is pretty explanatory. It focuses on showing military might and includes direct threats or strikes. If a subject is not complying with the international law, the country having the military might could launch amphibious assaults for a specific period. Fifth is the Maritime security, almost 90% of the world's trade is happening through sea routes. The goal of maritime security is to maintain the law order at sea routes. The operations include in maritime are counterpiracy, drug interdiction, environmental protection and other law enforcement.

US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo said "People in America and the rest of the world have a stake in keeping the integrity of Indo-Pacific, therefore, Indo-Pacific must remain free and open." Moreover, in 2018 President Donald Trump signed the Better Utilization of Investments Leading to Development Act or the BUILD Act. The American narrative is based on the theories that China and Russia want to apply its Authoritarian model globally. Moreover, they want to gain autonomy over the other nations via Veto power i.e. economic, diplomatic, and security decisions. It further dissects China's long-term strategy to pursue a military modernization scheme to achieve Indo-Pacific regional dominance so that it can eradicate US future pre-eminence (Aamir, 2021).

China wanted to build a strong alliance game so that they can bring all the defensive countries into its court. To further narrow it down the US has three eternal opponents i.e. China, Russia, and North Korea. On the other hand, they also have a string of alliances i.e. Japan, Australia, South Korea, Vietnam, and Singapore. In this regard, US prior State secretary Mike Pompeo revealed "US military forces are very active in the region so that it can maintain a peaceful bustle in Indo-Pacific." To say the very least US hides its "Indo-Pacific" "anti-China strategy" under the guise of Liberalism. It is one way to perceive the whole Indo-Pacific engagement through the lens of imperialism where US wants to gain global hegemony. However, the second conjecture is via Neo-realistic perspective, it highlights balance of power. When one or two countries tried to instill influence on the region, the established power cut off its ties by opting for coercion or a string of alliances. This is called as "Thucydides Trap" according to the Graham Allison (Aamir, 2021).

However, as per Pakistan's perspective, these myriad issues require an internal inspection rather than an external one. In 2021, Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa talked about the wide range of security issues both Internal and External at the Islamabad Security dialogue. In this conference, for the first time ever, a top military official talked about the preference for Human Security and Economic development. He further explained that Pakistan being a developing country is facing

multidimensional challenges, therefore, the country needs multilateral regional and global cooperation to overcome these adversaries. Pakistan is geo-strategically act as a conduit between different civilizations and regional economies, so it is necessary to put behind all the disputes and resolve all our current issues in a dignified and peaceful manner. He stated that the Currently, these has been a significant shift in the national security policy of Pakistan – Bad governance, corruption, widespread poverty, socio-political issues, rampant illiteracy, and extremism requires the utmost attention rather than the external regional dominance issues (the express tribune, 2021).

On January 12th 2021, National Security Advisor of United States declassified the framework of Indo-Pacific policy. It was no surprise that the document contains information of how to stop the rise of China as the next global power. There has been a very little debate that how it could affect Pakistan. To examine attentively from Pakistan's perspective US considers India a preeminent power in South Asia and wanted it to take a lead role in governing all security-related matters of Indian Ocean. In order to help India, gain this objective US is seeking to increase India's capacity to serve them as a security and defense provider that will also ensure a solid and enduring strategic partnership to attain common interest in the region. The fundamental objective here is to expand the stature of India as a mature defense partner of the US by expanding defense trade and defense technology. Moreover, US also talked to compete with China's belt road initiative of, the plan is to build an effective diplomacy capability that will diminish the Chinese narrative of being the next inevitable regional power.

The head of Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed said that there is no confusion that US future engagement regarding Indo-Pacific is to threat Pakistan security (Paskal, 2021).

US Indo-Pacific Policy and its Impacts on Pakistan: Case Study of Quad and India's Dilemma

The initial seeds of Quad were sown in 2004, at that time US, Australia, Japan, and India joined to form a humanitarian assistance to India after a destructive earthquake and tsunami which caused massive damages to the country. In 2007, Shinzo Abe hinted towards the Indo-Pacific strategy and talked about coupling of Indian and Pacific Ocean regarded as "Confluence of two seas" (Miller & Chatterjee, 2021).

The fact that Quad holds a lot of significance for India, as the ultimate motive is to curb the China's economic and military rise via strategies. In future, if China's hostilities arise on the borders India can take the help of their fellow Quad members. On top of it, they can also take assistance from naval front and carry out strategic explorations in Indo-Pacific region. In India's point of view the Indo-Pacific framework goes from the East coastline of Africa towards Western and Southern parts including some portions of Middle East. US is currently worried as of facing the reality because this year China has surpassed them becoming the leading trade partner (Pant & V, 2022).

In 2021, Iranian envoy visited Pakistan and suggested a potential arrangement of China, Russia, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey to form a regional security alliance called PENTA. Such developments are very important to China because it is making a physical appearance and producing a state on dependence via BRI. Since the CPEC project has been initiated, a lot is going on especially the regional security concerns for China and Pakistan are on the rise. Recently, Prime Minister Imran Khan visited Russia in February 2022 to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin (Buddhavarapu, 2022).

After two decades it is the first ever bilateral trip by a Pakistani Prime Minister to Russia. The visit came at a very crucial moment when Russia launched a full fledge attack at Ukraine. This showcased the whole international community that Pakistan sided with Russia and the speculations above might not be just some speculation at all.

According to a statement from Foreign Office, PM Imran Khan and President Vladimir Putin has discussed a wide array of bilateral relations including energy cooperation. They had also exchange international and regional issues such as Islamophobia and situation in Afghanistan (Yousafzai, 2022).

Quad Complications

After the cold war, India has entered into the nonalignment arena, therefore, they are uncomfortable with the concept of Anti-China and "alliance of democracies". Following that dilemma, Quad would likely raise expectations to promoting democracy abroad as it will not set with the image of India given the history. In its Foreign policy, India has traditionally rejected to advocate democratic ideals and democratic policies. As we can analyze, the whole situation becomes extremely intense and critical for India because any acts of authoritarianism and illiberalism could affect Modi's government and ultimately derail relationships (Miller & Chatterjee, 2021).

Conflict between India and Pakistan:

Ever since the division of sub-continent in 1947, three wars have been fought between the two nations over the territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Till date each state continues to assert claims over the entire area. In August 2019, Indian government deployed ten thousand of troops and additional paramilitary forces to the Kashmir region. The purpose behind was to revoke article 370 of Indian constitution terminating the special status of Jammu and Kashmir (Cfr.org, n.d.).

Followed the deployment, the region went under lockdown process, suspending internet and phone services and detained thousands of people. Such a huge development was the direct consequence of an attack on Indian paramilitary convey that killed at least 40 soldiers. The attack was claimed by Jaish-e-Mohammad and considered as the deadliest attack in the history of two decades. In all such rage, India carried two air strikes inside Pakistan's territory allegedly claiming that it was a terrorist training camp. Pakistan retaliated a day later by striking on Indian-administrated Kashmir, the whole escalation turned into an aerial engagement which resulted in Pakistan shooting down two Indian military aircrafts and captured an Indian pilot (Cfr.org, 2022).

In a QUAD joint statement, they explicitly cleared to denounce the use of proxies and emphasized to counter any logistic, financial and military support or funding to a terrorist organization which can be used to conduct cross border attacks as well as launch a terror attack. Moreover, they conveyed their support to Afghanistan and announce to provide a safe passage to Taliban or any person who wishes to leave the country. According to Indian officials, Pakistan provides funds to a terrorist organization to operate in Kashmir. Hence, it can be said that the above message was an indirect ultimatum to Pakistan (Buddhavarapu, 2022).

Pakistan Concerns over QUAD

The major challenge to Pakistan is the Indo-Chinese dispute in the region because India is trying very hard to gain a dominant edge over China so that it could secure a regional influence (Bell, 2021). Both India and China are involved in a territorial dispute over LOAC in Galwan valley. Due to this, India and US saw the activities of China through the lens of hostility and doubt. China is also CPEC and trade partner of Pakistan, so Pakistan may not have a choice but to side with China (Ali, 2020). Washington on the other hand backed India – thus in case of inter-regional conflict Pakistan would be dragged into the mess impacting its security and economy.

Moving on, Pakistan could face a strategic dilemma as the conflict grows tense between India and China coupled with US-China contestation over the Indo-Pacific region (Yamin, 2022). It will likely affect regional stability, security and create a cold war-like situation. Pakistan has good, friendly, and economic ties with China, therefore, the US targeting China will produce serious consequences for Pakistan's economy.

Also, the country has to suffer economic sanctions and deprive of various financial packages due to its allegiance with China. In a nutshell, the Quad security pact is helping India to improve its strategic and political frame in the region by siding with the US. The US and Indian navies are conducting joint exercises in the Indian Ocean which according to many analysts could contribute to tackling sea threats as well as curbing violent extremism (Bashir, 2021).

Pakistan economic and military power is not very solid comparatively to India. The main element of NSP is to bring a balance of power including nuclear weapons production and international alignment, the focus is to prevent the gap from widening. On the international platform, Pakistan opposes the elevation of India's regional and international positioning (Clarke, 2019).

95% of Pakistan trade is seaborne making the economy largely dependent on secure Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs). We can evaluate that Pakistan's major concerns extend to the Indian Ocean particularly because Indian Blue Water Navy will increase due to QUAD it could put the sea routes at risk for Pakistan (Clarke, 2019).

Analysis of Asia's Regional dynamics in accordance with Indo-Pacific Policy

Evidently, the 'New India' of Modi, Shah, and Jaishankar is moving towards very brazen policies, embracing power politics as they go (Staniland & Paul, 2019). The extremity of the circumstances is that in recent years President Xi Jinping of the Chinese communist party (CCP) has articulated a new kind of threat confronted by the government. On top of it, Beijing is leveraging its educational sector to imbue the people with the belief that China is superior to all the western nations. The campaign is specifically designed to cater to youth with the sole purpose of loyalty towards China. Here, we can

witness how the authority, point of view, and conjecture are changing under the Xi rule (Mankikar & A, 2022).

US Indo-Pacific Strategy

According to the US, the core theme of this policy is to have a sustained and creative collaboration with its partners, institutions, and allies. The objective of the US is to make the Indo-Pacific region connected, secure, prosperous, resilient, and free & open (Indo-pacific strategy of the united states, 2022).

- **Connected**

The US wants to build a connected Indo-Pacific and that can only be done via collaboration with its allies, working with the same momentum and capacity. Plus, they wanted to build an adaptive environment within and beyond the region. The outline also focuses on deepening the five-alliance treaty with Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea (ROK), the Philippines, and Thailand. Now, the US knows the importance of having regional allies. Therefore, they have introduced pacts with countries like Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea (ROK), the Philippines, and Thailand. Building an effective strategy takes a lot of effort and needs all the details to make it work (Pulipaka & Musaddi, In Defence of the 'Indo-Pacific Concept, 2021).

- **Secure**

For 75 years, the US is reinforcing and raving for peace, security, stabilization, and prosperity. And for that obviously, they always had to bring their A-game in defense and security. Now the Indo-Pacific again wants to extend and modernize its defense system to defend the allies and interests with aggressive policies through deterrence. According to the White House, in wake of Indo-Pacific engagement US is looking forward to countering aggression through integrating advanced deterrence along with the development of space, cyberspace, and critical - and emerging-technology areas (Indo-pacific strategy of the united states, 2022).

- **Resilient and Transitional threats**

Climate change and global warming have become a huge transitional threat for the Indo-Pacific region like the south Asian glacier have started to melt, which increase the flow of river resulting in sea rise. Moreover, COVID-19 hits that part of the region very badly, affecting the economy and human lives severely. Indo-Pacific governments are surrounded by conflicts, issues, natural disasters, corruption, resource scarcity, and regional challenges. The country is aiming to build regional resilience to stabilize the 21st Century transitional threats:

1. Working coherently with allies and partners on the 2030 and 2050 agenda, strategy, and policies that complement curbing the temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius.
2. Reducing the usage of the elements that are causing the climate change and environmental degradation.
3. US wants to bolster global health security starting with eradicating COVID-19.

- **Free and Open trade**

(Pardesi, 2019) Free and open trade is one major mutual interest of allies, they don't want any fiasco in this regard. To acquire a free and open Indo-Pacific, it is necessary to promote a lawful government – be able to make free choices and govern legally. To fulfill this requirement the US came up with the idea to invest in democratic institutions followed by a free press and vibrant civil societies. Furthermore, fiscal transparency is needed to expose corruption and illegitimate business in the region. Lastly, incorporating advanced technologies cater to tangible threats like cybercrime and data breach.

India's New Security Order

In 2019, a huge crisis and crackdown followed when the Indian air force launched an airstrike on Pakistan's territory. The reason behind the airstrike was the suicide bombing those Indian forces allegedly claimed executed by Pakistan's insurgent network. Right after the attack, the conflict escalated as the government of India sent its forces to the occupied Jammu and Kashmir and revoked its special status, and so the humanitarian crisis began. A month of detentions, restrictions, and oppression marked the beginning of radical policies in Kashmir (Ministry of external affairs, 2019).

We will unfold these excruciating events in a series; India's new assertive security policy while the US announced strategic engagement in the Indo-Pacific region, and how it will cast implications on the National security policy of Pakistan. Pakistan is already going through a huge financial and governmental crisis, amidst all of the chaos, the US decided to strengthen India which would

inadvertently create a huge impact in the region, given the circumstance between both the neighboring countries (Clarke, 2019).

Indo-Pacific Policy & implications on Pakistan in the light of Structural Realism

Structural realism gives us a detailed view of international relations and how anarchy is induced in a state's structure. However, structural realists differ in their view of how much power a state requires under anarchic conditions. The theory is further divided into two branches; Defensive and Offensive realism. The anarchic concept in this theory showcases that the ordering principle in the world is decentralized meaning that there is no central authority. Whereas offensive realism seeks power, influence, and security through domination and hegemony. It also focuses on the distribution of capabilities measured by great competency in the international arena (Pashakhanlou, 2018).

Moreover, Mearsheimer adds three elements to their theory of offensive realism:

- States are rational actors: they make rational choices based on calculations and credible information. It is the basic instinct of survival to put one's needs before anyone else's, so they act according to their interests.
- A state always has an offensive capability that could lead them to turn against one another in disputed times.
- State and its relations are based on uncertainty because it is hard to assess state actors' choices and intentions. No state is fully assured that other neighboring or rival states would turn the military apparatus against them (Lobell, 2017).

India is on the way to setting a new order as we can analyze the patterns of their recent activities. In the recent speech of India's external affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, he outlined a new phase of the country followed by new characteristics of foreign policy under Modi rule and changing world order. He further presented a very mixed picture and emphasized national development. In the past, India, had this mantra of unchanging foreign policy but now times are changing and the country has decided to go for timely correctives, he added. Under the Modi rule, the state is willing to take the risk and go far & beyond to achieve its goals. Lastly, he said, a state shouldn't be dogmatic in its approach dogmatic in approach if they are willing to change the global order – Putting our dogmas behind us to work for a new journey.

New Delhi strategized a new way to cater to Pakistan – Instead of using military means they are now trying to isolate the country via economic means. In 2019 addressing the campaign rally for the Maharashtra Assembly election. Modi blamed the previous Congress government failed to act against the terror attacks conducted on Indian soil. Modi pinpoint Pakistan was included and strategize the strike.

Pakistan Current and Future Prospects

What does this new dynamic mean for Pakistan? On one side the US wants the assertive, proactive, and powerful India to counterweight the rise of China's dominance. India is advancing their policies towards military cooperation as they want to overcome the negative trends, therefore, joining forces with US and partners with Asia would get them to achieve liberal and democratic values, and continues high levels of economic growth. In addition, Modi's vision of merging domestic politics with national security, especially the handling strategy of Pakistan could go either way and escalate the whole situation – undermining the goal of India to move past the regional rivalry (Singh, 2021).

The territory of the Indian Ocean goes all the way from the Arabian Sea, South India's coastal waters, to the Bay of Bengal near the entrance of the Strait of Malacca. As a matter of fact, the route of the Indian Ocean is very important in terms of trading & shipping – interconnecting Oman, Yemen, Somalia, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Indonesia.

However, China uses the shipping ports of Pakistan due to the CPEC project whereas the US annually joins the maritime exercise which is held with India (Tertia & Perwita, 2014).

BRI was unveiled in 2013 by China's President Xi Jinping, it is referred to as one of the most ambitious infrastructures ever conceived. The development and investment initiative will stretch from East Asia to Europe, resulting in the expansion of China's political and financial influence. US has concerns that BRI might prove as a Trojan horse for China's regional development and military expansion. Some analysts see that BRI is bolder Chinese statecraft under Xi, it will pave the way for China towards new investment opportunities, along with the growth of export markets and boost incomes and domestic consumption (Chatzky & McBride, 2020).

Pakistan is taking a lot of assistance, financial aid, and other liabilities from China. Stopping China means the system of Pakistan could have been in danger as already the country is facing so much systematic pressure coupled with a failed agreement with IMF (The world bank, 2022). Pakistan is looking at a financial crisis, and some analysts have also speculated that the country might end up with a failed system just like Sri Lanka has pulled into the crisis.

(Staniland & Paul, 2019) At the annual press conference, Indian Army Chief General M. M. Naravane explicitly mentioned the cooperation between Pakistan and China both in the military and non-military dynamics, and we must be ready for a two-front threat situation. Moreover, the above-mentioned threat has also been acknowledged by other top military officers – In 2020, Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat, economic cooperation between China and Pakistan, the stance of Pakistan on Indian occupied Jammu & Kashmir accompanied by continued military, economic and diplomatic support from China has created a high-level mandate preparation for India.

(Dunne, Kurki, & Smith, 2017) According to the Offensive Realism, security is scarce on an international platform – systematic and structural anarchy compels major powers to draw more means of increasing security via maximizing their relative power by expansionist foreign policies to gain more power and weakening potential challengers.

The current situation in Pakistan is turning into a disaster, the economic condition is tilted towards the downside, and no special attention was given to the macroeconomic projects. The country is still in debt and taking loans from the IMF, the former PM Imran Khan signed a \$6bn bailout package in 2019 (Javaid, 2022). Islamabad only received \$3bn because Imran Khan's Government abandoned the agreement to end subsidies, expand the tax net and improve collection. Pakistan's future perceptions of Indo-Pacific policy (if it turns out to be aggressive) are vague at the moment. Being a developing country Pakistan is not entirely free to pick and choose as will (Younus, 2020). Nevertheless, it has greater strategic and geopolitical importance which thereof demands a wise and stable course of action in the national security policy. Lessons learned from the past, Pakistan's policymakers might need to take certain strategies under consideration while formulating the country's foreign policy and national policy directions:

- Pakistan needs to take all previous lessons into consideration.
- Due to the US-China crisis and trade war, Pakistan needs to take steps very carefully for securing short-term and long-term benefits.
- The country needs to re-adjust the policies with entirely new adjustments and realignments in the region, which is also not anti-China.
- Pakistan can also diversify its policies with the Indo-Pacific engagement by adding more neutral issues like climate emergency, water scarcity, and agriculture
- Pakistan can utilize the US Indo-Pacific engagement scenario by bolstering ties with the US by offering them facilitation regarding Afghan peace dialogue and negotiations with the Taliban political government.
- If Pakistan becomes economically stable by following augmented democratic practices and creating a favorable political environment leading to international recognition, credibility, and worldwide cooperation (Younus, 2020).

CONCLUSION

US and China are both economically independent, and most likely the tensions, complexities, intensifications, and volatilities will impact the security of Pakistan and the overall South Asian region. The vision behind the Indo-Pacific policy is that all the nations will get access to international waters, space, airways, and cyber domains (Clarke, 2019).

Moreover, the US has showcased the clear intentions of its changed policies regarding the region. In the recent Quad summit, US President Biden along with Yoshihide Suga of Japan, Narendra Modi of India, and Scott Morrison of Australia signed a joint statement that said of protecting the shared values, commitments, and rule-based order. The main focus of the summit was countering China, aligning with India, and revitalizing the alliances. US, Australia, UK, India, and Japan hold an integral part in international relations (Defence strategic update, 2020).

The major challenge for Pakistan as they always sought strategic and international parity with India to defend themselves from the ever-growing threatening power. Also, the embedded concept of Maritime Security into the Indo-Pacific policy is somehow new and shifting the orientation. The

purpose of Maritime was to protect ships, maritime installations; employees, and the marine environment.

Now, the concept is evolving and securitizing as the world power is shifting. We can analyze that the threats in association with Maritime security are always related to the land space debate which concluded that the insertion of Maritime security is derived from the epistemological debates. Pakistan is already taking action regarding the new emerging strategy, shifting its political orientation from the US toward China. Both the countries have mutual interests i.e. limiting India's influence in the region. However, there are many chances that the Indo-Pacific engagement will turn into an assertive policy, resulting in creating a pressurized environment to accept India's regional supremacy. Instead, Pakistan could strengthen its alliance with China side with its interests and oppose the rising power blocs (Li, 2021).

US-India Strategic Partnership (NSSP) initiative, missile defense, 123 nuclear programs, and a ten-year framework of bilateral security cooperation. Pakistan must enhance its economy, strategic alliance, and national cohesion to counter the Indo-US convergence (Farooq, Kazmi, & Javed, 2018). For what it's worth, Pakistan has a long-standing recognition and cooperation in the international society, if it becomes strong internally with its institutions and structures working in a coherent, politically viable, and constructive way. It is imperative that Pakistan weigh up and analyze the long-term consequences of such policies (Clarke, 2019).

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