

FROM REGIONAL ALIENATION TO REGIONAL INTEGRATION: POST 9/11 PAKISTAN'S RELATIONS WITH US AND CHINA

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Abstract

International relations adhere no permanence in its alliance and enmity, when it comes to bilateral ties and national interests, Pakistan who was a leading companion of US post 9/11, encountered with deepening its bond with China who emerged more assertive regarding its regional role in the wake of 9/11, therefore, the main argument of this study is that 9/11 incident proved a point for Pakistan where it preferred regional security over economic reliability, as a prime factor to determine its foreign relations. The study observed that post 9/11 security scenario pressed Pakistan to opt for a partner rather than a master to combat its troubles in terms of its regional position, therefore this study relates itself to regional security complex theory to purport Pakistan's diplomatic drive towards China in comparison to US. Moreover, this paper asserts that post 9/11 the shift in regional strategic alliance and regional events pushed Pakistan to grow and expand its equation with China to explore a gateway which is loaded with opportunities and challenges at the same time. China and Pakistan pose commonality and interdependence of interest at regional level towards India backed by US; therefore, this paper signifies itself as it examines that how Pakistan's relation with China in the wake of 9/11 has contributed towards regional security.

Keywords:

Pak-China Relations, Pak-US Relations, Regional Security Complex Theory, Post 9/11, Foreign Policy

Introduction

The horrific events of September 11 shocked the whole globe and caused a paradigm shift, altering the security strategies of every country.¹

Pakistan occupies a strategically and geopolitically precarious position at the crossroads of South and Central Asia. Since the events of September 11, the United States has been far more vulnerable to both domestic and foreign security threats. America was the world's leading superpower at the turn of the twentieth century, and since then, it has done everything—good and bad—to maintain and expand its hegemony.²

When the United States sought Pakistan's assistance in achieving its national interests, it employed the 'carrot and stick' strategy, as was common during and after the cold war and the post-9/11 era. Put simply, the United States endeavoured to enlist Pakistan's assistance through the provision of financial and military assistance and created security risks to Pakistan. The United States have had cut off all or nearly all financial and military support to Pakistan as soon as its objectives were met. Historically, US frequently, manifested detachment with Pakistan the first in the 1970s, when the United States kept Pakistan out of the Soviet Communist bloc, and the second in the years 1979–1989, during and after the war in Afghanistan, and finally, after the Soviet Union collapsed.³

Significant shifts in Pakistan's relationship with the United States began with the invasion of Afghanistan by the United States in the year 2001. Pakistanis are even more perplexed and anxious about the future of the war because of the United States' decision to withdraw from Afghanistan, despite the fact that they were already losing the fight against terrorism within their own country. In the context of its bilateral relations with Pakistan, the United States occasionally engages in a strategy known as "talking tough to Pakistan" while also providing economic assistance. This is done as a show of goodwill.⁴

After the attacks of September 11, 2001, there was a significant shift in the United States' direct military and economic aid to Pakistan; nonetheless, the trade relations between the two countries remained mostly intact. Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, diplomatic relations between the two countries have remained tense, even though the United States has increased its financial assistance to Pakistan. Since September 11, 2001, when several incidents heightened tensions and distrust between the two countries, the United States of America and Pakistan have been at odds with one another. Examples of such occurrences include the attack on the Salala check post in 2011, the incident that occurred with Raymond Davis in 2010, the cessation of NATO supplies for seven months in 2011, and the incident that occurred with Osama bin Laden in 2011. The repeated drone attacks that took place within Pakistani territory resulted in the deaths of thousands of innocent people as well as terrorists.⁵

According to Katzenstein, foreign policy revolves around the security paradigm. Security is defined as the absence of numerous hazards to the states, so leaders develop strategies after understanding the grasped and actual risks within the nation. Foreign strategy cannot be successful without the employment of economic and military power.

Consequent upon, foreign policy refers to the coordinated actions of states toward one another in pursuit of and defence of national interests. There are a lot of national, regional, and international actors in this complicated process. Foreign policies are typically crafted by states with the goals of border protection and economic expansion in mind.

¹ Kakihara, "The Post-9/11 Paradigm Shift and Its Effects on East Asia."

² Akram, "A Pakistani Perspective."

³ Wadood and Alamgir, "Pakistan's Strategic Realignment: A Critical Appraisal."

⁴ Shah, "Pakistan's Relations with the United States and China in the Post-9/11 Era."

⁵ Osiur, "An Analysis of the Regional Security of South Asia in Post 9/11 Period: Regional Security Complex Theory Approach."

In the context of diplomatic calculations, national interests serve as the determining variables, and they are the objectives of the state that must be accomplished through the implementation of foreign policy. Since the country's foundation, Pakistan's foreign policy has been directed by the core objective of ensuring the nation's independence or national security to the greatest extent possible. Throughout its history, Pakistan has held the belief that it has always been helpful to the upkeep of international peace and stability to maintain good relations with neighbouring states. Pakistan's geographical isolation may appear to be a physical impediment; nevertheless, if the country is able to work toward improving its relations with its neighbours, it may actually be a strength.⁶

When it comes to analyzing Pakistan's relationship with China, the key lens through which this relationship is viewed is the regional security architecture. When considered against the backdrop of Pakistan's ascent to prominence as a new nation seeking stability in a region that is prone to instability, this scenario appears to be plausible. The ruling class and the military of Pakistan swiftly came to the conclusion that maintaining relations with China was the most prudent course of action in this hypothetical scenario. A formalization of these connections into a partnership has taken some time, despite the fact that Pakistan's foreign policy has always placed a strong emphasis on maintaining good relations with China. The study of international relations asserts that the dynamics of international relations are characterized by the complicated interplay of practical national interests. This is why international relations are so dynamic. It's possible that these national interests will shift gears depending on how things play out on a global and regional scale.⁷

But contrary to popular belief, the Pakistan-China relationship is grounded in pragmatic and strategic geopolitical considerations, not in love or romanticism. When Pakistan recognized the People's Republic in 1950, it officially began diplomatic relations with China. But between the late 1950s and the early 1960s, ties improved, and the two nations have worked together and supported each other ever since. Pakistan remained a non-NATO ally and frontline state in the still-ongoing global battle against terror, but relations with China stayed solid and even expanded. Several high-level visits between the two nations' presidents occurred between 2000 and 2001.⁸

The meteoric rise of the People's Republic of China (PRC) is a phenomenon that is recognized on a global scale. Because the United States of America went from being one of the poorest countries in the world in the 1970s to having one of the largest and most developed economies in the 1990s, the United States is extremely concerned about the rise of the country to economic dominance. Following the incident involving the EP3 spy plane in April 2001, China took a position to defend its sovereignty and demanded that the United States apologize for violating Chinese territory. During the 1980s and 1990s, China was relatively silent. However, following the incident, China spoke out against the United States. Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States has been engaged in a war on terrorism, which has resulted in China's strategic plan being disrupted and a decline in the security architecture of the region. The economic well-being of both China and Pakistan is directly correlated to the nature of their existing relationship. The decade of the 1990s was marked by a number of events that had an impact on the regional security of South Asia. These events included the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Afghan civil war, nuclear tests conducted by Pakistan and India, the Indo-Pak Kargil War, the United States invasion of Afghanistan in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and the Indo-Pak military standoff that occurred between 2001 and 2002.⁹

The People's Republic of China's (PRC) meteoric ascent is an international fact. The United States has grave concerns about the country's rise to economic dominance, since it went from being one of the world's

⁶ Ahmad and Hashmi, "Pakistan Foreign Policy Choices in Post 9/11 Period: Options and Challenges."

⁷ Banlaoi, "Southeast Asian Perspectives on the Rise of China: Regional Security after 9/11."

⁸ Mohammad Tehseen, "Sino-US Competition."

⁹ Zeb, "PAKISTAN-CHINA RELATIONS: WHERE THEY GO FROM HERE?"

poorest in the 1970s to having one of the biggest and most developed economies in the 1990s. China was mostly quiet in the 1980s and 1990s, but after the EP3 spy plane incident in April 2001, the country took a stand to defend its sovereignty and called on the United States to apologize for invading Chinese land. After 9/11, the United States launched a war on terrorism that has disrupted China's strategic plan and caused a decline in the region's security architecture. The relationship between China and Pakistan is vital to the economies of both countries. South Asia's regional security was affected by a slew of events that transpired in the 1990s, such as the Soviet Union's demise, the Afghan civil war, nuclear tests by Pakistan and India, the Indo-Pak Kargil War, the US invasion of Afghanistan in response to 9/11, and the Indo-Pak military standoff between 2001 and 2002.¹⁰

States' interactions, especially those among Pakistan, India, and China, were the primary determinants of South Asia's security ties prior to 9/11. Direct or indirect meddling in regional politics was common during this time by regional and global powers. China-India ties, India-Pakistan ties, and nuclear proliferation were the primary Cold War security concerns in South Asia. The security landscape has become more intricate since 9/11 due to several reasons that have altered both international and regional politics in South Asia. Among these factors are the following: the United States's involvement in Afghanistan, its alliance with Pakistan, its distrust of Pakistan over terrorism, strategic cooperation between China and Pakistan, rivalry between China and India, and rivalry between the United States and China in South Asia. The United States also views India as having a key role to play in containing China. Due to the worldwide rise in terrorism after 9/11, there has been an increase in economic and strategic interconnection. Over this period, major powers have forged strategic alliances with developing states. Since September 11, 2001, there have been a lot of shifts and changes in global alliances, both bilateral and multilateral, between powerful nations and developing nations, and among other groups.¹¹

Brief background:

Pakistan came to the realization throughout the course of time that large nations, particularly the United States, did not come to its assistance when it required it the most. There has been a lot of progress made by China and Pakistan over the years as a result of their reliable alliance. It is surprising that these two republics have been able to coexist peacefully through their tight interconnectedness, given that their social, political, and economic institutions are essentially different from one another. The common regional constant, which is an ultimatum from India, constitutes a close connection between the two countries. Pakistan and China have been experiencing domestic and external turbulence for the past fifty years, but in the new century, closer links between the two countries appeared. China was required to build relationships with South Asian countries and neighbours after 1949 due to political and geographical concerns. Despite the fact that China had never intended to give up its friendly relations with Pakistan, it was forced to do so.¹²

These two long-time allies not only persevered through the challenging times brought on by the changing regional and global landscape of international politics in the new millennium, but they also toiled tirelessly beginning in 2005 to fortify their strategic partnership. Pakistan regards China's commitment, reliability, and support for Islamabad's defence needs more highly than those of the United States, which it has had to cope with due to its unreliability.¹³

In the wake of 9/11, the United States' war on terrorism has had far-reaching effects on Pakistan, including the country's economy, internal security, defence, and relations with China and the United States. Most Pakistanis perceive the United States as an untrustworthy ally, while China is viewed more positively as a genuine friend and partner in Pakistan. Trade, defence cooperation, direct financial and military aid, and

¹⁰ Faisal, "Pakistan-China Relations."

¹¹ Minhas Majeed Khan And Mirwais Kasi, "Pakistan-China Relations."

¹² Wadood and Alamgir, "Pakistan's Strategic Realignment: A Critical Appraisal."

¹³ Arshad, Rogers, and Daut, "Pakistan-China Renewed Cooperation: Survival Strategy to Balance the United States' Tilt towards India."

regional and international political ties are all part of Pakistan and the United States' lengthy history of bilateral relations. Despite the military and economic benefits, maintaining amicable relations with a superpower has been challenging for Pakistan. Though the relationship between China and Pakistan has been lucrative at every stage, public perception of the two nations' relationship has shifted in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. Pakistan holds strategic importance for China as well, as it played a key role in facilitating China's admission to the UN Security Council. Pakistan is seen as a bridge connecting China and the Muslim world.¹⁴

Many non-regional powers, such as Western industrialized nations and the US, were also engaged in the region to further their own geopolitical agendas. International intervention of this kind just served to further complicate the political dynamics. Even additional complications arose from an already intricate situation following September 11th. Among the many significant interstate and intrastate difficulties, we face today are the following: the Sino-Indian border dispute; the increasing danger of Hindu extremism in India; and terrorism in Pakistan. The Kashmir issue and cross-border terrorism are other key factors contributing to this impasse. Fostering inter-regional cooperation is essential to the region's long-term progress and prosperity; it is one of many necessary steps to protect the region from these challenges.¹⁵

Pakistan, which is situated at a singular crossroads of South and Central Asia, is geographically considered to be one of the most vulnerable places on the entire planet. Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States of America has been confronted with several increasingly serious dangers from both home and abroad. New dangers to the region's safety surfaced in the years that followed the events of September 11, 2001. The proliferation of terrorist organizations and beliefs known as extremists is one of the most significant threats.¹⁶

Additionally, Beijing has done a wonderful job of winning over Islamabad and supporting it in becoming self-sufficient in its defence industry. This is a significant accomplishment. The supply of facilities and the transfer of technological know-how are two ways in which China provides help to its closest friend. The Treaty of Relationship, Cooperation, and Good Neighbour Relations, which was signed on April 5, 2005, comprised high-level policy suggestions. This treaty served to improve the multifaceted relationship that exists between Pakistan and China. Shaukat Aziz, a former prime minister of Pakistan, asserts that the strategic partnership agreement between India and the United States was the impetus for Pakistan and China to reach an agreement on deeper ties. An important turning point in Pakistani and Chinese relations occurred because of the fact that both countries were prepared to execute new strategies and programs in order to tackle concerns that were present in their existing bilateral ties. One of the distinguishing characteristics of China's security strategy for South Asia and Asia as a whole is the multi-faceted collaboration that exists between China and Pakistan.¹⁷

With the constantly shifting regional strategic dynamics related to security, this study is an attempt to highlight new aspects of regional cooperation to ensure regional security by these two nations, particularly in the wake of 9/11.

Theoretical Framework:

The authors Barry Buzan and Ole Weaver are two well-known figures in the field of international security literature. According to their argument, a regional framework offers the most comprehensive analysis and explanation of the complicated security situation that governments find themselves in. According to the Regional Security Complex Theory, the significance of regional security patterns in international politics is growing at an alarming rate. It provides a comprehensive analysis of the several regional security

¹⁴ Amin, "The Dynamics of the Sino-Pakistani Strategic Partnership from Its Formation in the 1960s to the Present."

¹⁵ Allauddin, Liu, and Ahmed, "The Changing Dynamics and New Developments of China-Pakistan Relations."

¹⁶ Small, *The China Pakistan Axis: Asia's New Geopolitics*.

¹⁷ Javaid and Jahangir, "Pakistan-China Strategic Relationship: A Glorious Journey of 55 Years."

dynamics that are tied to the traditional power structure of the world. The framework of international security continues to place an emphasis on regional security, especially in connection to the framework. The radical diversity that can be found in the various regional structures of powers within the larger international security environment has been explored and analysed through new avenues thanks to the RSC theory. This discovery was made with reference to the East Asian and South Asian regions, which also happen to be the focus and investigation in the current study.¹⁸

To shed light on the dynamics of Pakistan-China strategic ties across bilateral, regional, and interregional/global dimensions, the research makes use of the paradigm of the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT). In addition to highlighting the significance of regional structures, the theory proposes that the processes of securitization and de-securitization are intertwined within a given region. Throughout its history, the South Asian Regional Security Complex, which includes Pakistan, has demonstrated a conflictual nature and is influenced by the dynamics of the global environment. Despite the fact that Pakistan's significance in terms of security and its participation in the fight against terrorism was brought to light in the years following the attacks on September 11, 2001, the pattern of friendship that existed between Pakistan and China continued. Antagonism, unrelenting competition, and unending enmity have been the defining characteristics of the relationship that exists between Pakistan and India. In light of the new circumstances, New Delhi has linked itself with Washington in an effort to achieve great power status and to compete with Beijing on a significant level. The significance and standing of South Asian RSC are undergoing a transformation that is making a tremendous impact. Since September 11, 2001, the dynamics of Pakistan-China ties have been strengthened as a result of the merging of the South Asian Regional Security Complex with the East Asian Regional Security Complex. On the other hand, China's security strategy is primarily influenced by its desire to capitalize on the unrelenting competition between India and Pakistan.¹⁹

Pakistan will be positioned as a crucial component in China's larger regional objective to access the Indian Ocean by creating a network of ports along the Silk Road. This would be accomplished through the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which offers China operational authority of the Gwadar port, which is strategically vital. It is considered that Pakistan's relationship with China has developed and intersected within the context of the political power dynamics in the area after the events of September 11, 2001. In addition, Islamabad and Beijing have begun a phase of increased coordination in order to counteract the power competition that exists between Washington and Delhi. China is seen by Pakistan as a counterbalance to the security gap that has been caused by India's expansionist intentions in the region. At the same time, Pakistan is working hard to establish a connection with the East, which can be described as an all-weather cooperation, even though its relationship with the United States is turbulent and transactional.²⁰

India perceives China as too formidable a competitor to confront without the assistance of an equally powerful ally. This threat perception elucidates its expanding military, defence, and strategic interactions with the United States. The circumstances have resulted in enduring security interdependence between China and Pakistan. The current situation offers a compelling framework for the examination and analysis of South Asia's security architecture via the lens of Buzan's Regional Security Complex theory, particularly in connection to Pakistan's developed ties with China. The quadrilateral interaction among Islamabad, Beijing, New Delhi, and the United States can be analysed through the lens of Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT). The Regional Security Complex (RSC) is essential for comprehensive security analysis.²¹

¹⁸ Buzan and Waever, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*.

¹⁹ Zeb, "PAKISTAN-CHINA RELATIONS: WHERE THEY GO FROM HERE?"

²⁰ Khan and Afridi, "South Asian Security and Stability and Regional Rivalries: Post 9/11 Indo-Pak Proxy War in Afghanistan."

²¹ Khan et al., "Shifting Sands: Pakistan's Strategic Culture Amidst Regional And Global Flux."

China and Pakistan have meticulously collaborated to sustain a stable regional environment. Both parties provide unequivocal support to protect each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, while abstaining from interference in internal matters. Bilateral coordination has been particularly evident regarding conflict and instability in Afghanistan, the withdrawal of US troops, tensions between India and Pakistan, the US's role in strengthening India, and post-9/11 regional dynamics, all of which have significantly amplified China's interests, influence, and role in recent years.

Post 9/11 and Pakistan's Regional Standing:

The September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States had a lasting impact on the current state of global security. The 9/11 incident had profound consequences on practically every aspect of life in the modern world. Every industry, including global banking, Hollywood, politics, and communication, has been impacted by the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Thus, 9/11 does not mark the start or finish of any global security issue. The events of 9/11 may have defined the global security concern, which had been steadily increasing since the end of World War II. US South Asia policy was altered in two ways by the conclusion of the Cold War. First, the US no longer relied on the Soviet Union to shape its policies toward South Asia; rather, Washington started to see the subcontinent as a region and began to approach India and Pakistan differently. Second, internal rather than external threats to US interests originated in the region. The three primary objectives of US strategy in South Asia were economic liberalization, non-proliferation, and democracy promotion.²²

Pakistan's strategic location on Afghanistan's southern and eastern borders made it an ideal ally for the US coalition against the Taliban's strongholds, making it a vital coalition partner in the war against terrorism spearheaded by the US. Additionally, Pakistan was able to supply the crucial intelligence that the US needed to reestablish diplomatic and military ties with Islamabad. Pakistan changed from being a Taliban ally to a collaborator in the ongoing fight against terrorism, and the US used this change as leverage to further its own goals. Washington continued to rely on Pakistan in the post-Taliban era to hunt down Al-Qaeda terrorists who were thought to be operating from the Pakistan-Afghan border.²³

Following 9/11, US policy towards Pakistan underwent a significant transformation, with Pakistan emerging as a crucial ally in the US-led war on terror in Afghanistan. China, having experienced significant relief following the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, was compelled to acknowledge the existence of US military in the region after the events of September 11. The presence of the US troops in the vicinity and ensuing developments exacerbated China's security landscape. The altered strategic scenario has augmented Pakistan's geopolitical significance to China. China harbours significant apprehensions regarding the United States' long-term objectives in the region.

While the immediate impetus for the US invasion of Afghanistan was the events of 9/11, China contends that the US's long-term ambitions in the region are significantly more ambitious, as evidenced by US activities in Central Asia, a region of considerable strategic significance. A Chinese researcher asserts that Central Asia holds three strategic values for China. Central Asia is vital to China's energy security due to its abundant energy resources. Secondly, Central Asia serves as a vital 'bridge' between the East and West, essential to China's geopolitical objectives. Third, Central Asia borders the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and hosts a significant population of expatriate Uyghurs. Consequently, it is crucial for the stability of Xinjiang and, more broadly, for the unity and stability of China.²⁴

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²² Nawaz, "The Transition of US Foreign Policy and Pakistan after 9/11."

²³ Mazhar and Goraya, "Foreign Policy of Pakistan: Internal Challenges."

²⁴ Nasim, "Pak-China Geostrategic Interdependence: Impact on Rising Economies of Asia."

its abundant energy resources. Secondly, Central Asia serves as a vital 'bridge' between the East and West, essential to China's geopolitical objectives. Third, Central Asia borders the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and hosts a significant population of expatriate Uyghurs. Consequently, it is crucial for the stability of Xinjiang and, more broadly, for the unity and stability of China.²⁵

As previously mentioned, Pakistan is a crucial state whose development will also impact future developments in world politics. The US administration contacted the Pakistani government and expressed its desire to obtain Pakistan's help. General Musharraf, who was in command of Pakistan's fleet at the time, pledged his complete devotion by agreeing to all US demands. The world shifted to the point where President Bush announced a clear strategy in which the rest of the world was divided into two camps: those who supported the United States and those who should consider joining the opposition. Pakistan had a long border with Afghanistan, and in such circumstances, when the entire world was choosing a single approach against terrorism, it was not friendly for Pakistan to take the opposite tack.²⁶

Later on, Washington and New Delhi transitioned from "estranged democracies" during the Cold War to "engaged democracies" in the post-Cold War era, the United States started to lean toward India in the late 1990s. The following illustrates the tilt. Initially, the United States of America established a thorough and formalized alliance with India, encompassing several domains like financial connections, political discourse, and military training. Second, the US took a stance on the Kashmir dispute that included supporting direct communication between India and Pakistan, insisting on the Line of Control (LoC) being respected, and opposing the use of force to settle the conflict in a way that would benefit India. Third, the US started working more closely with New Delhi on international matters after realizing how important India was and how dominant it was in South Asia. Fourth, India emerged as the biggest recipient of US food and development aid in South Asia: in FY 2000, US aid to India was \$170 million, more than 45 times the amount Pakistan received and the second greatest sum in all of Asia, after Indonesia.²⁷

Consequent upon, Pakistan began brainstorming new South Asian cooperation channels to maximize foreign policy value. US policy toward Pakistan had changed, benefiting the front-line ally less in this confusing battlefield. The Obama Administration United South Asia's Af-Pak strategy in 2009. Pakistan should not have been linked with Afghanistan in the South Asian campaign against terrorism. Pakistan was marginalised; thus, it sought new partnerships to strengthen regional and global relations. Trump administration South Asia security policy was released in 2017. Policy themes included curbing Afghan militants and strengthening India as a South Asian power. President Trump warned Pakistan of dire consequences for not complying with US demands. He accused Pakistan of hiding terrorists inside safe heavens. Trump threatened to withdraw all financial help to Pakistan for harbouring terrorists. Trump tweeted that Pakistan has betrayed US war against terrorism and will lose \$255 million. US aggressiveness led Pakistan to seek other foreign policy options.²⁸

Pakistan and China conducted CPEC negotiations under the One Belt One Road project to connect continents, according to the regional security complex hypothesis. The Zardari Regime resisted US coldness and favoured China and other regional countries. It explains Pakistan's desire to explore new mutual fronts for meaningful output. After 9/11, global architecture changed. Pakistan's geopolitical and geostrategic location made it important. Though Pakistan was in US camp for a decade after the tragedy. However, security concerns forced policymakers to consider other choices to guarantee territorial sovereignty and economic success. According to Pakistani ambassador to China Suleman Bashir, "the most important aspect of the treaty was China's clear and categorical assurances to defend Pakistan's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence".²⁹

²⁵ Faisal, "Pakistan-China Relations."

²⁶ Jamil, Hashmi, and Ahmed, "Sino-Pak Geo- Strategic Interdependence: Post 9/11 Determinants."

²⁷ Nawaz, "The Transition of US Foreign Policy and Pakistan after 9/11."

²⁸ Muhammad Munir, "Pakistan-China Strategic Interdependence."

²⁹ Rashid, Javaid, and Shamshad, "Pakistan-US Relations after 9/11: Points of Divergence."

Hence, the events of 9/11 drastically changed South Asia's security landscape. One stabilizing force in South Asia is the growing influence of China. China can act as a counterbalance in South Asia and encourage cooperation among all the governments for the peace and stability of the region if it is granted full membership in SAARC. India faces a challenge from China's growing influence in the area, which might potentially erode its own authority. China has been investing in infrastructure projects in numerous South Asian states, including the Maldives, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Nepal, and has been forging closer political and economic connections with these nations. China is a major player, especially in terms of economic integration and regional connectivity. Despite its relatively small number of obstacles, China's influence on South Asia's regional dynamics is significant and has far-reaching consequences for the area. Since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, there has been a significant change in the way that people see security. a growing issue including hazards that are both traditional and unconventional. Pakistan-China relations have suffered greatly because of the global war on terrorism, growing US strategic collaboration with India, China's economic ties, and regional changes in the Asia-Pacific region. China's close commercial ties with South Asian nations play one of the most significant roles in the peace and security of the area. China is the sponsor of the Gwadar Port, a vast network of roads and railways, thermal and hydroelectric, electronics, mining, and nuclear energy.³⁰

Pak-US Relations Post 9/11 and Regional Alienation:

There have been numerous instances of both positive and negative encounters between Pakistan and the United States as a result of Pakistan's diplomatic connections with the United States being established in 1947. On the other hand, when the United States shown leniency and magnanimity by giving India in South Asia priority over Pakistan, a great deal of doubt and suspicion ensued. Following the events of September 11, 2001, the United States signed a nuclear accord with India in 2005. A 'carrot and stick' technique was utilized by the United States in its relationship with Pakistan in order to advance its goals. In the past, the United States of America provided Pakistan with economic assistance; nevertheless, this assistance resulted in security threats. Subsequent events demonstrated that these actions taken by the United States left Pakistan isolated on both the regional and international arenas.³¹

To conduct an analysis of the United States' diplomacy towards Pakistan, it is necessary to provide a historical framework of the oscillations that have occurred in the relationship between the two countries. Pakistan was established during a time when various nations were working to rebuild their destroyed economies and military alliances were being formed shortly after the Second World War. Pakistan was established during this time. The atheistic doctrine of communism diverted the emphasis of Pakistani leadership, resulting in a preference for the Americans. Pakistan received invitations to visit from both the Soviet Union and the United States; however, Pakistan chose to visit the United States.³²

Subsequently, Pakistan joined CENTO in 1955 and SEATO in 1954. Both organizations exist today. Following Pakistan's participation in these two alliances, it was believed that the United States would be able to accomplish its goals of reducing the influence of communism in the region and strengthening its defences against India, which is a dangerous enemy. During the 1960s, there was a substantial shift in the relationship between Pakistan and the United States. During the Sino-Indian War that took place in 1962, Pakistan stood in favour of China, while the United States of America voiced their support for India and offered to provide military help. As a result of Senator Humphrey's declaration in 1964 that India was the most important American partner in the war against communism in Southeast Asia, relations hit their lowest point.³³

From 1971 until 1974, the United States, as a significant ally during the Cold War, supported Pakistan despite the arms embargo. Pakistan facilitated President Richard Nixon's inaugural visit to the People's

³⁰ Kosar, "Pak-China Relations: An Analysis."

³¹ Jabeen, Mazhar, and Goraya, "Trends and Challenges in Pak-US Relations: Post September 1."

³² Banlaoi, "Southeast Asian Perspectives on the Rise of China: Regional Security after 9/11."

³³ Javaid and Jahangir, "Pakistan-China Strategic Relationship: A Glorious Journey of 55 Years."

Republic of China. From 1979 to 1988, under Zia ul Haq's leadership, Pakistan and the United States had a cordial and cooperative relationship, mostly founded on military alliances and accomplishments. The 1990s transformed America's political influence in the area, compelling Pakistan to confront numerous limits in its pursuit of regional security. The United States' alignment with India was the primary catalyst for the decline in Pakistan-USA relations. The 9/11 attacks in the United States altered the global political landscape, prompting the United States to seek friends particularly in South Asia, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, the Arab world, and Africa. The United States' "war against terrorism" after 9/11 has significantly influenced Pakistan's economy, internal security, defence, and its ties with the two superpowers: the United States and China. The United States intermittently employs a strategy of "talking tough to Pakistan."³⁴

Despite India's non-signatory status to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the United States entered into a nuclear agreement with India in 2005 under the pretext of civil nuclear cooperation. This allowed the United States to gain access to India's nuclear resources. Because it shifted the power balances in favor of India within the South Asian region, this agreement caused Pakistan to experience a large amount of concern during its implementation. Pakistan is the United States' primary ally in the fight against terrorism; but, the United States was unwilling to extend the same civil-nuclear cooperation to Pakistan. This circumstance exemplifies the United States' double standards in the region. There was a factor that contributed to the anti-American sentiment in Pakistan, and that was the drone strikes that were led by the CIA in the tribal regions of the country. Officials from the United States of America claim that drone operations were successful in eliminating and disrupting the leadership of al-Qaeda in Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia. The drone strikes have garnered widespread opposition in Pakistan due to the fact that there have been cases in which innocent bystanders have been killed on purpose alongside militants themselves. As a result of these events, Pakistan's relationship with the United States became even more precarious, and Pakistan was compelled to investigate its choices in greater depth.³⁵

Pak-China Relations Post 9/11 and Regional Integration:

Following the events of September 11, 2001, new paradigms were adopted by global architecture. Because of its geopolitical and geostrategic location, Pakistan is a nation that is extremely valuable. Despite this, Pakistan remained in the United States' camp for around 10 years after the episode that occurred in 2005 when the Indo-US civil nuclear pact displayed the goals of the United States. During that time, Pakistan was in desperate need of the support and experience of an international actor in order to protect its interests in the region, and China appeared as a ray of hope for Pakistan. Furthermore, Pakistan was forced to make decisions with the intention of examining alternative alternatives to preserve both economic growth and territorial autonomy as a result of China's liberal posture. The two countries share a common perspective on the fundamental problems that are hurting their respective countries. In 2005, Pakistan and China signed a friendship treaty with the intention of increased their degree of cooperation with one another. The unambiguous commitment made by China to safeguard Pakistan's political independence, territorial integrity, and sovereignty was the most important aspect of the deal.³⁶

Additionally, Pakistan's security challenges originate from the vulnerabilities of Afghanistan and militancy, which necessitates a focus on regional security, political stability, and human development. Pakistan's security concerns need to be addressed. The strong partnership that China maintains with Pakistan helps to ensure that regional concerns are maintained with respect. Despite the fact that South Asia is located in a geographically unique location, it continues to be one of the most impoverished regions in the world, and the governments of the region pay extremely little attention to the advancement of human development. Each and every state, and Pakistan and India in particular, are facing tremendous challenges as a result of the growing strategic partnership between India and the United States. This relationship is a

³⁴ Akhtar and Sarkar, *Pakistan, India, and China after the US Drawdown from Afghanistan*.

³⁵ Hussain, "The Indo-US Strategic Nexus: Policy Options for Pakistan."

³⁶ Khan et al., "Shifting Sands: Pakistan's Strategic Culture Amidst Regional And Global Flux."

factor that contributes to the competition for regional security and represents an approach that is negative. After the tragic events of September 11, 2001, there has been an increase in acts of terrorism, violence, and militant activity across the region and beyond.³⁷

It is no longer the case that China views itself as a "outsider" to South Asia; rather, it views itself as a crucial participant in the dynamics of the area. In the course of his visit to Pakistan in November 2006, President Hu Jintao referred to Pakistan as an indispensable cooperation partner. A reference to this was made inside the context. During his trip to Pakistan in December 2010, the Premier of China, Wen Jiabao, made a statement indicating that Beijing would never desert Islamabad whatever of events. In the wake of the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, China is experiencing a growing sense of unease regarding the growing strategic alignment between the United States and India. The United States of America and India both regard China as a possible threat and their major competitor. Because of this, it is in both of their best interests to exert some influence on China's rise to power. In view of the shifting regional and global backdrop, the cornerstone of the developing partnership between China and Pakistan is built in the fact that their perceptions of India are becoming more aligned with one another.³⁸

Between 2001 and 2002, India amassed massive military forces at the borders of Pakistan, and the two countries narrowly averted armed conflict during the protracted crisis that lasted over a year. During the crisis outbreak, the United States exhibited a more robust pro-India position. During the crisis, Washington consistently urged Pakistan to implement further measures. Conversely, China adopted a more pro-Pakistani position throughout the crisis, unlike its neutral stance during the Kargil Conflict. Considering the situation, Beijing cautioned the international community against applying unilateral pressure on Pakistan. Furthermore, it emphasized that India, being a larger nation, ought to assume a more constructive role in alleviating tensions and urged the United States to adopt a more equitable perspective on the situation.³⁹

Many regions in Asia have been negatively affected because of the war on terror that is being directed by the United States and its major presence in the region. Especially in South Asia, national interests are the primary factor that ultimately determines the course of international relations. Most China's problems are related to the country's economic interests.⁴⁰

To accomplish its goals of gaining economic and geopolitical advantages, China works to cultivate friendly relations with all the countries in this region, regardless of their size. It is possible to attribute the strong and intimate friendship that exists between Pakistan and China to a variety of different factors. In contrast to the United States of America, Pakistan strives to build a close relationship with China instead. Although it is a big power, China has not demonstrated any hegemonic intentions and has abstained from interfering in the domestic affairs of Pakistan. To ensure the region's continued security, peace, progress, and prosperity, they have made a commitment to combating terrorism, separatism, and religious extremism. It is clear that they are committed to their initiatives.⁴¹

Taking into consideration the circumstances, China continues to emphasize the all-encompassing and long-lasting strategic cooperation that it maintains with Pakistan. Pakistan's armed forces have received a substantial amount of armament from China, which has been a big donor. Additionally, China has agreed to construct two additional nuclear power reactors in Pakistan by granting permission. Both the government of New Delhi and the government of Washington have voiced their displeasure with the move. In addition to serving as a regional stabilizer for Pakistan in relation to India and that of a counterbalance to the demands that were imposed by the United States, China served as an essential alternative supply of

³⁷ Akhtar and Sarkar, *Pakistan, India, and China after the US Drawdown from Afghanistan*.

³⁸ Inayat, "Conflict and Cooperation in South Asia Post 9/11: Implications for Pakistan's Security."

³⁹ Shah, "Pakistan's Relations with the United States and China in the Post-9/11 Era."

⁴⁰ Kakihara, "The Post-9/11 Paradigm Shift and Its Effects on East Asia."

⁴¹ Feng and Ali, "The Challenges to the Mega Infrastructure of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor in Pakistan."

military weapons. The geopolitical significance of Pakistan is the primary reason for China's interest in the country. The Chinese government operated as a trustworthy conduit in reaction to any efforts that were made to isolate Pakistan.⁴²

To safeguard its national interests and establish a strategic relevance within the area, Pakistan has consistently put into action a plan on these matters. An entirely new alliance with China has surfaced as a result of this endeavour. As a result of its significant bilateral contacts with China, Pakistan is in a position of strategic importance during the ambitious strategies of the United States of America, India, Russia, and China.⁴³

China has consistently upheld its position as a reliable ally with every government in Pakistan and post 9/11, deepening bon with China has opened doors of regional integration for Pakistan in South Asia. Despite changes in leadership and governance in both nations, the substantial common interests between Pakistan and China have remained unaffected, preserving their connection. The events following September 11th have reinforced Sino-Pakistani relations, effectively reversing the previously poor trajectory of their relationship. Before the 9/11 tragedy, the security dynamics of South Asia mostly revolved around inter-state relations, particularly the interactions among Pakistan, India, and China, with extra-regional and global powers significantly influencing regional affairs, either directly or indirectly.

Conclusion:

States unquestionably pursue their national interests, and currently, regional security is the primary factor that influences state-to-state interactions above financial security. As a result, it serves as the primary factor that determines the effectiveness of foreign or external state policies. Due to the mistrust and uncertainty that has been inherent in Pakistan's relationships with the United States over the course of this time, China has become an extremely important strategic player for Pakistan. After the events of September 11, 2001, Pakistan's opinion of China's geopolitical prominence has become even more firmly established in comparison to that of the United States. Because China's concerns regarding South Asia have developed since the time of the Cold War, it is of the utmost importance to acknowledge this fact. Due to Pakistan's participation in the fight against terrorism, China considers Pakistan to be of strategic importance. The concerns that China has over the strategic cooperation that the United States and India are forming in the Asian area are extremely important to take into consideration. It has been made easier for Pakistan to advance in its relationship with China because of China's rise in the twenty-first century, which is a consequence of China's increased regional security and the United States' relative decline despite its unequalled strategic manoeuvres.

⁴² Hathaway, "The US–India Courtship: From Clinton to Bush."

⁴³ Khan, "2. Foreign Policy of Pakistan."

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