

**Pakistan-Iran Relations since 9/11: Challenges,
Opportunities and Prospects**

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ABSTRACT

Thesis Title: Pakistan-Iran Relations since 9/11: Challenges, Opportunities and Prospects

Pakistan and Iran are natural allies on the basis of common history and culture. They are important states geo-strategically in world affairs not only due to economic importance but also for having a distinct geo-strategic location, which makes them vital in regional and world geo-politics. Despite having many commonalities in culture, history, religion and geostrategic environment, they could not develop a sustainable multidimensional relationship. In the beginning, they were able to develop a geo-economic and strategic partnership. However, a number of external factors, including the cold-war power politics, Soviet-Afghan war and Iran-Saudi estranged relations, created structural constraints in their relations. After 9/11, the dynamics of regional and international political environment changed that impacted the Pak-Iran bilateral relationship and gave new dimensions to their relations. This study examines the evolving nature of Pak-Iran relations since 9/11 with a focus on the challenges, issues and opportunities. This study finds that Pak-Iran relationship still faces various challenges, however, a number of developments, particularly China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), both states' partnership with China and reconciliation process in Afghanistan, offer opportunities for the development of closer relationship. Further, the study concludes that the two countries can overcome the challenges and issues if they move forward to realize the full potential of the opportunities.

Keywords: CPEC, SCO, Indo-Iran strategic relationship, Afghanistan, Indo-US strategic partnership.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BLF	Baluchistan Liberation Front
BRI	Belt and Road Initiatives
BRP	Baloch Republican Party
CARs	Central Asian Republics
CIA	Central Investigation Agency
CPEC	China-Pakistan Economic Corridor
FATA	Federally Administrated Tribal Areas
GWOT	Global War on Terror
IMT	Islamic Movement of Tajikistan
ISF	Islamic Resistance Forces
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
KPK	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
MFN	Most Favored Nation
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OBL	Osama Bin Laden
OBOR	One Belt One Road
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
QCCM	Quadrilateral Cooperation and Coordination Mechanism
RAW	Research and Analysis wing
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
TTP	Tehreek- i- Taliban Pakistan
UN	United Nation
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

INTRODUCTION

Pakistan and Iran are the two Muslim neighboring states having great significance in world affairs because of their distinct geography and resources. Both states are closely interlinked in norms and values, shared history, culture, faith and linguistic interlinkages. Both have great importance in regional affairs due to the special importance of their geographical location. Iran is an important political actor in Persian Gulf and it is full of natural resources, particularly having second largest proven natural gas reserves of 971.2 trillion cubic feet next only to Russia.¹ Pakistan has cordial relations with Iran since its inception. After the independence of Pakistan in August 1947, Iran was the first country which internationally recognized the sovereignty of Pakistan. Shah of Iran was the first Head of State to pay a state visit to Pakistan in March 1950.

In the beginning, a treaty of friendship was signed between Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan and the Shah of Iran. The founding father of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, argued to develop cordial relations with neighboring Muslim country. On several occasions, Jinnah pointed out with great vision that Pakistan could look forward to a genuine and lasting relationship with Iran. In the Shah era, Iran was closer to Pakistan in different areas like in the field of trade and defense. The intimacy between both countries was the result of historical closeness, common culture and norms.

In 1979, Pakistan-Iran faced declination due to shift in political regime in Iran after Islamic Revolution and changing regional dynamics like Soviet-Afghan war, divergent approaches in Afghanistan such as Pakistan's alignment with the US. All these factors halted bilateral relationship. The advent of the Islamic Revolution in Iran brought about a paradigm shift in Iran's internal and external policies. Iran left the alliance with the West and adopted an independent foreign policy. But Pakistan remained allied with the West in terms of providing support to the US on the policy of containment against Soviet's rise in Afghanistan. Instead of a shared strategic outlook and historical convergence, Pakistan-Iran relationship became the victim of strategic divergence with its inevitable negative

¹ Marie Lall and Iftikhar A. Lodhi, "Political Economy of Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) Gas Pipeline," *Institute of South Asian Studies of Singapore* 26 (2007): 16.

consequence. Pak-Iran relationship faced declination in the aftermath of Islamic revolution in Iran.

In the decade of 1990s, it had been seen the rise of the monster of sectarian terrorism in Pakistan which resulted in the tragic deaths of hundreds of Pakistanis belonging to one or the other sect.² In the process, several Iranian officials posted in Pakistan also fall victim to acts of terrorism aggravating strains in Pakistan-Iran relations. During Taliban rule in Afghanistan (1996-2001), both states adopted divergent approaches in Afghanistan which led break up in their bilateralism. Their relations remained highly tense until fall of Taliban regime.

However, there were made some efforts in 2000 and the beginning of 2001 for resolving conflictual issues. By that time, both have realized the collateral damage during the tense relationship as well as it was necessary to resolve these issues for mutual prosperity. Therefore, on April 2001, Mr. Hasan Rouhani, the incumbent President of Iran who was the Secretary General of the Iranian Supreme National Security Council at that time, paid a visit to Pakistan to put Pakistan-Iran relations back on track. Meanwhile, the event of 9/11 led to a policy shift in Afghanistan that brought Pakistan closer to Iran's policy.

The post-Cold War era was quite different from the previous international system of bipolarity. Prior to this, political and security agendas of states were their dominating interests. The post-Cold War and subsequent developments of 9/11 enhanced economic liberalization and trade relations between Pakistan and Iran for gaining national interests. In this regard, Pakistan and Iran realized full potential of economic cooperation and both came closer after the events of 9/11. In the field of commerce and trade, Iran and Pakistan conducted US\$500 million of trade and concluded free trade agreement in 2005.³ The land border at Tafton is the conduit for trade in electricity and oil. Iran is extending its railway network towards Tafton. In 2007-08, Pakistan's annually merchandise trade with Iran consisted of \$256 million in imports and \$218.6 million in exports, according to

² Zahir Shah and Ijaz Khalid, "Pakistan-Iran Relations in the Changing Global Scenario Post 9/11," *Journal of Applied Environmental and biological Sciences* 5 (2015): 207.

³ Jahangir Achakzai, "Pak-Iran Trade Expansion: The Irritants & Policy Challenges," *Central Asia Journal* 67 (2005) , accessed April 6, 2017, http://www.asc-centralasia.edu.pk/Issue_67/05_Jahangir_Achakzai.html.

World Trade Organization (WTO). In August 2008, Iran agreed to finance a robust energy project that would allow Pakistan to import 1,000 megawatts of electricity. In 2008, General elections were held in Pakistan on 18 February after being postponed from 8 January 2008. Elections in Pakistan, the political regime came in to government after long period of dictator rule. The elections in Pakistan provided a new look of relationships between two neighbors. Some scholars believe that that Pakistan People Party (PPP) led-government is closer with Iran than Saudi Arabia due to its liberal policies.⁴ Therefore, the elections in Pakistan opened a wave of closeness between both states.

The trajectory of Pakistan-Iran relations has been influenced by not only to domestic and regional dynamics but also global forces also impact their relationship. The changing dynamics of South Asia, global and structural developments influence Pakistan-Iran relations. Therefore, both states relationship has to face issues, challenges and opportunities at state, regional and global level. For instance, Indo-Iran cooperation in Afghanistan as well as India's mega investment for constructing Chahbahar port affects Pakistan's relations with Iran. In addition, opportunities exist which provide chance for the enhancement of cordiality between both states. For instance, shared culture and history, common geostrategic environment and geographical proximity create closeness between both states. Further, both have signed geo-economic project of the gas pipeline that is having greater potential for improving more closeness. Unfortunately, it could not be materialized because of external pressure.

The lingering mistrust, American pressure, complexity of Afghanistan situation and the Western economic sanctions on Iran do not allow Pakistan and Iran to take full advantages of the opportunities that are available since 9/11. Moreover, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JACPOA) provided an opportunity for both Pakistan and Iran to join hands in strengthening bilateral relations and cooperation in various fields. Un-fortunately, the unilateral withdrawal of the US from the agreement in 2018

⁴ Safdar Sial, *An analysis of emerging Pakistani-Iranian ties*, (Norewegian Peace Building Resource Center, 2015), 4.

demolished the opportunity. Iran had to face international sanctions that have restricted Pakistan for improving economic relations.

Statement of the Problem

Pakistan and Iran are the two Muslim neighboring countries and share common faith, culture, history and other geostrategic linkages. Historically, in the Shah era, both countries were strategic partners and very close to each other, even thinking for mutual federation.⁵ But their relationship experienced disturbance after Islamic revolution of Iran in 1979. They could not establish cordial relations after Islamic revolution of Iran because of changing regional dynamics and developments. For instances, structural constraints occurred such as new political system in Iran, Soviet-Afghan war, Iran's anti-Americanism rhetoric and Pakistan's inclination towards America and Saudi Arabia. The event of 9/11 changed international politics dramatically as well as it impacted positively on the relationship of both neighboring countries. Although the era of post-9/11 has been seemed as a cooperative relationship but both could not develop cordial relationship due to occurring of issues and challenges at state, regional and international level in terms of terrorism and sectarianism, instability in Afghanistan as well as role of major powers such as US, China, and Russia.

However, the shift occurred in Pakistan-Iran relations and a new phase of their relationship started after 9/11. It is important to study the relationship of both in the context of changing dynamics of global system especially since 9/11. After the 9/11, both countries revisited their bitter relationship on the basis of undertaking cooperative measures. Therefore, both made some attempts for improving their bilateral ties after the fall of the Taliban in 2002. In fact, both states are facing challenges and issues which are hurdle for cordiality. The analysis of existing opportunities and challenges gives broader spectrum of Pakistan and Iran relations. Moreover, there exists greater potential for improving bilateral relationship by realizing the existing opportunities at state, regional and global level such as socio-economic bilateral agreements, common positions in

⁵ Muhammad Amir Rana, "Iran and Pakistan's intertwined history," *Dawn*, July 24, 2016, accessed April 28, 2017, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1272879>.

Afghanistan particularly after the US drawdown from Afghanistan as well as both are having cordiality with common friend China. The relationship between Pakistan and Iran can be studied through three levels of analysis: international, regional and state level. The study of three levels of analysis defines the evolving nature of their relationship in the contemporary world and describes existing challenges and opportunities and futuristic challenges, opportunities and prospects.

Objectives of the Study

This study anticipates achieving the following objectives:

- To examine the historical evolution of Pakistan-Iran relations.
- To study the dynamics of Pakistan-Iran relations since 9/11.
- To find out the existing challenges which Pakistan-Iran relations have been confronting in post 9/11 period.
- To examine the existing opportunities that offer potential for developing closer relations between Pakistan and Iran.
- To assess the future prospects for Pakistan-Iran relations.

Research Questions

The research investigates the following questions

- How have Pakistan and Iran developed their relationship in the changing course of history?
- How have their relationship been affected by the changing dynamics since 9/11?
- Which opportunities exist for Pakistan-Iran relationship in post-9/11 period?
- What future prospects exist for Pakistan-Iran relationship?

Literature Review

Pakistan and Iran are both Muslims neighboring countries and both have shared culture, history and faith. After Pakistan's independence in 1947, Iran was the first country which recognized Pakistan as a sovereign entity. The relationship between

Pakistan-Iran can be viewed on System and international level. Dr. Lubna Abid Ali discusses the relationship in her article “Pak-Iran Relations in the Post-Imperial World” (2009).⁶ She explains the evolution of Pakistan-Iran relationship and describes that the both countries have number of similarities like shared history, culture, faith and linguistics linkages but both could not develop cordial and strategic partnership. She discusses different factors that influence Pak-Iran relationship in the post-revolution era. There exist external and internal factors which influence their relationship. For instances, the role of US in the South Asia particularly in the internal affairs of Pakistan as well as her role in the politics of Middle East, influence of Saudi Arabia in the domestic politics of Pakistan and the volatile situation of Afghanistan. The domestic instability like terrorism, instability and extremist organizations are hurdles for improving bilateralism.

Harsh V. Pant explains the nature of relationship in the article “Pakistan and Iran’s Dysfunctional Relationship” (2009).⁷ Pakistan and Iran are bound by cultural, ethnic and religious bonds. Pakistan gained independence in 1947 at the beginning of the Cold War. Iran became the first state to recognize the new nation and the two neighbors soon developed a strong partnership by signing a treaty of friendship in 1950. The developments in terms of the fall of Shah in 1979 and anti-American rhetoric led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini’s worried the Pakistani authorities. The writer discusses the changing phase of relation between two countries after the Islamic revolution in Iran 1979. Iran got suspicious over Pakistan’s alignment with US and her support to Taliban. Pakistan got great amount of aid from US and Saudi Arabia on the Jihadi agenda against Soviet aggression. This created Pak-US closeness and dismayed Pakistan-Iran relationship. Above all, the author describes the challenging issues between both states for showing the dysfunctional relationship like wars in Afghanistan, having different approaches to Afghanistan, issue of instability and boarder management crisis.

⁶ Lubna Abid Ali, “Pak-Iran Relations in the Post-Imperial World,” *Journal of Political Studies* 16 (2009): 4.

⁷ Harsh V. Pant, “Pakistan and Iran's dysfunctional relationship,” *Middle East Quarterly* (2009): 46.

Nabiha Gul discusses the regional security in the article “Post-9/11 Afghanistan and the Regional Security Scenario” (2006).⁸ Following the 9/11 events, the world community was compelled to view terrorism as a common challenge which was projected as the foremost source of global insecurity and threat. The strategies applied to cope with this challenge drastically changed the global security. The security of both countries was not only disturbed after 9/11 but it also created mistrust between two countries. The regional scenario generated gap between each other for having respective priorities.

V. Suresh and K. Ramesh elaborate Pak-Iran relationship in their article “India-Iran relations: Prospects and challenges” (2015).⁹ They discuss the growing ties between India and Iran with reference to implications over Pak-Iran bilateralism. Pakistan and Iran are having shared institutional body for enhancing economic and trade cooperation as well as on the road of developing cordiality through economic cooperation organization (ECO). ECO is the successor organization of Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD). But the both states could not develop trade and economic liberalism. Indo-Iran economic bilateralism as well as their closeness on the matters of Afghanistan is the greater concern for Pakistan.

Zahid Ali Khan discusses Pakistan’s concerns over Indo-Iran economic ties in his article “China’s Gwadar and India’s Chahbahar: an analysis of Sino-India geo-strategic and economic competition” (2013).¹⁰ He describes that the foreign policy of Pakistan is Indo-centric as well as emerging Indo-Iran economic ties have been seen suspiciously by Pakistan. India is on the policy of isolating Pakistan global and regional level. China’s involvement in the development of Gwadar sea port is an important shift that counters the US influence in the domestic politics of Pakistan’s affairs. CPEC has long lasting impacts on Pakistan’s relationship with Iran. On the other hand, India alongside with Iran is developing Chahbahar port which is geo-economic challenge for Pakistan. China is emerging a powerful extra-regional player that challenges US hegemonic aspirations.

⁸ Nabiha Gul, “Post-9/11 Afghanistan and the Regional Security Scenario,” *Pakistan Horizon* 59 (2006): 45.

⁹ V. Suresh and K. Ramesh, “India-Iran relations: Prospects and challenges,” *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations* 9 (2015): 381.

¹⁰ Zahid Ali Khan, “China’s Gwadar and India’s Chahbahar: An Analysis of Sino-India Geo-Strategic and Economic Competition,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 32 (2013): 82.

Dr. Satyanarayan Pattanayak explains the relationship of both countries historically in his book “Iran's Relations with Pakistan: A Strategic Analysis” (2011).¹¹ He gives strategic analysis of the relationship and discusses that how these two states with having different political systems are going to get closer in recent days. He proclaims that both Iran and Pakistan represent two distinct patterns of political systems and navigating their relationship is a very difficult task indeed. However, new developments in recent years have created commonalties for improving bilateralism. He gives the opinion that both countries would become strategic partner by enhancing trade, economic and cordial relations. He argues that Pakistan is able to maintain cordial relations with Saudi Arabia and Iran despite the fact that their relations had acquired adversary proportion after 1979. It is the active example of foreign policy of Pakistan which is balancing the influence and promoting for self-interest by enhancing the relations towards neighbor country.

Muhammad Anwar gives economic perspective in his article “Islamic Banking in Iran and Pakistan: A Comparative Study” (1992).¹² He discusses that Iran and Pakistan are having opportunity for establishing their banking and financial sectors completely in line with the dictates of Sariah. Furthermore, he explains that both countries have the opportunity to expand their bilateral political and economic relations. The Iranian foreign minister Javad Zarif has also suggested opportunities for greater economic and security cooperation in the region following the landmark of nuclear deal with the P5+1.

Nazir Hussain and Sannia Abdullah discuss Pak-Iran relationship in article “Iran Nuclear Deal: Implications for Regional Security” (2015).¹³ He assesses that after the success of nuclear deal with global powers, Iran will establish economic ties with neighboring countries. They discuss the implications of the deal for the whole region. After Nuclear deal, Iran would enhance economic and trade relations with all countries after relaxation on economic sanctions. Furthermore it is elaborated this deal will impact Iran's role in the

¹¹ Satyanarayan Pattanayak, “*Iran's Relations with Pakistan: A Strategic Analysis*,” (New Dehli, Vij Books India Private Limited, 2011), 70.

¹² Muhammad Anwar, “Islamic Banking in Iran and Pakistan: A Comparative Study,” *The Pakistan Development Review* 31 (1992): 1092.

¹³ Nazir Hussain and Sannia Abdullah, “Iran Nuclear Deal: Implications for Regional Security,” *Journal of Political Studies* 22 (2015): 584.

Middle East. But the deal was failed due to the US unilaterally withdrawal of the deal and Iran could not get full advantageous of the deal.

Zubeida Hasan discusses the closeness of three states Iran, Pakistan and Turkey after establishing the institutional body of Regional Cooperation for Development in 1964 in her article “Iran, Pakistan and Turkey-Regional Co-Operation for Development”(1964).¹⁴ She argues that three countries are having good relations in economic field as well as all of them belong Turku-Persian culture dominated states and non-Arab allies. These states can enhance economic relations through using economic institutional body despite having divergences on regional and global issues and domestic political system as well.

Shah Alam says that both states relations have shared geo-strategic environment in his article “Pakistan-Iran relations Iran-Pakistan Relations: Political and Strategic Dimensions” (2004).¹⁵ He gives the analysis of Pak-Iran relations on the basis of historical events and discusses the convergences and divergences on the basis of strategic and political dimensions. In this regard, convergent environment led them into cooperation and divergent environment created problems in their bilateral relations. Muhammad Naveed Qaisar and Amjad Abbas Khan say that Pak-Iran relationship also faces challenges with the changing dynamics in article “Pakistan-Iran Relations in a Regional Context” (2017).¹⁶ They discuss that Pakistan and Iran are having close ties from the inception despite having challenges and Issues in terms Pakistan has established strategic relationship with Iran’s arch rival Saudi Arabia and similarly Iran has developed closer relationship with India. However, Iran’s developing relations with China and Russia also has implications for her relationship with Pakistan.

Research Gap

Literature reviewed above focuses on Pakistan-Iran relations on the basis of historical events. Their relations are discussed with the reference to the cold-war politics and post-

¹⁴ Zubeida Hasan, “Iran, Pakistan and Turkey-Regional Co-Operation for Development,” *Pakistan Horizon* 17 (1964): 279.

¹⁵ Shah Alam, “Pakistan-Iran relations Iran-Pakistan Relations: Political and Strategic Dimensions,” *Strategic Analysis* 28 (2004): 530.

¹⁶ Muhammad Naveed Qaisar and Amjad Abbas Khan, “Pakistan-Iran Relations in a Regional Context,” *A Research Journal of South Asian Studies* 32 (2017): 248.

cold war regional politics. Historically, Pakistan and Iran developed strategic relationship in pre-revolution era. During the Shah of Iran era, both were enjoying economic and geostrategic relations. However, their relationship could not see the previous trust and cordiality in post-Islamic revolution era. After the revolution, the global and regional scenario changed and socio-political differences emerged. Moreover, the revolution changed regional geopolitics along with developments at domestic and global level which led towards differences between Pakistan and Iran and resulting in mutual disadvantages.

Moreover, literature review indicates that Pakistan-Iran relationship is almost dysfunctional and the two countries have so far failed to develop cordial relations. Further, many authors view Pakistan-Iran relations as a complicated relationship. There exist issues and challenges between the two states which are hurdles for improving bilateral relations. These include regional constraints, divergent approaches regarding the matters of Afghanistan, changing regional dynamics in the post-9/11 period, divergent alliances and the challenge of terrorism. Moreover, Pakistan and Iran's divergent political systems and regional approaches create distance between the two countries. The political instability in Pakistan and sectarianism are also matters of concern for Iran.

To some extent, some authors have discussed the possible cooperation and closeness between Pakistan and Iran in the changing global and regional scenario. However, Pakistan and Iran relations have not been discussed in detail by identifying challenges, opportunities and prospects especially after 9/11. Some scholars briefly have discussed challenges and opportunities but their focus remains on analyzing historical events without considering role of ideological factors and analyzing future developments. There exists a lack of broader discussion on Pak-Iran relations as the given literature is unable to give a comprehensive picture of Pakistan-Iran relations in post-9/11 era taking all elements and factors that impact the relationship into account. In addition, many scholars discuss Pakistan-Iran relations by applying traditional approaches of international relations, namely realism and liberalism. These approaches are unable to explain complexities of the issues, challenges and opportunities. Their relationship is analyzed by using the theory of complex interdependence that covers the nature of their relationship in depth by giving a comprehensive picture.

In this thesis, Pak-Iran relations are discussed by using three levels of analysis approach with reference to the changing dynamics of international politics on their relationship. Their relations are discussed with giving focus on post-9/11 developments and considering the role geopolitical developments after launching Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). It is discussed that 9/11 is the transitional phase of Pakistan-Iran relationship when both states realized the full potential of their relationship. The subsequent developments in post-9/11 period in terms of fall of Taliban government created an opportunity for developing closer relationship.

However, historical events are also discussed that have great impact on their bilateral relationship. The ideological aspect of the relationship is very important to discuss for understanding clearly the nature of their relationship. Many scholars have missed this factor that has greater role in Iran's geopolitical maneuvers. The political system of Iran is the mixed of democratic and Islamic system that runs under the authority of supreme leadership. Moreover, it is highlighted that why the two states, despite having a potential for developing a deep-rooted relationship, could not establish a cordial relationship. There exists a great potential for improving bilateral relations by realizing the opportunities. Moreover, futuristic prospects are discussed with reference to geopolitical developments which have positive implications for their relationship.

Theoretical Framework

Theory provides frame of reference or model for describing International System. Realism and Liberalism are the dominant theories of international relations which give traditional look of the international system. These two approaches have limited explanation and closer look that is unable to give comprehensive outlook of international relations. The theory "Complex Interdependence" is developed by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye in late 1970s in a book *power and interdependence*.¹⁷ It gives broader picture of international relations and focuses the role of transnational actors, social and economic interlinks in world politics. Further, it challenges classical and structural realism which

¹⁷ Robert Jackson and Georg Sørensen, *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012), 107.

asserts the role of military and economic power for explaining states behavior. The concept is evaluated on the basis of critique over the theories of Realism and Liberalism. This theory is an analytical construct of the traditional approaches for defining that how international politics is transformed by complex interdependence.

The theorists recognize that the various and complex transnational connections and interdependencies between states and societies are increasing, while the use of military force and power balancing are decreasing but remain important. Complex interdependence is characterized by three characteristics. These consist of involvement of the use of multiple channels of action between societies in interstate and transnational relations and the absence of a hierarchy of issues with changing agendas and linkages between issues prioritized as well as bringing about a decline in the use of military force and coercive power in international relations.

The approach of complex interdependence suitably defines the nature of Pak-Iran relations which involve tangible and non-tangible actors. The theory shows that both countries share many ideals like history, culture and faith which develop multilateral cooperation in the fields of economics and security. The two countries offer ideal opportunities for economic relationship. The shared geostrategic environment as well as geographical proximity creates interdependence between the two. Their interdependence is evident from the fact that divergence between them results in mutual disadvantage and convergence leads to win-win situation. Historical analysis of their relations shows that they maintained cooperation despite having serious issues between them. In the Shah's era, they remained strategic partners and had great cooperation in the fields of trade and security. Their relations became strained from 1979 onwards on the issue of Afghanistan and the Islamic revolution.

Pakistan-Iran relations are not merely based upon neighborhood and geographical contiguity or not just state-to-state relations. The two countries are interlinked through people-to-people interactions. The people of both states consider each other very closer. Both are interlinked through common cultural, historical and religious bonds. Their deep-rooted relationship does not owe to only material advantageous but multiple channels play significant role in maintaining closer relationship. For instance, socio-cultural ties

and shared historical background are underlying factors of their relationship. Before the independence of Pakistan, Persian was common language and was spoken by the people of Indian sub-continent. Some scholars such as Howard Wriggins view that Iran has greater influence on the political structure and process as well as Islamic cult in the sub-continent which came through the Persian preachers.¹⁸ After the independence, both states developed cordial and warm relationship. It is noteworthy that they never involved in any territorial dispute and conflict. During the cold-war, both states adopted the positive approach towards each other and remained strategic allies. However during the Taliban rule in Afghanistan, they faced extreme bitterness. On the positive side, both attempted to resolve through coordination in post-9/11 period.

Historically, both states remained close realizing the advantage of common socio-cultural and strategic linkages. Moreover, they were close in the period of cold-war due to having common security challenges. However, they have some issues and challenges that create mistrust and coldness of their relations. For instance, volatile situation of Afghanistan after the ending of cold-war as well as after 9/11 created differences between them. Moreover, internal instability, worse security situation of Pakistan after 9/11 and cross border terrorism is the factors of mistrust between them. But both states have always remained successful in resolving all issues by mutual-coordination while realizing natural intimacy and avoiding escalation of tensions. Moreover, there exists a great security challenge in terms of problem of cross border terrorism but this issue is dealt by mutual coordination and both states have strategic coordination for resolving the issue. Their bilateralism could not be affected by such kinds of challenges and issues. Both have realized cooperation is an essential requirement of their relations.

With such a complex interdependence in between them, both have great potential for developing cordial relations. Due to the religious closeness, Pakistani people use to visit Iran for pilgrimage of holy shrines. The transnational channels are playing significant role in maintaining relations between the two states. Both have relations in the field of trade and commerce. The volume of bilateral trade increased by 20 percent during 2018-

¹⁸ Lubna Abid Ali, "Pak-Iran Relations in the Post-Imperial World," *Journal of Political Studies* 16 (2009): 1.

19 as said by the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Pakistan Mehdi Honarodoust.¹⁹ Moreover, both are thinking for establishing banking channel for strengthening and legalizing the trade relations.²⁰ Their cooperation and multidimensional relationship will potentially lead towards economic prosperity and peace across the region. Non-state actors and institutions can play an important role in developing cordiality and improving relations. They have a potential to enhance the relationship by overcoming hurdles and challenges. Given to geopolitical disposition with energy rich Iran in its neighborhood, Pakistan has a chance to come out of the energy crisis by building its part of gas pipeline project. This will be mutual beneficial for Pakistan and Iran as the former will get rid of energy crisis and latter will get economic relaxation in the midst of US stringent economic sanctions.

Research Methodology

This research is carried out that will answer the primary research questions. The primary concern of research is to discuss the evolving nature of their relationship for understanding issues, challenges and opportunities through analysis of data presented in the literature review which consists upon books, scholarly articles and policy briefs. As a consequence of the new developments in Iran's foreign policy and openness to the West adopted by President Rouhani, the topic has proven to be a research interest. This research examines the relationship through the theory of complex interdependence, discusses the pattern of the bilateral relations and explains the nature of relationship between two states. This research is based on qualitative method of analysis and the main sources of this research are Books, Journals, international reports, policy briefs, articles and official websites such as the Diplomat, World Affairs journal and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and official websites such as website of Pakistan's foreign Ministry.

¹⁹ "20% rise in Iran-Pakistan trade exchange," *Islamic Republic News Agency*, July 21, 2019. <https://en.ima.ir/news/83405298/20-rise-in-Iran-Pakistan-trade-exchange>.

²⁰ "Launching a banking channel between Iran, Pakistan to strengthen legal trade," *Mehr News Agency*, June 10, 2019. <https://en.mehrnws.com/news/146283/Launching-a-banking-channel-between-Iran-Pakistan-to-strengthen>.

The research is carried out by using qualitative methodology as well as adopted analytical and explanatory approach. Historical background of the study is also given for analyzing existing scenarios and assessing future prospects of their relationship. It is discussed that why have Pakistan and Iran failed to develop closer relationship, despite of having socio-cultural and historical linkages. The data has been collect from journals, books, research articles and newspapers and official websites. It is collected mainly from secondary sources as well as some data is collected from original sources such as using official website of Pakistan's foreign affairs for allocating interviews and approaches. The other sources are used like Jstore.com and Dawn News etc. For data collection, various libraries of Universities have been visited as well as used internet, social media and other sources. The data is interpreted for analyzing Pakistan-Iran relationship in changing dynamics of South Asia and post-9/11 developments. Explanatory and analytical techniques are mostly used in the research. The study is based upon contemporary developments since 9/11 for analyzing issues, challenges and opportunities between Pakistan and Iran. However, historical events are discussed for understanding broader picture of the relationship. The study is carried out comparing the geopolitical developments from the past to present at state, regional and global level.

Significance of the Study

The topic is important in contemporary regional and international politics especially regarding the changing dynamics of South Asia. The research discusses two important states which are located in two geostrategic important regions, namely South Asia and Middle East. Both regions are quite significant in world politics. On the one side, Iran is full of its natural resources and second world largest gas producer in the world and located in Persian Gulf. On the other hand, Pakistan is an important state, located in South Asia, first Muslim Nuclear capable state and having distinct geographical location. Due to their distinct qualities, Pakistan and Iran remain the center of world politics. In addition, their relationship has been impacted by the regional developments in South Asia. The new dynamics of the South Asia in terms of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Indo-US strategic relationship as well as Russo-Pakistan emerging strategic ties have greater impact on their relationship.

It is assessed the needs of global energy will rise by 45 percent till 2030 and demand will come from china and China. Moreover, it is expected that China will import 7.3 million barrel crude oil per day till 2020. Such kinds of demands have serious implications for China.²¹ Therefore, she is working on developing different projects for reaching energy rich states. CPEC is the part of Chinese “One Belt One Road” (OBOR) initiative.

Iran also showed positive aspirations to CPEC. The president of Iran Muhammad Hassan Rohani expressed his views that Iran is desirous of participating in CPEC which is one of the greatest projects in the history of the region. Such kind of desire shows further development of good relations in the fields of economic and trade. The research focuses all those opportunities of Pak-Iran relationship which are important for improving bilateral relations as well as it elaborates that how can both states manage challenges and issues for improving cordiality. Further, the geographical proximity, ideological closeness, shared culture as well as having socio-economic bilateral agreements are important for further cooperation and cordiality. All these factors make complex interdependence and enhance bilateralism after realizing full potential of these positive factors. Further, these will lead towards cooperation particularly after removing structural constraints at state, regional and global level.

Delimitation

Finding a great deal of information on this topic is not easy, because it deals with different factors which have impact on the relationship. The topic carries the relationship between both states since 9/11. It also discusses recent scenarios with reference to geopolitical developments that provide opportunities for improving the relationship. On the other hand, different challenges are also discussed with reference to their long lasting impact on the relationship. An analytical approach is adopted to understand the complete scenario. On the basis of historical events along with recent developments, different phases of their relationship are discussed. Meanwhile, it is elaborated that the cordiality between Pakistan and Iran will spread peace and prosperity across the region.

²¹ Muntazir Ali, “China as a Factor of Stability in South Asia: Problems and Prospects,” *Pakistan Horizon* 63 (2010): 66.

Information is acquired through different books, research articles, journals, news and websites. The research also gives the analysis of Pakistan-Iran relations on the basis of developments at state, regional and international level. The role of non-state actors and Islamic political parties are also discussed. The roles of different pressure groups are also discussed because these play important role in opinion building. Pakistan's balanced approach between Saudi Arabia and Iran is also discussed.

Chapters' Breakdown

The introduction of the thesis includes statement of the problem, significance of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, theoretical framework, delimitation and chapter's breakdown.

- Chapter 1 "Historical Background" discusses the historical analysis of the topic and elaborates evolving nature of their relations as well as highlights different phases of Pakistan-Iran relations.
- Chapter 2 "Challenges for Pakistan-Iran Relations" discusses what kind of challenges and problems faced by neighboring countries at state, regional and international level and how these can be tackled.
- Chapter 3 "Opportunities for Pakistan-Iran Relations" elaborates the opportunities between Pakistan and Iran and discusses its impact on regional strength.
- Chapter 4 "Futures Prospects." gives futuristic overview of Pak-Iran relationship. It holds theoretical analysis for enhancing relations through using opportunities and commonalties between them.

The thesis ends with "Conclusion" that consists upon suggestions and the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 1

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF PAKISTAN-IRAN RELATIONS

The historical perspective of Pakistan-Iran relations gives deepening spectrum of their relationship and describes the evolving nature of their relationship in changing dynamics of South Asia. The deep-rooted and socio-cultural linkages provide opportunities for enhancing bilateralism between both states. Therefore, both established cordial relationship in the initial phase of Pakistan's independence. The cold war power politics impacted their relationship and both became strategic partners. Due to having complex interdependence, both states remained cooperative over all issues and never involved any conflict. Generally, their relationship remained cooperative, conflictual and competitive in all periods of interaction. The Islamic revolution of Iran in 1979, Afghan Soviet War (1979-1989) and disintegration of Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) portrayed competitive environment where divergences led towards dismay in their relationship. Moreover, the developments at global level in the wake of 9/11 attacks and US invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 generated convergent and divergent interests. The historical overview is given in the beginning for understanding the nature of Pak-Iran relationship.

Phase 1: Cultural and Strategic Dimensions of Pakistan-Iran Relations 1947-1979

In the first phase, Pakistan and Iran established close relationship on the basis of common cultural and strategic dimensions. The cold-war power politics and the geopolitical environment led them to strategic partnership. Both developed warmth and geostrategic partnership on the basis of common history, culture and geostrategic environment. According to complex interdependence, *there are many forms of connections between societies in addition to the political relations of governments, including transnational links between business corporations.*²² Both established multidimensional relationship and became economic partners through signing different economic agreements. Therefore, the first phase is considered as a phase of cordiality and

²² Jacksen and Soresen, *International Relations*, 144.

both remained close on the basis of common security threat and geostrategic environment.

1.1 Shared History and Culture

In first phase (1947-1979), the cordiality and warmth was evident in Pakistan-Iran relations due to shared geostrategic environment, history, culture and norms. Their relationship is basis on ideational factors such as common religion Islam as well as shared culture, norms and history. Due to shared culture and history, both established closeness on this basis of socio-cultural similarities dated back to thousands years ago. In addition, the deep rooted natural affinity and relationship started from the ancient civilizations; Indus valley and Mesopotamia, a dominant Persian civilization. They had close relations in commerce and trade. Further, Aryans ruled of the whole Indo-Persian region and settled here for a long time. Thus, the origin of both cultures is same while Persian culture has greater impact on South Asian culture. Persian language has significant impact on the Indian subcontinent.²³ The Persian culture impacted the Indo-subcontinent heritage into two aspects material and spiritual or intangible discourse. The common material heritage emerged in terms of the architecture, irrigation system, jewelry, dresses. The spiritual tradition emerged in thoughts, beliefs, literature and poetry. Further, cultural similarities are evident between two nations in their architecture, poetry, arts and many others. During the Mughal rule, Persian was used official language and remained official language till 19th century.²⁴ After the colonial rule on subcontinent, Persian language remained significant.

Both states have had long shared history of cooperation due to common heritage which resulted harmonious relationship after the independence of Pakistan. The ethno-religious values of the subcontinent as well as the whole South-Asian Islamic discourse are highly influenced by the Persian Islamic cult.²⁵ The Persian preachers and migrants impacted

²³ Zahid Shahab Ahmed and Shahram Akbarzadeh, "Understanding Pakistan's Relationship with Iran" *Middle East Policy* 25 (2018): 92.

²⁴ Aisha Rafique, Tahir Maqsood and Asima Naureen, "Pak- Iran Cultural & Historical Ties," *International Journal of Research in Applied, Natural and Social Sciences* 2 (2014): 147.

²⁵ Lubna, "Post-Imperial World," 1.

significantly the civilization of indo-subcontinent and they flourished Islam throughout the region. Further, they were considered great honor in the courts of Mughals.²⁶ Historically, Persian culture had been introduced in this era as well as it got significant influence during the Muslim Sultanate of Delhi in 13th century. There were two hubs of Persian heritage in the subcontinent; Lahore and Uchh. It remained predominant culture until the late 17th century.

Pakistan's western spheres including Baluchistan region and Makran coast were also the part of Persian civilization and remained under rule of Persian legacy for a long time.²⁷ Even still now, people of Baluchistan region have closer affinities with Iran's Baluchistan and Sistan province, having dual nationality and holding relaxation in their migration codes of conduct. Moreover, the large population of that area use to speak Persian language such as the people who migrated from Iran also uses Persian language as a mother tongue and Hazara tribe still speaks Persian.²⁸ In Pakistan, many universities have language learning programs of Persian.

Both countries have common prehistoric tradition.²⁹ They had interactions and shared believes, culture, norms and values in prehistoric centuries particularly during the legacy of Muslims on subcontinent. The longstanding affinities between the two nations provide the base for cordiality and friendly relationship with each other. The leaders of Pakistan's freedom movement were greater advocacy for the promotion of good relation with neighboring Iran. After the Independence, the founding father Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah retreated foreign policy guidelines for conducting peculiar cordiality with Iran and other Muslim countries in general. The founding father special guidelines made it clear that Iran is brother country as well as it provided the roadmap for establishing cordial relations. Further, he said to ambassador to Iran Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan that Pakistan had most cordial relationship with Iran in the whole world.³⁰ Moreover, it was

²⁶ Khalida Qureshi, "Pakistan and Iran-a Study in Neighborly Diplomacy," *Pakistan Horizon* 21 (1968): 34.

²⁷ Muhammad Saqib Khan, et al, "Study Regarding the Pakistan and Iran Relations," *International Affairs and Global Strategy* 30 (2015): 14.

²⁸ Asima Naureen, "Historical Ties," 147.

²⁹ Saqib Khan, "Pakistan and Iran Relations," 14.

³⁰ Javid Husain, "Pakistan-Iran relations revisited," *The Nation*, November 10, 2015, <https://nation.com.pk/10-Nov-2015/pakistan-iran-relations-revisited>.

included in foreign policy guidelines that Pakistan would give special importance to all Muslims countries and play the role for promoting harmony among all Muslims states.³¹ Generally, the Islamic context of Pakistan's foreign policy elevates the cordiality with all Muslim states on the basis of common religion Islam and particularly with Iran.

After the independence, Persian language remained important due to culture and historical linkages and had great influence over Urdu. The shared history and similar origin of heritage provided an opportunity for the leaders of both states for the establishment of cooperative relationship in the beginning. Iran was the first country which recognized Pakistan after the independence in 1947 whilst India alongside Afghanistan rejected its inception in United Nations (UN). It made clear that Iran was the natural and strategic friend of Pakistan.

During the first phase, the relationship remained cordial and cooperative rather than contested and competitive at all levels of interaction local, regional and international. Both countries came closer to each other in initial phases of cold war to address their common security challenges in bipolar international system. In 1950, they signed treaty of friendship and started close diplomatic, economic and trade relations. The Shah of Iran, being head of state, first foreign dignitary who paid official visit to Pakistan that showed special interest of Iran and it enhanced cordiality between two states.³² During the visit of Iranian premier, Shah asserted common cultural and historical linkages between both states and retreated to provide full kind of support in every field. He proclaimed that Pakistan's progress, prosperity and security had greater significant for Iran's concerns and the people of Pakistan were close to his heart. Both countries developed cooperation on culture and signed an agreement on 9th March 1956.³³ Moreover, some other agreements were signed in the field of science and technology.

³¹ Pervaiz Ali Mahesar and Abdul Hameed, "Changing Dynamics of Pakistan's Foreign Policy: An Overview," *The Government-Annual Research Journal of Political Science* 2 (2013): 47.

³² Ankit Panda, "Pakistan's Approach to Navigating the Saudi-Iranian Split," (Washington, DC, United States Institute of Peace, 2019), 2.

https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2019-02/pakistans-approach-to-navigating_the-saudi-iranian-split.pdf

³³ Asima Naureen, "Historical Ties," 151.

The warmth relationship with Iran supported the fate of Pakistan in different ways. Iran always supported over the Kashmir issue in UN and stood with the Pakistan's stance at international level in difficult times.³⁴ Further, she played mediator role and assisted Pakistan in resolving different issues. It was the result of Iran's mediation when Pakistan successfully restored relationship with Malaysia and issues were being resolved in 1965.³⁵ As far Afghanistan, she claimed over the territory of Pakistan, opposed in UN and their relations ended in 1959. With the bestirred of Iran, Pakistan maintained its relationship with Afghanistan and resumed commerce activities in 1963. Similarly, dispute with India over the Rann of Kutch territory resolved with the active effort of Iran. Pakistan's trusted Iranian nominee Mr. Nasrullah Intizam played arbitrary role in the tribunal.³⁶ Moreover, during the War with India in 1965, Iran supported Pakistan and assisted extraordinary help in terms of generous aid. Similarly, she opposed India's role in the crisis of eastern Pakistan in 1971 that led towards the dis-membership with Pakistan.

Pakistan restored natural affinity by establishing closeness to Iran that would ensure security and survival for newly born Pakistan. After the independence, it was need of the time to warmth relationship with Iran for countering the security and geostrategic concerns emanating from India's aggression and hostile Afghanistan. Pakistan maintained cordiality with Iran by appointing first ambassador to Iran in 1948.³⁷ Thus diplomatic relations started that strengthened the friendship. Later on, it extended towards strategic convergence to overcome regional security concerns. The good and peaceful neighbors are greater significant in foreign relations in terms of assurance of security as well as ensured prosperity and peace across the region. Un-fortunately, Pakistan relations could not remain cordial with neighboring states except all-weather friend China and then Iran.

³⁴ Zahid Ali Khan and Shabir Ahmad, "Pakistan and Iran in Afghanistan: From Soviet Intervention to the fall of Taliban," *Central Asia Journal* 64 (2009), Accessed 28 April, 2018, https://www.asc-centralasia.edu.pk/Issue_64/02_Pakistan_and_Iran_in_Afghanistan.html.

³⁵ Muhammad Iqbal, "Pakistan and Iran: A study of Neighborly relations (1947-2007)," *The Journal of Political science G.C university, Lahore* 26 (2007): 57.

³⁶ Ibid: 57.

³⁷ Ibid: 56.

1.2 Security Challenges and Strategic Convergence

During the first phase (1947-1979), Pakistan and Iran remained close due to common security challenges and strategic convergences. The end of Second World War (WWII) generated bipolar international system where USSR and the US emerged predominant major powers at global level. The bipolarity of the system exacerbated the conflictual and competitive environment between two major powers for their dominance across the globe. The dynamics of international environment affected the political discourse of South Asia in general and the subcontinent particular. In addition, external factors impacted the partitioned states in terms of exaggerated security concerns from communist bloc as well as from capitalist and western bloc. Such kinds of regional scenarios shaped the nature of interaction between both states.

After the Partition, Pakistan had to face lot of security and economic challenges in the beginning period. In addition, there was a problem of hostile neighbors in terms of India's aggression and Afghanistan with territorial disputes. Thus the growing concerns, in the context of existential security from India and adulterated relationship with Afghanistan, structured the Pakistan into strategic relationship with neighbor Iran. Pakistan maintained its cordiality with peaceful Muslim neighbor and managed security challenges through alignment with powerful Iran. She was not only fulfilling security needs of Pakistan but also provided 'strategic depth'. On the other hand, Iran was also facing security challenges. Iran's growing security concerns were highly related to communist expansionist policies which threatened Iran's survival and territorial integrity due to geographical proximity with USSR.³⁸ Therefore, she sustained herself through providing help to Pakistan because of her advantageous location. Moreover, Pakistan provided Iran strategic depth against possible soviet's aggression.

Moreover, the cold-war affected the regional politics of South Asia in the context of India's alignment with USSR and apparently Pakistan's alignment with the US or

³⁸ Shirin Tahir-Kheli , "Iran And Pakistan: Cooperation In An Area Of Conflict," *Asian Survey* 5 (1977): 474.

capitalist bloc. During the peak period of cold war in 1950s, Iran became under the threat of USSR expansionist motives and was in danger by their expansionist vision. She already had faced bitter experience over Azerbaijan crisis and knew about the role of the US for ending the occupation. Consequently, she decided to sign strategic pact with the US named as Baghdad Pact in 1955. In addition, Pakistan was facing security challenges in terms of hostile India, bitter relations with neighboring Afghanistan and vulnerable from the expansionist vision of USSR. These factors compelled Pakistan for cultivating the strategic relationship with the US in the hope of protecting its defense and military needs. Further, the US was on the policy of containment against soviet's rise. Therefore, she was in fear from soviet's expansion in south Asia particularly after India's inclination towards USSR through constructive engagement. Thus, the strategic alliance of both states with the US was also in the geo-strategic interest of the US and this was the inclusion of containment of communism for further expansion.

In order to check the US influence, USSR tried to keep away Iran for signing such agreement with the US and offered fifty years non-aggression pact. But Iran rejected the offer by signing strategic agreement with the US and ensured geostrategic interests with the US. Moreover, it was also rejected by Iran due to the closeness with Pakistan and other allies such as United Kingdom (UK) and Turkey.³⁹ The Baghdad pact was renamed CENTO in 1959 after the quitting Iraq from the Pact in the following event of pro-communist coup against the government in 1958 in Iraq. This pact enhanced the relationship and sustained cordiality between both states. Moreover, the super powers rivalry caused Pak-Iran closeness due to common security concerns and shared behaviors. Both were having similar policies in the context of seeking help from west to resolve domestic challenges and countering security concerns. For instance, both condemned strongly the aggression of allied forces over Suez Canal in 1956. Their collective response appeared again during the Arab- Israel war in 1967. Both supported Arab states and opposed Israel over her aggression at the forum of UN.

³⁹ Rohullah Ramzani, "Emerging Pattern of Regional Relations in Iranian Foreign," *Journal Of World Affairs* 18 (1975): 282.

Pakistan was dynamic ally of Iran throughout the 1950s and sixties. Meanwhile, Iran continued support during the crisis that helped Pakistan for overcoming growing isolation.⁴⁰ Iran was facing socio-economic challenges in this era that caused Iran's limited foreign policy. It was due to internal problems and survival challenges. She was facing security hardships and unable to establish coherent and active foreign policy. In addition, domestic upheavals had appeared in terms of uprisings started for change in domestic political system and for economic wellbeing as well. At regional level, Iran was facing geopolitical challenges. Arab radicalism or Pan-Arabism and soviet expansionism was another challenge for the state's consolidation and stability. Thus, sociopolitical environment and growing security concerns made the imperialistic regime of shah tied to internal issues and kept away from activism at regional and global level. Conversely, Pakistan was dynamic partner till 1959 due to comprising industrial base economy, large population and strong military.

Later on, Pakistan faced wars with India, economic challenges and dismemberment of eastern Pakistan in 1971 led towards the changing the equation and resulted dependency on Iran. She showed activism in the regional politics and emerged as regional powerful state. Further, two other factors supported to Iran's fate such. The ending of British control over Suez Canal and withdrawal from the regional affairs provided a chance for Iran to fill the power vacuum. Thus, it had increased Iran's role in the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula.⁴¹In addition, Iran's active role in the crisis of oil embargo in 1973 and subsequently further generation of oil had ensured dominance at regional level.

Due to geostrategic importance of Pakistan, Iran remained close with Pakistan. Pakistan's geostrategic location provided Iran a strong position due to Pakistan's existence at crossroads of two important regions; Middle East and South Asia. Thus, Pakistan's transnational location between two regions enhanced its power for both regions. Further, the security and stability of Pakistan and chaos within the country is interlinked with the Iran's security calculus as well as it has spillover effects across the Middle East. During the cold-war, the regional security demands and global bipolarity led them into strategic

⁴⁰Tahir-Kheli, "Area of Conflict," 477.

⁴¹ Tahir-Kheli, "Area of Conflict," 477.

cooperation with the US. In addition, the security landscape indulged two states mutual cooperation for ensuring peace and security.

Both faced some suspicions over the alignment with West. For instance, Pakistan did not get support from the US during wars with India in 1965 and 1971. Similarly, Iran faced suspicions during the crisis that occurred in 1960 when the US was interested to install nuclear weapons on Iranian soil. These events led both states to speculations over relations with the US. However, the US president Richard Nixon (1969-1974) was most interested in making Iran dominant regional ally. The policy of Richard Nixon or Nixon doctrine supported Iran in different fields and it also helped Pakistan strategically. During seventies, both Pakistan and Iran were more focused on their domestic upheavals which ultimately led towards change in their respective regimes such as dictator ruled in Pakistan (1978-1988) and Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979.

1.3 Bilateral and Regional Economic Cooperation

Both countries have economic interdependence in different areas such as bilateral trade agreements, endeavors for regional trade developments and etc. During first phase (1947-1979), Pakistan and Iran signed different bilateral agreements as well as formed organizational body for enhancing trade and commerce. Pakistan maintained its socio-economic relationship with Iran since its inception due to the closeness of shared culture, values and history. During the Shah Era (1941-1979), both countries had developed close cooperation over economic relations as well as established multi-dimensional relationship. Both had signed the status of Most Favored Nation (MFN) in the initial phases of cooperation. Iran supported Pakistan in difficult times economically as diplomatically such as granting oil on easy terms and standing with Pakistan at international level. In addition, she supported Pakistan during the wartime with India in 1965 economically, diplomatically and psychology. It was provided greater support in the field of medical by providing qualified nurses as well as granted 5000 tons of petrol without any cast. Meanwhile, it was announced free oil transfer to Pakistan which showed some kind of oil embargo for India.

In late sixties, Iran emerged predominant economic and influential power at regional level due to changing dynamics of Middle East. Meanwhile Pakistan became weak economically that made it dependent over Iran.⁴² In 1970s, Pakistan became most dependent country on the regional powerful country Iran. She acquired financial assistance to overcome economic challenges. Iran provided great economic assistance when Pakistan lost its eastern economic market in terms of giving aid as well as helped in the financial issues. Their economic relations enhanced tremendously in 1970s. For instance, the trade volume during 1970 to 1973 was in favor of Pakistan and subsequently it became in favor of Pakistan completely and she attained surplus value. Regardless of such trade benefits, Iran also assisted Pakistan by giving credit for financial developments and provided help to overcome costly oil price.

Further, the agreements in the field of trade and commerce were signed in 1974s and 1976s as well as huge amount of aid was also given in term of loan with the worth of 580 \$ million then 150 \$ million on easy terms. This was generous amount which was given at that time. The loan payment procedure was very easy and it's started after three years in 1979 but it was extended for more five years due to request of Pakistan. Moreover, other bilateral agreements were also signed for the development of industry as well as initiated skill oriented projects.⁴³ In 1964, the economic institutional body was also established by both states along with Turkey on the idea of flourishing economic activities across three countries. The body was named Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD). It was formed on the idea of trilateralism where three states, Pakistan-Iran-Turkey, would come closer to resolve their issues. It was envisioned that RCD would promote economic relations among three states as well as enhance relations among other Muslims countries.⁴⁴

Substantially, the underlying reason for the formulation of RCD was the dissatisfactions of member states from the activism of the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) as well as they had security concerns over US-led institutional body. In complex interdependence

⁴² Safia S. Mohammadally, "Pakistan-Iran Relations (1947-1979)", *Pakistan Horizon* 32 (1979): 56.

⁴³ Ibid: 57.

⁴⁴ Ibid: 59.

International and Regional Organizations are important that set agendas for states. In this regard, RCD got advantages in beginning and became active economic institution for regulating economic relations among member states. The role of RCD was evident when Izmir summit hold in 1976 which initiated different projects for easing trade liberalism. For instance, the idea of Tariff Free Trade (TFT) was floated that enhanced intra-regional economic connectivity and promoted commerce and trade. Similarly, there was discussed the enlargement of RCD for other members by including other regional states such as India, Afghanistan. But it could not be metalized due to opposition by Pakistan.

2 Phase 2: Decade of Decline in Pakistan-Iran Relations (1979-1990)

According to complex interdependent, *absence of hierarchy among issues, and military force is not used by governments against other governments involved in the interdependent relation.*⁴⁵ In this regard, both faced strand relationship after Islamic revolution of Iran regardless of security issues such as divergent political setup came in power in Iran as well as her anti-American foreign policy discourse. Therefore, Pakistan-Iran's relations went into declination during this phase due to geopolitical developments. The contention and Competition were evident in their relations as well as both adopted competitive measures for maximizing their role in Afghanistan. The factors of influence were mainly Islamic revolution of Iran, Soviet-Afghan war (1979-1989) and Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988). Furthermore, Islamic Revolution of Iran led socio-political developments in Iran. However, Pakistan officially recognized new revolutionary regime but the domestic change in Iran's political system as well as shift in forging behavior affected the relationship with Pakistan. For instance, Iran-anti Americanism rhetoric was hurdle for coordination with pro-US Pakistan.

The Islamic Revolution of Iran influenced the geo-political environment of Middle East in terms of it challenged the political systems of Arabs monarchies of Middle East (ME). Therefore, the gap between Arab states and Iran widened and it led towards the enmity. In result, the rivalry affected indirectly the Pakistan-Iran relations because of former closeness with Saudi Arabia and Gulf Arabs states. Thus, regional states rivalry, shift in

⁴⁵ Jacksen and Soresen, *International Relations*, 144.

political priorities of Iran after the Islamic revolution in Iran and changing dynamics of South Asia led towards the frosty relations between historically interlinked states.

2.1 Post-Islamic Revolution Iran's Foreign Policy

In the post-Islamic Revolution era, Iran portrayed different behavior in contrary to previous Iran under the Shah liberal's thoughts and close ally of the US in Middle East. The struggle of the revolution's leader was not only against Shah but it was for maintaining global justice and opposing the system of injustice led by US.⁴⁶ Since Islamic Revolution, the two factors of Iran's foreign policy are dominant those are the source of confrontation with its neighbors, regional Muslims countries and superpowers. These are revolutionary Islam and Persian nationalism.⁴⁷ Pakistan-Iran relationship had been affected with the advent of revolutionary change in Iran. The cordiality with Iran shifted into normalization after Islamic Revolution of Iran (IRI) in 1979 which ousted the Shah's Regime through replacing revolutionary factions under the pro-Islamic democratic model known as Wilayat e Faqeh (Supreme Leader Authority). The foreign policy discourse and regional ambitions of pro-Shah Iran, in terms of following the paradigm of Nixon doctrine, had been altered to a new set of principles. The institutional mechanism was established on the basis of neutralization without considering the role of US in shaping foreign policy behaviors as well as it was rejected totally the US influence in domestic affairs of Iran. The revolutionary leadership under Khomeini declared US as selfish motive nation.⁴⁸

The revolutionary regime established the discourse of foreign behavior on the Islamic Fundamental Principles (IFP) and formulated foreign policy guidelines for advancing relations with all neighbors. The new regime disassociated itself from the US alignment through joining non-alignment movement in 1979. She attained anti-US approach and revisited the foreign policy discourse on anti-US hegemonic interests. Consequently, the

⁴⁶ David E. Thaler, et al, *Mullahs, Guards, and Bonyads: An Exploration of Iranian Leadership Dynamics* (California, RAND Corporation, 2010), 13.

⁴⁷ Daniel Byman, et al, *Iran's Security Policy in the Post-Revolutionary Era* (California, RAND Corporation, 2001), 7.

⁴⁸ Krysta Wise, "Islamic Revolution of 1979: The Downfall of American-Iranian Relations," *Legacy* 11 (2011): 7.

nascent regime did not only distance itself from US aspirations but also it withdrew from the US-led strategic pact of the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). Thus, it was decided that Iran did not remain the trustee of Nixon doctrine where she was playing the role of geopolitical partner of the US and enjoying closeness.

These developments raised for concerns for Pakistan who was following the US aspiration as well as she adopted pro-US discourse. However, Pakistan officially recognized new revolutionary regime but the domestic change in terms of new political system and shift in forging behavior affected Pakistan's relations with Iran. Iran withdrew from the strategic US-led pact of CENTO. As a result, Pakistan also moved away from the pact in March 1979 which escalated gap because of losing mutual juncture between both states. Moreover, economic and military setback with the consequence of revolution affected the Pakistan's dependence over Iran for the regional strategical and economic needs. Now Iran was not a strong partner due to end of support by western powers. Thus, it was irrational for Pakistan to relay on her for strategical purposes.

The Islamic Revolution of Iran (IRI) influenced Middle Eastern affairs in terms of challenging the status quo of region as well as questioned the political systems of Arabs monarchies. It was threatened seriously to Arabs monarchies in order to change to their rigid political system and status quo of the region. The gap between Arabs monarchies and Iran widened and started enmity on the political affairs. Further, It was the highly quest of Iranian leadership to expend the revolution across the regional Muslim countries and especially towards neighboring countries Pakistan. As a result, the region had been divided on the socio-ideological differences and it created rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Such kind of rivalry affected indirectly the Pakistan-Iran relationship which had close relationship with Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and other Gulf Arabs States (GAS). Moreover, the developments in the affairs of Middle East in terms of regional states rivalry and shift in political priorities after the Islamic revolution in Iran led towards the frosty relationship between historically interlinked states.

2.2 Iran's Anti-Americanism and Change Regional Policies

The Islamic revolution of Iran in 1979 was different in nature and distinguished in the consequences. It generated theoretical and sociopolitical change within Iran's society after the downfall of liberal monarch Muhammad Raza Sha Pahlavi or shah of Iran. The new revolutionary regime condemned strongly the primer policies which consisted upon more dependency on west for economic and strategic needs. Further, during the Sha era, state had become the colony for western powers such as the US and UK. Moreover, the population of Iran not only rejected the policies of Shah of Iran but they view him as serving US geopolitical interest. He was considered pillar of the US security ambitions in Persian and Middle East.⁴⁹ After the revolution, the political system had been changed under the concept of 'Wilayat e Faqih' where grand cleric (wali Faiqih/Supreme Leader) would be the custodian of the system.

The new political system had been formulated on the basis of Islamic interpretation of ruling system that also impacted Iran's foreign policy and domestic policies as well. The new political democratic model rejected the western liberalist ideological and political thoughts. The new regime declared new vision of progress on the basis of self-dependent through unity and adopted progressive financial policies to uplift economic crisis and these were made separated from the US geopolitical interests. Conversely to the Sha era in which Iran had fallen under the complete dependency for geostrategic and domestic needs. These developments had also altered foreign policy towards the US and her allies Saudi Arabia, Israel and Pakistan as well.

Pak-Iran relationship could not remain cooperative due to Pakistan's strategic partnership with the US in Soviet-Afghan war as well as its closeness to Saudi Arabia. Iran looked Pak-US friendship annoyingly and suspiciously. Iran looked Pak-US cooperation as a strategy of encirclement that led to divergent approaches between Pakistan and Iran. Pakistan went into closeness with the US for strategic interests and her cordiality with KSA was based for containing or hurdling Iran's expansionism. These divergences fissured warmth relationship and created trust deficit. However, the president of Iran

⁴⁹ David E. Thaler et al, Mullahs, Guards, and Bonyads, 8-9.

Khamani paid official visit to Pakistan in 1986 for enhancing collaboration and diminishing the gaps through building trust but structural constraints became hurdle for further cooperation.

In 1980s, RCD was replaced to new organization named as Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). The new body was established to meet new challenges which arose after the downfall of Sha regime in 1979. Moreover, new regime of Iran was suspicious to RCD because it was created with the collaboration of the US and UK. During 1980s, both countries maintained highly economic relations. Pakistan's exports to Iran increased after the revolution. For instance during 1983 to 1984, exports reached highest level than any other state of Iran. It was the first time when Pakistan made highest trade revenue of 6 billion worth of Pakistani rupees among ECO member states.⁵⁰The change was the result of high demand of Iran's crippled economy.

The nascent revolutionary regime had to face mountainous challenges and hostilities internally and externally. The country had to face new challenges under the new Islamic Ideology with pro-Islamic and anti-West regional ambitions. As far Middle East, Iran was struggling against the changing status quo by opposing the legitimacy of the monarchies whereas Pakistan was supporting them by maintaining good relations. Iran's political pro-Islamic shift caused the divergent approach to deal geo-strategic regional environment. As a result, Pak-Iran relations could not develop, remain tense and move towards declination due to structural changes at regional and global level.

2.3 Iran-Iraq War and Soviet Intervention in Afghanistan

Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988) and Soviet intervention in Afghanistan (1979-1989) were the part of subsequent developments in the post-Islamic revolution era which heightened security concerns for the nascent regime of Iran. During Iran-Iraq war, Saddam's regime was supported by the US for the elimination of anti-west revolutionary regime on the agenda of installing pro-west regime. The Iran-Iraq war was a quite different is nature, period, and tactics. In eight years of the war, regional allies of the US forwarded for

⁵⁰ Iqbal, "Relations (1947-2007)," 59.

support Saddam's regime such as Gulf Arab States mainly Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. The war resulted intensive rift among the Mideast countries. The new revolutionary regime of Iran had to face horrible loss due to war with Iraq which did not only affect cripple's economy of Iran but also it left long lasted sociopolitical and security implications. The war was socio-economic setback and geo-strategic challenge for Iran. In this era, Pakistan was developing close relations with Arabs under the dictator of Zia ul Haq (1978-1988).

Pakistan's closeness to Arabs monarch's meant that Iraq's regime would be protected by Pakistan. Due to Ideological closeness with Saudi Arabia, Iran raised concerns with Pakistan over the moves of cordiality with rival. However, Pakistan remained natural in this situation and she extended support to Iran. Furthermore, she played mediation role during the war from very first day as well as president Zia paid a visit to Iran for the peaceful resolution of the conflict. In addition, Pakistan's foreign minister also met with Iranian officials for resolving the issue. Meanwhile, Pakistan continued diplomatic support to Iran at UN for cease fire as well as continued trade relations and commercial contacts with Iran. In 1986, President Khamini paid state visit to Pakistan that brought out new era of closeness between both states.⁵¹

On the other hand, the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 affected the regional security and sociopolitical environment which apprehended negative implications on the relations between Pakistan and Iran. As the consequences of Afghan-war, economic and security challenges had been faced by both states. The sociopolitical problem in terms of migrants' crisis emanated in terms of migration started at large scale. Further, both countries responded the challenges of Soviet-Afghan war in different ways. They played divergent role for respective geopolitical ends. The war or holy fight (Jihad) in Afghanistan, which was fought with the help of Pakistan, was against the ideological configurations of Iran. Further, Iran distanced itself through provided help of different group of Afghanistan. The situation became complex for Iran when Pakistan decided to

⁵¹ Tahir Tabassum, "Snooping into the Saga of Bilateral Ties - Iran and Pakistan in Historical and Future Perspective," *Journal of Politics and International Studies* 3 (2017): 69.

join US proxy war for ousting soviets from Afghanistan under the umbrella of Islamic Jihadi politics.

By proving support to the US, Pakistan ensured geo-strategic interests and received greater support from the US in terms of weapons, aid and technical support. In 1981, US gave \$3billion aid for three years and announced to provide forty F-16 aircrafts and authorized economic assistance of \$4billion for next five years for the purpose of support to Mujahedeen against Soviet Union.⁵² On the other hand, Iran was not confident with Pakistan's supported Mujahedeen, later known Taliban, because of their radical political aspirations as well as their concept of Islamic state. Such kinds of motives were against the Muslim shiest ideology of Iran. Thus, it was decided by Tehran regime to support Northern Alliance (NA) against Soviet forces. Such kinds of divergent approaches escalated tensions between Pakistan and Iran. On the Matters of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran both supported different militant groups for a common cause which generated conflictual posture after ending the Afghan freedom fight. Iran supported the Northern alliance, a pro-Shia and ethnic Hazara dominated group, which had divergent approach for the settlement of Afghanistan crisis conversely to Taliban which were supported by Pakistan along with US support.

Phase 3: Pakistan-Iran Frosty Relationship (1990-2001)

3.1 Afghanistan Crisis, Taliban's Factor and Jihadi Politics

Pakistan-Iran relationship was affected by long Afghan-Soviet war. In addition, the changing dynamics of international system, in terms of disintegration of USSR, had left implications for their relationship. During the decade of 1979-1989, the culture of Jihadism was promoted and Islamic thematic fight (Jihad) deteriorated the security situation across the region because of the infiltration of extremist elements throughout the region. The instability and chaos in Afghanistan, after Soviets' retreat, augmented geopolitical and security concerns for Pakistan. The ten-year war within Afghanistan (1979-1989) exaggerated more destruction and chaos whereby civil war started by

⁵² Shahnaz Akhtar, "Dynamics of USA-Pakistan Relations in the Post 9/11 Period: Hurdles and Future Prospects," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 2 (2012): 206.

domestic militant groups for achieving power in the matters of Afghanistan. The four decades of Afghanistan's war created misplacement of the people and people of Afghanistan migrates to neighboring countries Pakistan and Iran especially after Soviet-Afghan war 1979. However, Afghan refugees' population returned to their land but they are still largest among the refugee population estimated 2.5 million located in Pakistan.⁵³

The Afghan-war was fought against Soviet intervention by the local warriors under the theme of Jihad with the help of global partners. These warriors, named as Mujahedeen were trained by Pakistan in local madrassas. The groups were highly motivated by Salafist jihadi ideology which consists upon rigid explanation of Islamic political factions. All local warriors made Islamic Resistance (IR) that fought with Red Army of Soviet Union with having massive support by regional and international players. The economic aid was provided by Saudi Arabia and technical assistance also was given to mujahedeen by Central Intelligence Agency of America (CIA). Saudi Arabia transformed money to CIA and it was used to purchase arms for Afghan Mujahedeen.⁵⁴ Saudi Arabia General Intelligence Directorate (GID) and CIA worked with ISI for training Afghan mujahedeen and providing financial assistance.

After the victory of Islamic Resistance (IR), sociopolitical problems and power vacuum generated next civil war among the Islamic Resistance Forces for their geopolitical agendas. The phenomenon of Jihadi Politics generated more extremism, fundamentalism and terrorism. Consequently, it led towards chaos, destruction and civil war within local groups that reshaped the Afghanistan a pariah state and made it hub of terrorism. In addition, the situation became more complex after rising stakes of global players. Due to geographical importance, Afghanistan became the epicenter of power politics among regional and international players such as Pakistan, India, Iran and the US.⁵⁵ The post-Soviet withdrawal period paved civil war among warlords for gaining power and it ended when Mujahedeen took power and established Islamic State in 1992.

⁵³ Craig Loschmann, Katie Kuschminder and Melissa Siegel, *A Long Way to Go: Irregular Migration Patterns, Processes, Drivers and Decision-making* (Canberra, ANU Press, 2017), 81.

⁵⁴ Ali Imran and Dong Xiaochuan, "The Hidden Hands Soviet-Afghan War 1979-89, U.S Policy and External Actors," *American International Journal of Contemporary Research* 6 (2016): 152.

⁵⁵ Pavlo Ignatiev, "Afghanistan: Balancing between Pakistan and Iran," *Indian Journal of Asian Affairs* 27/28 (2015): 59.

The deteriorated situation affected security of Pakistan's security, deteriorated peace and generated sectarian violence. Pakistan's frontline role in the war by training local warlords through penetration of Islamic extremist ideology (Wahhabism) had proven catastrophic. Further, it heightened Islamic extremism in Afghanistan and militants developed linkages with central Asia Islamic militants groups including Islamic movement of Uzbekistan (Hizb-ut-Tehrir). In addition, extremist factions established the grounds in the tribal areas of Pakistan (FATA) and launched brutal attacks on the ethno-religious minorities of Pakistan. They manipulated the ethno-religious lines of Pakistan's society and claimed deadly attacks on other sects of Islam particularly Shias and other anti-jihadist factions. Thus it promoted Talibanism and the culture of Jihadi politics emerged that affected security situation within Pakistan. In addition, sectarian violence heightened Iran's concerns and affected relations with Pakistan.

3.2 Pakistan's Alignment to Saudi Arabia and Rise of Sectarianism

Pak-Iran relationship has passed through different levels of cooperation, competition and annoyance. During this Phase, element of sectarianism and Saudi's extra involvement in Pakistan affairs deteriorated the Pak-Iran relationship. Pakistan-Saudi Arabia relations are based upon cultural and religious linkages as well as their ties are dated backed from the beginning. During the Afghan war in 1979, Saudi factor became prominent in Pakistan's affairs and subsequently it influenced the domestic matters and foreign policy choices. In 1978, General Zia-ul-Haq visited Saudi Arabia and new era of relations started between both states.⁵⁶ The Saudi's extensive involvement and Pakistan-Saudi strategic relationship augmented sectarianism which divided society on the ethno religious lines.

Substantially, the Islam came in the subcontinent from the Sufi interpretation of Islam that is broader explanation and tolerance based Islamic ideology. The war in Afghanistan provided the leverage to Saudi Arabia for the penetration of Sunni Wahhabi ideology of Islam into society of Pakistan. The rigid explanation of Islam, Wahhabism, did not only

⁵⁶ Mujtaba Razvi, "Pak-Saudi Arabian Relations: An Example of Entente Cordiale," *Pakistan Horizon* 34 (1981): 89.

exaggerate sectarianism but also it affected the educational system and halted socio-political lines of the society. Wahhabism, a new brand of Islam was created as a counter balance to Shia threat and it was used against Shia minority in Pakistan.⁵⁷ During Soviet intervention, Saudi Arabia and the US used this brand of Islam for supporting Islamic extremism. As a result, the society of Pakistan was divided on ethno religious lines as well as it generated series of conflicts on sectarian bases. The use of petrol dollar by Saudi Arabia in 1970s, Iran-Saudi rivalry and Islamic revolution of Iran in 1979 were the underlying factors of promotion of sectarianism in Pakistan.

KSA provided great amount of aid to radical forces, Jihadists groups against Soviets by introducing Wahhabi brand of Islam. Moreover, the policy, under Zia regime, of unprecedented support to the US and KSA by the manipulation of Islam and Islamization policy within country escalated extremism. Actually, Zia introduced policy of Islamization as counterweight to Iran's expansionist policy of Revolution.⁵⁸ It halted security situation and escalated sectarian tensions in the society. In 1992, sectarian violence erupted in Afghanistan under Rabbani's presidency between Sunni ittehad e Islami (Islamic Union) and Shia groups. The Islamists (Mujahedeen and warlords of Afghanistan) were motivated by jihadist ideology manipulated ethnoreligious lines of divergent Muslims sects which augmented sectarian conflicts.

The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan ended with the signing of Geneva Accords under the guidelines of United Nations (UN) in February 1989 that ensured Soviet's withdrawal.⁵⁹ After this, Pakistan relations with Afghanistan could not remain cordial. After Soviet's withdrawal, it was local warlord's mujahedeen who struggled for gaining power by overthrowing the Najibullah regime (1989-1992). The unrest and instability led towards resignation of Dr. Najibullah which generated opportunity for Pakistan through using Mujahedeen for installing political set up under Peshawar Accord on 24 April 1992. But the rule of Islamic State in Afghanistan led by Mujahedeen proved catastrophic

⁵⁷ David Waterman, "Saudi Wahhabi Imperialism in Pakistan: History, Legacy, Contemporary," *Socialinių Mokslų Studijos Societal Studies* 6 (2014): 246.

⁵⁸ Sajid Aziz, "Iran-Pakistan Relations," *CISS Insight Quarterly Journal* 4 (2016): 28.

⁵⁹ Khalid Manzoor Butt and Azhar Javed Siddiqi, "Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations: An Analysis from 1978 to 2001," *Research Journal of South Asian Studies* 31 (2016): 730.

which generated chaos and ended on May 1996. The phenomena of Taliban emerged and they took power from 1996 to September 2001. Pakistan supported Taliban regime explicitly which affected Pak-Iran relationship. Furthermore, the divergent approaches in Afghanistan worsened bilateralism and widened gap.

Moreover, Afghan refugee's crisis became another security challenge for Pakistan which provided the nurseries for militant groups. The killing of Shias Muslims enhanced concerns for Iran. In 1990s, the assassination of Iran's council general Sadiq Genji occurred and issue of sectarianism got attention at international level.⁶⁰ In addition, sectarian violence had been increased during Taliban rule over Afghanistan and the incident of killing of Iran's diplomats at Mizar Sharif created complex situation.⁶¹ During this decade, relations remained constraint due to Taliban factor, sectarian conflicts, rise of anti-Shia terrorist organizations and the killing of Iran's Counsel General Sadiq Ganji in 1990 in Lahore. Divergent approaches in Afghanistan, sectarianism and emergence of Taliban government worsened bilateral relations of Pakistan and Iran.⁶²

The interplay of major powers during the Afghanistan war in 1980s and holy fight or Jihad with the help of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia affected the region socio-politically and geopolitically. Pakistan was more affected country of this war after Afghanistan. Pakistan's role in the war was the frontline state of the US. The manipulation of Islam for geo-political interests did not only halt the security situation but also it nurtured sectarian violence. After Soviet intervention, South Asia became center of power politics whereas US established strategic alliance with Pakistan against Soviet expansionism. It was decided to retaliate to Soviet forces through covert mission of Central Intelligence Agency of America (CIA) along with Pakistan Inter Service Intelligence (ISI) agency with the economic assistance of Saudi Arabia.

⁶⁰ Asma Khan Mahsood , "History of Sectarianism in Pakistan: Implications for Lasting Peace," *Journal of Political Sciences & Public Affairs* 5 (2017): 3.

⁶¹ *Afghanistan: The Massacre in Mizar-I Sharif* (Human rights watch, November 1998 Vol. 10, No. 7). <https://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports98/afghan/Afrep0r0.htm>.

⁶² Zahir Shah, et al, "Pak-Iran Relations: New Dynamics and Prospects," *Journal of Applied Environmental and Biological Sciences* 5 (2015): 69.

3.3 Divergent Regional Approaches

The convergence of Pakistan-Iran relations during Afghan war, though having some irritants, had been altered with the changing dynamics in the geostrategic environment in late 1980s. After the victory of Islamic Resistance Forces against Soviets, Iran and Pakistan played divergent role in the matters of Afghanistan for respective interests. After Soviet disintegration, the mutual interest of allied forces in Afghanistan had been shifted to the US geostrategic ends. The post-war challenges mainly consisted upon ensuring peace and stability in Afghanistan through installing regime.

During the war, Iran supported Shia resistance forces such as Harkat e Islamic (Islamic Movement), Pasiadaran e Jihad e Islamic (Guardians of the Islamic Jihad) and Sazman e Nasr (Victory Organization). At the end of the war, Iran was in favor of the government comprising multi ethnic Sunni and Shia forces. But the divergence occurred when Pakistan backed Pashtun dominated groups, seven Sunni mujahedeen primers, gained the power at domestic level. In response, Iran started to support non-Pashtun groups for its geopolitical end. Further, she raised concerns with Pakistan regarding Hazras deprivation from the Afghan's government even they were the part of freedom fight against communist aggression.

Moreover, Iran continued lobbying the groups in term of unifying all factions of Shia known as Hezb-e Wahdat (Islamic Unity Party), Dari speaking groups and Ismaili Muslims groups. As a result, Iran succeeded for giving powers to pro-Tehran factions after the end of first Afghan war.⁶³ The representation had been given to Hezb e Wahdat in the regime of Burhan Uddin Rabbani in July 1992. However divergence approaches remained evident between two states due to changing landscape of regional affairs as well as involvement of extra regional actors U.S and Saudi Arabia in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

After the role of pro-Iran factions in government, Tehran continued to support anti-Taliban forces. The anti-Taliban approach was made due to Iran's distinct ideological

⁶³ Bruce Koepke, "Iran's Policy on Afghanistan the Evolution of Strategic Pragmatism," *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute Sweden* (2013): 5.

requirement as well rising concerns for Saudi-Pakistan influence. The ideological jihadist interpretation of Taliban was a greater threat for Iran which was supported by anti-Iran forces. Meanwhile American oil companies proposed a gas pipeline project from Turkmenistan to Gwadar which did not limit Iran's geo-economic interests rather it would be setback for Tehran geopolitical interests. During the Taliban rule (1996-2001), there were emerged conflicts between Taliban and Iran. In 1998, a conflict arose on the water distribution at Helmand as well other boarder related issues. Their relations became worse on the issue of Mizar Sahrif when Taliban killed Iran's diplomates. In response, Iran moved the 250000 troops to Afghan's boarder for retaliation.⁶⁴

The installation of Taliban regime enhanced not only security concerns for Iran but it was propagated that this move of Washington along with her allies for weakening Iran. Substantially, Tehran failed to create counterbalance against Taliban regime whereby pro-Iran Factions scattered into different groups. As well as pro-Taliban groups remained involve in the killing of Shia Muslims which enhanced sectarianism. Such kind of divergent moves created frosty relationship between two neighbors.

The disintegration of USSR reshaped global politics into uni-polarity where the US emerged predominant force. Meanwhile, US dominance in Gulf region in the post-cold era raised security concerns for Iran as well as indirectly it affected Pak-Iran relationship. In addition, Pakistan-US alignment and her closeness with Saudi Arabia raised Tehran's apprehensions. After Soviet's retreat from Afghanistan, the power vacuum was filled by Taliban and Jihadist forces with the help of Pakistan. This development negated the Tehran's geopolitical interest. After cold war, new US gulf dominated scenario emerged and Pakistan and Iran came closer on security issues and cooperation emerged on sensitive issues such nuclear technology.⁶⁵ However, Iran continued cooperation with Pak's archrival India that affected Pakistan-Iran relations.

⁶⁴ Andreas Wilde, "Continuity and Hiatus: Structural Patterns of Iran's Policy in Afghanistan," *Internationals Asien Forum Studies* 40 (2009): 27.

⁶⁵ Shah Alam, "Iran-Pakistan Relations: Political and Strategic Dimensions," *Strategic Analysis* 28 (2004): 527.

Phase 4: Normalization in Pakistan-Iran Relations (2001-2013)

Pakistan-Iran relations developed in this phase due to emergence of cooperative environment in Afghanistan with the fall of Taliban regime as well as anti-Taliban approach was adopted by Pakistan which created closeness with Iran. Further, both developed socio-economic relations and signed agreement of Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline (IP). Both countries successfully developed economic interdependence in the wake of positive developments.

4.1 Downfall of Taliban Regime and Converging Interests

Pakistan-Iran relations are highly dependent on the regional developments especially related to Afghanistan's affairs. During Taliban rule in Afghanistan (1996-2001), Pak-Iran relations were highly tense due to divergent outlooks regarding Taliban rule in Afghanistan. In this era, the government of Taliban was established on basis of Sunni political Sufite school of thought on the idea of Islamic State (Islamic Khilafat) that raised concerns for other internal ethnic groups such as Hazara and pro-Iran factions such as Northern alliance. Further, Pakistan aligned with Taliban's regime that was geopolitical setback for Iran. As a result, the divergent policy caused conflictual interaction and coldness in their relationship that remained till the fall of Taliban's regime.

The event of 9/11 impacted Pak-Iran relations. In the wake of 9/11 attacks, the US invaded Afghanistan, eliminated Taliban regime and installed anti-Taliban or pro-US regime. Due to the US invasion of Afghanistan, cooperative landscape appeared with the fall of Taliban's regime. In addition, Pakistan also had been changed foreign policy with accordance to the developments in Afghanistan and adopted the approach of anti-Taliban. The shift in Afghan affairs generated advantages for Iran as it supported Tehran's endeavors for restoring powers against anti-Taliban forces. Now Afghanistan had become cooperative juncture, for both Pakistan and Iran, which was remained conflictual posture for two decades (1979-2000).

In 1999, the military coup by General Pervez Musharraf put forward new approach with neighboring Iran. Meanwhile, the visit of Iran's foreign minister Kamal Kharzai in December 2001 on the invitation of President Musharraf eliminated the deadlock in relations. According to Complex interdependence, *interdependence involves reciprocal effects among countries or other actors in different countries.*⁶⁶ Both countries faced mutual destruction due to having deadlock on the matter of Afghanistan. Similarly, both have realized full potential of cordial relationship after 9/11. Therefore, in the meeting with Pakistan's foreign minister Abdul sattar, both realized the importance of cordial relations for mutual and regional benefits. Similarly, it was stressed by the both foreign ministers for improving relations through weeping out bitter experiences on the matters of Afghanistan.⁶⁷

The downfall of Taliban regime reshaped environment into convergence of interests. Both remained important players in the installing new regime as well as in peace process. The elections in Afghanistan, after downfall of Taliban, were a positive gesture and both recognized new elected democratic regime. They cooperated over Afghanistan's affairs, looked democratic change positively and advocated support to nascent regime of Hamid Karzai. Similarly, Pakistan and Iran played supportive role at Bone agreement. Their relations, which were ended due to divergent interests in Afghanistan, had been reshaped into convergent interests.

Both countries moved toward the resolving of contested issues through creating forms for information sharing and enhancing communication mechanisms. Later on, visit of the Iran's primer to Pakistan in December 2002 as well as the visit of Pakistan's foreign minister Shoukat Aziz visit to Iran in 2005 showed enthusiasm in the relationship of both states. They were agreed to participate in the projects of infrastructure building in

⁶⁶ Jacksen and Soresen, *International Relations*, 144.

⁶⁷ "Pakistan and Iran hail new era," *BBC NEWS*, November 30, 2001, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/1682654.stm.

Afghanistan and both established joint Pakistan-Iran committee under the UN progress strategies and other international funding agencies.⁶⁸

Historically, Afghanistan remained close with Sunni extremist groups. For instance the extremist group Jundullah (Soldiers of Allah) operates in bordering province Baluchistan. The group launched offensive attacks on the Iran's bordering guards as well as they also involved in disturbing internal security of Iran. Moreover, Afghanistan's long porous border with Iran is transitional subway for the extremist groups and illicit activities. Thus, Iran decided to build 700km long and concrete wall with Pakistan border near to Afghanistan to stop all illicit activities and counter security concerns.⁶⁹ While the rise in sectarian violence in Afghanistan generated from 2007 to 2013, Pakistan did not only condemn such activities but also she has started operations clean up against all militant groups within the state. In addition, Pakistan's Army conducted operation Zarb-e-Azab in North Waziristan to cut down all facilitators of the groups in Afghanistan.

4.2 Improvement in Economic Cooperation

Pakistan and Iran developed trade and economic relations after changing regional posture in Afghanistan in terms of downfall of Taliban regime that generated convergent interests. In 2002, both proposed trade agreements and signed Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs). This was an overwhelming development after a long period. Prior to this, both were agreed on sharing information for security and defense needs, sharing intelligence information and agreed for the cooperation on political divergences.⁷⁰ Further, it was discussed the possibility of proposed Iran-Pakistan and India gas pipeline (IPI) project. On the other hand, Iran increased economic relations with India and signed "The New-Delhi declaration" in the visit of President Khatami on January 25, 2003. In meeting with his counterpart A.B. Vajpayee, both agreed to promote cordiality through improving economic and strategic ties. It was proposed to cooperation

⁶⁸ Najam Rafique, "Prospects of Pakistan-Iran Relations: Post Nuclear Deal," *Strategic Studies* 36 (2016): 8.

⁶⁹ Ron Synovitz, "New Walls Rise after Iron Curtain Falls," Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty, August 28, 2015. <https://www.rferl.org/a/new-walls-rise-in-europe-iron-curtain-/27214403.html>.

⁷⁰ Tabassum, "Future Perspective," 71.

in the field of defense and both showed the enthusiasm in energy sector. Indo-Iran cooperation in Afghanistan enhanced due to India's support to anti-Taliban factions and her closeness with Karzai government. The changing regional realities took closer both India and Iran.⁷¹ Iran's warmth juncture with Pakistan's arch-rival raised concerns for Islamabad and it created hurdle for the improvement in bilateral relationship.

In 2005, regime changed in Iran and came in power hardliners which was another challenge for Pakistan as well as it impacted bilateral relationship. The administration of new Iranian primer, Mahmood Ahmadinejad, adopted confrontationist assertive approach towards the US hegemony which affected Iran's accommodation assertions. Furthermore, the foreign policy was dominated by new confrontationist paradigm that led the country towards international isolationism in terms of imposition of international sanctions. The conservative features of Iran's foreign policy discourse negated the hegemonic aspirations of US along with the regional allies Saudi Arabia and Israel. In addition, Iran started work on nuclear program without considering international concerns. In this era, Iran focused on maintaining good relations with neighboring countries through constructive engagement with Muslim countries and anti-US Asian powers as well. Furthermore, the regional policies were primarily related to counterbalance of the US influence through supporting Hezbollah and Hamas. In addition, strategic alliance was made with Syria and established cordial relations with Iraq and Afghanistan. All these moves were carried out for negating U.S hegemonic aspirations and opposing Israel and Saudi Arabia regional engagement. The foreign policy established on the idea of "look to the East" where cooperation was made to regional organizations such as Shanghai Cooperation organization (SCO) for security needs and maintaining balance of power.⁷²

In 2005, both were agreed for boosting trade through reducing tariffs on 647 items as well as became partner of Preferential Trade agreement (PTA). The idea was floated for the creation of Trade zones in coming years. Similarly the economic enthusiasm took place with Tehran in 2009 on Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline (IP) project and signed the Gas

⁷¹ Alam, "Strategic Dimensions," 537.

⁷² Amir M. Haji-Yousefi, "Iran's Foreign Policy during Ahmadinejad: From Confrontation to Accommodation," *Turkish Journal of International Relations* 9 (2010): 14.

sale and purchase agreement (GSPA). The gas pipeline would cover 1900 kilometer distance and it started from South pars of gas field in Iran to Sindh, Pakistan province. Pakistan would utilize the gas to generate the 4000MW electricity which would uplift the energy shortage. In the first year of the agreement, Iran agreed to give 2500 million cubic of gas to Pakistan which would be increased in upcoming year to 700mcf as well would be doubled immediately in next year. Both agreed that the construction of the project would be completed in 2014. In addition, Pakistan's premier along with his counterpart inaugurated the project and started work inside Pakistan on 780 kilometer pipeline in March 2013.⁷³ The project could not be materialized due to sanctions on Iran, internal policy weakness, concerns over gas purchase and sale agreement as well as due to the influence of Saudi factor in Pakistan's affairs.

The Trade volume between two sates is at very low level and remained in favored to Iran during 2003-2004 fiscal year. In this year, Pakistan imports were \$265 million whereas exports were US\$92 million. Pakistan-Iran enhanced trade volume in next years and Pakistan was the fifth largest partner in 2009. Their economic relations affected with the rising controversy on Iran which ultimately caused the international economic sanctions which halted economic enthusiasm.⁷⁴ Pakistan always supported the Iran to use of nuclear technology for civilian purposes and opposed coercive measures of United Nation and Major Powers. The cordial but limited cooperation is the predominant theme which fractured their relationship.

Phase 5: Cooperation in Pakistan-Iran (2013-2018)

In this phase, Pakistan-Iran relations developed and cordiality and cooperation has been established with the result of initiating formal agreement of Iran-Pakistan gas pipe line (IP). In March 2013, both inaugurated the energy project of Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline (IP) with the worth of \$7.5billion despite of US pressure and warnings. The ceremony was arranged in Iran's city of Chahbahar where President Asif Zardari and Mahmood Ahmadinejad inaugurated it officially. It was said it as a big event which

⁷³ Aziz, "Iran-Pakistan Relations," 30.

⁷⁴ Centre for Pakistan and Gulf Studies, *Pakistan-Iran Relations: Prospects and Challenges* (Library of Congress, 2014), 10.

would restore trust and economic relationship between neighboring states. Moreover, the presidential elections in Iran led to new leadership under Hassan Rohani who was on the agenda of modernization and believed dialogue to western powers on controversial issues. In 2015, Iran's foreign minister Jawad Zarif along with high officials visited Pakistan for multilateral talks in the fields of security and economic.⁷⁵ The Nuclear deal with global powers ensured limited relaxation when Tehran forwarded immediately for bilateralism with Islamabad.

5.1 Withdrawal of the US Military Forces and Vacuum of Power

Pakistan and Iran have opportunities for the promotion of cordial relations after the drawdown of US military forces. The GWOT started in Afghanistan in October 2001 by US-led coalition for installing democratic regime through the elimination Taliban's regime. After more than a decade, the debate was started in US media withdrawal of the US troops from Afghanistan as well as the issue was highlighted in academia and other forums. On January 2013, the US president Barack Obama elucidated the withdrawal strategy mechanism. He added that it would be operationalize after achieving geostrategic objective of GWOT. The withdrawal of US troops started in 2011 when 650 troops left Afghanistan.⁷⁶ In 18 April 2012, U.S and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) gave detail of drawdown and stated that US drawdown would be in three pledges. It was included in training of Afghan's military forces, keeping some international troops beyond 2014 as well as providing economic aid on yearly basis to the government. The strategy consists upon the total withdrawal of US forces by the end of 2014 except remaining limited personals for training and small contingent. The withdrawal started after signing of the US bi-lateral security agreement (BSA) with Afghanistan that will be effective after 2014 as part of training, advising and assisting to Afghan forces.⁷⁷ The

⁷⁵ Arif Rafiq, "Iran and Pakistan: Back to Business" *The Diplomat*, August 19, 2015, <https://thediplomat.com/2015/08/iran-and-pakistan-back-to-business/>.

⁷⁶ Elisabeth Bumiller, "U.S. and NATO Finalize Pacts on Ending Afghan War," *The New York Times*, April 18, 2012. <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/19/world/asia/united-states-and-nato-allies-near-deal-on-afghan-aid.html>.

⁷⁷ Ejaz Hussain, "Afghanistan: The Western Withdrawal and its Implications for Security and Economy," *Heidel Berg Papers in South Asian and comparative politics* 76 (2015): 3.

agreement explains the US role for maintaining peace and discusses the role for training to Afghanistan's military personals.

The disappearance of the US from the Afghanistan will create power vacuum which will prospectively fill by emerging powers China and Russia. Historically, Afghanistan is landlocked and geopolitical important state that holds history of violence and has remained the hub of the proxies of international player. The US drawdown strategy has geopolitical and security implications for Afghanistan and regional countries as well. The US new strategy consists on upon holding the control over Afghanistan without physical presence and maintaining the influence through India. She has developed strategic partnership with U.S for gaining geopolitical interest on the agenda hegemonic aspirations and containing China's rise particularly in Afghanistan. As far the consequence of US drawdown, there exists possibility of Taliban rise that will lead towards instability, chaos violence in Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, possibility of Pak-Iran cooperation also exists in the matters of Afghanistan through using respective leverage for resorting peace and stability. The drawdown of US forces favors peace and stability in terms of removing the concept of occupation by invaders. Moreover, Taliban will become part of political processes that will diminish grievances of locals after the power sharing among all local stake holders.

5.2 China's Emerging Role

Pakistan and China have cordial relations from the inception as well as having strategic and economic agreements. China proved all-weather friend and always helped to Pakistan in difficult times and it resulted mountainous relationship such as provided strategic, economic support and help the nuclear program and support Pakistan at international level.⁷⁸ China-Pakistan rising economic ties have geostrategic implications for regional countries and Pak-Iran relationship as well. China is investing 46\$ billion for the construction of Gwadar port, covering 70 kilometer coastal line with India ocean. The project is economic based mutual initiative of both Pakistan and China which has geo-

⁷⁸ Asma Rashid, "Pak-China Partnership: Us and India's Response," *Margalla Papers* 21 (2017): 247.

economic implication for neighboring Iran. The project consists upon the idea of connecting different region with China through establishing road and railways linkages. It provides connectivity to Iran, Central Asian states (CARs) and gives access to Africa and Europe as well. Iran is having advantages of joining the project by maintaining economic ties with Pakistan. Meanwhile, she has showed positive ambitions as well as Iran's ambassador to China also showed positive aspirations and expressed his willingness in connecting gas pipeline to china.⁷⁹

China has policy of soft power and it has become an important feature of her foreign policy.⁸⁰ She is on the policy of economic interdependence and using softer powers for maintaining ties with Iran. By developing good relations with Iran, China achieves geopolitical and strategic regional interests in terms of providing counterweight to US policies vis-à-vis Middle East. Similarly, Iran maintains geo-economic and strategic relationship with for economic advancement as well as for protecting geopolitical interests. Due to having geostrategic importance, Middle East is always remains the center of power politics by major power particularly after 9/11. Iran's distinct geography and natural resources as well as having antagonistic relationship with the US make it geopolitical important actor for China for gaining geopolitical interests.

Pak-China economic cordiality as well China-Iran good relations put forward Pakistan and Iran for positive gestures. Pak-Iran and Iran-China relationship creates mutual tri-juncture landscape among Pakistan, Iran and China. It makes possibility for countering the US hegemonic aspirations. Moreover, China and Iran have cordial relations and their cordiality is result of existing common socio-cultural linkages, having distinct civilizations and shared social behavior in two areas. Both are common in two things

⁷⁹ Najam Rafique, "Prospects of Pakistan-Iran Relations: Post Nuclear Deal," *Strategic Studies* 36 (2016): 3.

⁸⁰ Osamu Sayama, *China's Approach to Soft Power, Seeking a Balance between Nationalism, Legitimacy and International Influence*, (Westminster, Royal United Services Institute for Defense and Security Studies, 2016), 2.

such as having the sense of pride on their distinct socio-cultural civilization and both are facing geo-political constrains from the US hegemonic aspiration.⁸¹

Further, Pakistan is also facing security concerns from India and considers it as existential threat. Pakistan maintains cordiality with China to counter threat from Indian's aggression as well as her relationship with China is counterbalance of Indo-US strategic nexus. China's activism with Iran provides better opportunity for restoring warmth relationship between Pakistan and Iran. Moreover, both have distant relationship based on shared history and culture.

China-Iran maintained the cordiality after the Islamic revolution, in 1979, that put forward both states more closeness due to having common rhetoric of anti-Americanism. Both states have faced bitter experience from western world as well as remained victim of U.S hegemonic aspiration which halted socio-political conditions. Both countries have strategic relationship. China supports Iran for peaceful nuclear energy program as well as has deep partnership over last three decades. Iran is important for China due to having abundant energy resources. Similarly, China is the important for Iran because she ensures Iran's internationalism and helps geopolitically.⁸² In addition, the factor of proudness on their civilization is also common behavior between two states. Further, they have established socio-economic and strategic linkages. Pak-China cordiality and its enthusiasm with Iran shape triangular cooperative relationship that will ensure prosperity across the region.

5.3 Joint Comprehension Plan of Action (JCPOA) and its impacts on Pakistan-Iran Relations

In 2015, Pakistan welcomed the nuclear deal of permanent members of UN Security Council and Germany (referred as P5+1) and the European Union with Iran that is known as JCPOA. It was the greatest example of effective diplomacy that resolved the nuclear

⁸¹ Muhammad Salman Khan, "Pakistan-Iran-China Triangle: A Game Changer in the Region?," *The Dialogue* 9 (2014): 115.

⁸² Scott Harold and Alireza Nader, *China and Iran: Economic, Political, and Military Relations*, (California, RAND Corporation, 2012), 1.

controversy between world powers and Iran. It ensured relaxation in economic sanctions and increased opportunities for Iran to liberalize its economy. Therefore, lifting of sanctions allowed Islamabad-Tehran to expand their relations in political and economic domains. Consequently, both came closer on two major energy projects: a natural gas pipeline and an electricity transmission line. In August 2015, the Iranian Foreign Minister, Javad Zarif visited Pakistan and met with Sartaj Aziz, Advisor to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs for exploring opportunities in economic and security sectors. Both agreed for regional for economic integration and connectivity between Pakistan and Iran in order to promote connectivity within the whole region.⁸³ In February 2016, it was decided by Pakistan to revive commercial and economic agreements with Iran including trade, finance, energy, investment and banking.⁸⁴

But after the US unilateral withdrawal from the JCPOA changed the opportunities for cooperation between both states. US imposed more economic sanctions on Iran that would restrict any cooperation with Iran. The unilateral sanctions on Iran by president Trump were secondary sanctions on third countries which raised serious concerns for Pakistan. Similarly, the trade between both states will reduce after US unilateral withdrawal. In 2017, Pakistan's exports to Iran were amounted \$26.5million such as rice, paper and made-up textiles while imports were worth of \$327 million such as petroleum products, fruits and nuts.⁸⁵ The economic and trade could not be flourished until for the diminishing of international sanctions. Moreover, failure of JAPOA has negative consequences for energy project of Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline (IP).

⁸³ "Iran wants expanded relations with Pakistan: Zarif," *Dawn*, August 14, 2015, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1200373>.

⁸⁴ "Pakistan lifts sanctions against Iran," *Dawn*, February 19, 2016, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1240603>.

⁸⁵ Kaleeq Kiani, "Govt Assessing Future Impact of renewed Sanctions on Iran," *Dawn*, August 16, 2018.

CHAPTER 2

CHALLENGES FOR PAKISTAN-IRAN RELATIONS

Pakistan and Iran have diverse challenges in terms of security, economic and socio-political challenges. According to the assumption of complex interdependence “there is no hierarchy among the issues. The dividing line between domestic and foreign policy becomes blurred and there is no clear agenda in interstate relations. The foreign affairs agendas have become more and more diverse now. As opposed to the realists’ assumption where security is always the most important issue between the states, in complex interdependence, any issue-area might be at the top of the international agenda at any particular time.”⁸⁶Therefore, these are different factors that affect their relationship. The changing dynamics at regional and international level influence Pakistan-Iran relationship. The developments in the affairs of regional and international politics shape directions for possible cooperation or competition.

Iran’s distinguish foreign policy discourse limits its role internationally especially with the US. While Pakistan’s pro-western outlook enables its cooperation with the US and limits cooperation with anti-Americanist Iran. Meanwhile, terrorism and domestic instability in Pakistan influences Pak-Iran bilateralism for further improvement. Since 9/11, Pakistan and Iran have been faced ups and down in their relations in line with changing dynamics of regional and international environment. In the wake of 9/11 developments, structural constraints affected Pak-Iran relationships. These are the inclusion of rise of terrorism, Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), US invasion of Afghanistan, Indo-US strategic relationship, Pakistan’s new approach in Afghanistan, Iran’s revisited foreign policy in Afghanistan after the fall of Taliban regime. All these structural constraints are discussed.

⁸⁶ Waheeda Rana, “Theory of Complex Interdependence: A Comparative Analysis of Realist and Neoliberal Thoughts,” *International Journal of Business and Social Science* 6 (2015): 292.

2.1 Pakistan-Iran Relations in the Context of Post-9/11 Terrorism

The turbulent attacks of 9/11 changed the dynamics of international system. These exaggerated security concerns as well as affected the international security. Non-State Actors (NSA) and terrorist groups emerged that challenged international peace and security. After 9/11, the phenomenon of terrorism and militancy increased in Afghanistan as well as it affected regional security environment. Moreover, US-led war on terrorism augmented socio-economic tensions, nurtured instability and chaos in war-torn Afghanistan. After 9/11, regional developments augmented terrorism and socio-economic tensions that affected Pakistan-Iran bilateralism such as Global war on Terror (GWOT), US Invasion of Afghanistan and Iran-Pakistan divergent outlooks. All these factors deteriorated regional security and adversely affected Pakistan's relations with Iran.

2.1.1 Pakistan's Support to Global War on Terror (GWOT)

In the aftermath of September 2001 attacks, US president George W. Bush declared war against terrorism and decided to invade Afghanistan for the dismantling of Al-Qaida along with its leadership which was accused of turbulent events of 9/11. The event of 9/11 transformed the US polices to "neo-imperialist" power.⁸⁷ The policy shift of US after 9/11 proved US responded over these attacks offensively and showed global hegemony. The US president announced preemptive strikes in in his famous speech after 9/11. He proclaimed that preemptions would not be against only the terrorists who involved in 9/11 attacks but for those who harbored them. U.S would not do respect to any border and soil for the elimination of terrorism and would launch preemptive strikes on suspect location.⁸⁸ The 9/11 events did not change only the global politics rather then it impacted the Pak-USA relationship and Pak-Iran relationship as well. Pakistan's geographical proximity with Afghanistan, distinct geography and socio-economic compulsions led it towards joining Global War on Terror (GWOT) as well as the alignment with US favored geo-economic interests of Pakistan.

⁸⁷ Krahmann, Elke "The end of the 'new world order'?: Security governance and US imperialism after 9/11," *TranState working papers* 36 (2006): 4. <http://hdl.handle.net/10419/24949>.

⁸⁸ David E. Sanger, "Bush's Doctrine for War," *The New York Times*, March 18, 2003, <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/18/international/middleeast/bushs-doctrine-for-war.html>.

It was the first time after the collapse of Soviet Union (USSR), when the US emerged as so powerful state and led the world over GWOT. The GWOT altered the socio-political landscape of South Asia as well as affected foreign policy choices of Pakistan particularly related to Afghanistan. The 9/11 attacks were different in nature, strategy, goals and in the subsequent international implications. The post-9/11 developments revisited the definition of terrorism in the strategy of GWOT. Terrorism was defined as not only limited to those who involved in terrorist activities rather for those who harbor terrorists. The invasion of Afghanistan took place for the harboring Al-Qaida's leadership. It was named Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF).

Pakistan responded quickly on US declaration of Global War against Terrorism and became partner of the war with US-led coalition. Furthermore, Pakistan decided to provide full support to international community to crush terrorism. The decision took place on the basis upon geopolitical configuration and for economic wellbeing as well. As far Rational Choice Theory (RCT), it was constructive decision for both Pakistan and the US to reestablish strategic relationship. As far Pakistan, it was beneficial for crippling economy and diminished the international isolation. Meanwhile, India propagated against Pakistan as terrorist friendly state and portrayed herself regional hegemon for altering the position of Pakistan in the GWOT.

Historically, Pak-U.S friendship started from the inception and converted into strategic partnership during the highly tension periods of Cold War. Pak-US Strategic convergence was basis upon countering influences of USSR. The bilateralism was carried out that ensured security base interests which were time tested ends. The security related interest provided short-term and limited cooperation between Pakistan and the US. When security concerns diluted their relations became worse. For instance, Pakistan decided to extent full support against Soviet's intervention as well as it reached neck to neck cooperation in Pakistan and US. As a result, Pakistan received generous financial and strategic support. Pakistan's warmly cooperation made it frontline partner of the US. Their strategic calculus diverted into contentious relations with collapse of Soviet Union in 1989s.

After the defeat of soviet forces from Afghanistan in 1989, US achieved major objective and emerged as sole power at international power. During the Afghan war, US gave

relaxation to Pakistan on the issue of transfer of weapon destruction from South Asia to other regions. Pakistan's cooperation was not required for the US. Consequently, US president George W. Bush did not certify the Pakistan's possession of nuclear weapons. In September 1990, the US cut of economic and military aid.⁸⁹ The US imposed sanctions for accusing the violations of nuclear activities and having nuclear devices through passing Pressler amendments. On May 1998, more sanctions were imposed in the aftermath of nuclear tests through Glenn and Symington amendments. This resulted declination in Pak-US relationship and ended US economic and military support. Further, more sanctions were imposed on October 1999 for toppling the democratic regime by military dictator General Pervaiz Musharraf. Pakistan remained strategic partner with the US but it is also most sanctioned state in the world.⁹⁰

The turbulent events of 9/11 changed regional scenario of South Asia as well as impacted Pak-US relationship positively. US decided to choose support from Pakistan for curbing Taliban's footprints in Afghanistan. The structural demands of region led towards Pak-US closeness after having frosty relations. US needed support from Pakistan due to her geographical closeness with Afghanistan. The US president James Earl Carter made a call to Zia ul Haq for the support against Soviets, offered economic and military aid with the worth of millions of dollars and asked support of Afghan freedom fighters.⁹¹ Prior to this, Pakistan had acquired great influence in Afghanistan during Taliban's rule as well as remained major supporter of Taliban forces in Soviet-Afghan War. Consequently, Pakistan's advantageous location in South Asia became it important for US after 9/11 and eventually Pak-US strategic cooperation established regardless of having trust-deficit.

In post-9/11 developments, Afghanistan's posture became contested in some dimensions between Pakistan and Iran. The new developments occurred in Afghanistan in terms of presence of the US Military Forces, Rise of pro-west and anti-Taliban regime as well as Pakistan's alignment with U.S which nurtured Pakistan's role suspiciously in Iran's

⁸⁹ Munawar Hussain, "Pak-US Relations: A Historical Overview," *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture* 37 (2016): 75.

⁹⁰ Ibid: 62.

⁹¹ Ali Imran and Dong Xiaochuan, "The Hidden Hands Soviet-Afghan War 1979-89, U.S Policy, and External Actors," *American International Journal of Contemporary Research* 6 (2016):144.

concerns. On the other hand, Iran adopted policy of engagement with new regime after 9/11 as well playing strategic role in Afghan's affairs. Meanwhile, India enhanced influence in Afghanistan by using soft power strategies with new regime. The nascent Afghan regime after Taliban rule was only comfortable with Indians rather it supported them in the geopolitical affairs. These developments affected Pak-Iran bilateralism on the matters of Afghanistan in general and specifically Pak-Iran cooperation.

Afghan-India enthusiasm affects Pakistan-Afghan relations as well as damages Pakistan's constructive role in Afghan's affairs. Indo-Pak rivalry has been seen visibly on the matters of Afghanistan as well as they marginalize each other's interests. Indo-Iran nexus on the matters of Afghanistan is another challenge for Pakistan which would be distancing it from its neighbor Iran. India and Iran has initiated generous socio-economic projects through investing in different fields. Pakistan has limited options for cooperation with Iran due to Indian factor, rise of Indo-Iran nexus and Pak-US cooperation that makes Tehran suspicions.

2.1.2 Iran's Policy on Afghanistan and GWOT

Iran's response on GWOT depends on its geostrategic interests in Afghanistan, her perceptions regarding GWOT and geopolitical interests. Iran's stance is based upon anti-US narrative that challenges US supremacy in global affairs. The ideological polity of Iran and its enmity with US is important for understanding Iran's role in War on Terror. Historically, hostile relations between Iran and US started since the Islamic revolution in 1979. Iran condemns the US policies internationally. After launching GWOT, Iran showed concerns and proclaimed it as a new Grand Strategy by US for restoring regional and global hegemony. Further, GWOT has serious implications and serious challenges for the foreign policy of Iran.

After 9/11 attacks, she condemned and announced support against militancy and terrorism along with international community. Moreover, she proclaimed assistance for US-led invasion in Afghanistan against Taliban. Iran's pro-US narrative took closer to her with US in initial phases of GWOT. The common objectives emerged such as elimination of Taliban's regime was, border management issues, controlling drug and

narcotics smuggling and formation of political government in Kabul. Thus limited cooperation established over governance related issues. In the initial phase of the US invasion of Afghanistan, Iran welcomed war on terror and provided support against terrorist groups operating in Afghanistan.

Furthermore, Iran also participated in US-led multilateral meeting regarding peace and stability through installing legitimate government. Thus Tehran was the part of meetings in Istanbul (November 2011) and Bonn (December 2011) for the future of Afghanistan.⁹² In beginning, Iran was ready to provide full extent support to US for the elimination of AQ factions. But Washington rejected Tehran's cooperation by declaring it as "axis of evil".

On the other hand, US presence in Afghanistan was an existential threat for Iran's integrity and security especially for nuclear facilities which were close to Afghanistan's territory. Consequently it was existential threat for Iran and affected foreign policy options. Meanwhile, Iran also refrained herself for bilateral engagement with US. Further, she also opposed US military presence in Afghanistan. The deployment of US military forces, particularly closer to Iran's strategic assets such as its nuclear facilities, was the existential security threat for Iran. Iran did not consider war on terror positively rather proclaimed it war for maintain global hegemony.

Similarly, Iran considered US invasion of Afghanistan as countering Iran's influence and its encirclement. For instance, the US predator drone crashed in December 2011 which entered Iranian air space from Afghanistan. Tehran claimed that the move was taken by the US to sabotage the nuclear program. In 2005, US signed strategic agreement with Afghanistan government that deteriorated Iran-Afghanistan cooperation and Iran-US engagement.

Iran succeeded to establish good relations with new Afghan-government led by Karzai and supported by providing economic assistance for the infrastructure development. She also remained an important player in the installment of government process in

⁹² Monish Gulati, "US-Iran Relations and Peace in Afghanistan," *scholar warrior* autumn (2013): 78.

Afghanistan after toppling Taliban regime. Dari is the one of the two official languages of Afghanistan that is close to Persian and 50 percent uses to speak this language. The people of both countries are able to easily communicate each other. Along with, there is exist 20 present portion of the Afghanistan's poplation belong to Shia sect. These are manily Hazars and other is Qizilbash, Farsiwan, and Sayyeds.⁹³ The developments in the field of politics and economics were in the interests of Iran and Pakistan. Iran maintained its influence in the political affairs of Afghanistan by supporting Hazara population, constructing western parts of Afghanistan and supported Northern alliance or Northern Front (an Afghan opposition movement composed of militias centered on Tajik, Uzbek, and Hazara strongmen from northern Afghanistan). The response of Karzai government even under US influence sustained the cordial relationship with Tehran.

The legacy of Khatami is considered an important era of Iranian behavior towards western powers. In this era, Iran came up from International isolation and started to improve dialogue with US and western states. Khatami was believed on the idea of dialogue among different civilizations and rejected the phenomena of clash of civilizations which was portrayed by American political scientist Samuel P. Huntington. In that era, Iran developed cordial relations with neighboring states particularly with Pakistan and other Muslim states as well as developed relations with western powers.

The Iranian foreign policy discourse has been changed after coming conservative and hardliner president Mahmood Ahmadinejad (August 2005 to 2013). He attempted hostile stance towards US policies in the region and initiated the work on nuclear facilities without considering international pressure and nuclear related resolutions of United Nation (UN). The relations with western powers and US remained hostile highly tense. Consequently, Iran had to face international isolation in terms of international sanctions was imposed by United Nations and US. She afflicted into international isolationism and the sanctions halted the socio-economic situation of the country. Iran's economy became weak due to international sanctions. However, the new leadership came in power with having moderate narrative and believing on dialogue with western powers for resorting

⁹³ Alireza Nader, et al, *Iran's Influence in Afghanistan: Implications for the U.S. Drawdown*, (California, RAND Corporation, 2014), 6.

economic stability. The changing narrative of Iranian leadership impacted its foreign approach towards Afghanistan.

Iranian government relationship with Kabul is highly dependent on sort of different challenges such as management of water disputes, narcotic challenges, refugees management crisis and the US role in the domestic affairs of Afghanistan. The US geopolitical interests in the region countering Iranian influence by installing pro west regime in Kabul. However Iran maintains strong influence in Afghanistan by using cultural, political and economic means. Due to shared culture, language and history with Afghanistan, Iran having advantageous position by neglecting the military presence of US particular after drawdown of US military forces from Afghanistan.

2.1.3 US Invasion of Afghanistan

The invasion of Afghanistan led towards socio-economic and security implications for both Pakistan and Iran and both were affected with the altered regional and international environment. Due to hegemonic objectives of US after 9/11, Pakistan and Iran faced disastrous challenges.⁹⁴ US invaded Afghanistan after September 11 attacks to dismantle the Taliban regime and Al-Qaida with its leadership that was grounded there. The operation “Enduring Freedom” (OEF) is fought with the help of close ally UK. America announced global war on terror (GWOT) and it started from invasion of Afghanistan. The GWOT started against the accused of 9/11 events but neglected the causes of emergence extremism and fundamentalism.

The US decision of invasion over Afghanistan was carried upon rapidly, over ambitious and miscalculated. After 9/11 attacks, US President Bush called to international community to get support against terrorism and extremist. The International community responded positively. In August 2003, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) joined GWOT as well as formulated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Pakistan condemned 9/11 attacks and declared every kind of support including logistic and areal. Similarly, Iran also announced help against curbing extremism and terrorism.

⁹⁴ Manzoor Ahmad, et al, “The US Factor in Pakistan-Iran Relations: New Dimensions,” *Journal of Political Studies* 24 (2017): 295.

Due to front-line role, Pakistan lost her former allies in Afghanistan in terms of disqualifying Taliban regime. She lost strategic leverage over Afghanistan which was achieved during Afghan War in 1979s and during Taliban rule. Pakistan affected badly from US invasion of Afghanistan socio-economically and politically. Pakistan had to face huge influx of unchecked refugees which was not only burden on economy but created socio-political problems in Pakistan.

The refugees' camps were used for the creation militant groups, smuggling weapons, drugs and narcotics. With the result of US retaliation over Taliban, militant groups and terrorists organizations such as Al Qaida (AQ) moved to tribal areas of Pakistan (FATA) and Khaibar Pakhtun Khah (KPK) after dismantling their heavens in Afghanistan.⁹⁵ These militant groups launch offensive attacks within different cities of Pakistan and became the greater security threat for Pakistan. The security situation of Pakistan heavily disturbed in terms of numbers of casualties of civilians and enforcing agencies personals has been killed in the brutal in offensive attacks launched by Al Qaida (AQ) affiliated groups Tehrik e Taliban and Sipah e Sahaba etc.

Nevertheless the Afghans refugee's camps provided nurseries for militants groups those involved in terrorists attacks. Pakistan has faced great loss being ally of war on terror with US in terms of socio-economic loss as well as number of casualties in different attacks. After US decision to invade Afghan, the government of Pakistan took decision quickly to join the war and became front-line ally with US. The decision was taken without negotiating other political parties as well as without considering concerns of neighboring countries. Consequently, Pakistan had to suffer overwhelming implications of US war in Afghanistan; such as socio-economic implications with the result of deteriorated security and the phenomena of terrorism, extremism and insurgency is exaggerated with the passage of time. The GWOT left many political, cultural,

⁹⁵ Global security.org, "FATA - Recent Developments," Accessed on 28 March 2019, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/pakistan/fata-recent.htm>.

psychological and economic implications for Pakistan which was the result of remaining front-line state in the war.⁹⁶

As far Iran's concerns over US invasion of Afghanistan, the implications for Iran were mostly different to Pakistan due to her geostrategic interests, nature of her relationship with Afghanistan as well as the enmity with US. She also faced socio-economic problems in terms of huge refugees migration to Iran.

After the installment of pro-US regime, Iran supported not only to Shia groups such as Hazera but also provided aid to different militant groups including Taliban to counter US influence. Iran also provided help to US in Afghanistan but on other hand supported militant group against them. Moreover, Iran remained an important factor in the affairs of Afghanistan and apparently having cooperation with US on different Issues instead of enmity on global level. As well as US did not ignore the role of Iran in Afghanistan and later remained partner in peace making process. In 2003, Iran made a formal offer to US for negotiating on diverse issues related to peace process in Afghanistan but it was rejected by George W. Bush administration.

However, Tehran and Washington are having probably common objectives in Afghanistan such as stability, peace and elimination of Taliban and Al-Qaida. Because poor conditions at the domestic level in Afghanistan culminate Taliban and militant groups that are common threat for their geopolitical ends. As far as Tehran concerns, she is facing great problems from Taliban which are involved in narcotics smuggling that return great amount to them. As well as Washington considers Taliban a security threat for international peace. Therefore cooperation between Tehran and Washington is eye to eye. Iran along with India are providing great amount of aid to Afghan government to develop infrastructure, constructing roads, railways and bridges that connect South Asia to Central Asian Republics States. Both are working on the agenda of developing a famous project known New Silk Road which connects two important regions of Asia.

⁹⁶ Tariq Khan, "The Social, Political and Economic Effects of the War on Terror: Pakistan 2009 to 2011," *ISSRA Papers* 65 (2013): 71.

Tehran and Taliban also have coordination on different levels such as political process and crisis management. The representatives of Taliban have also visited Iran being a part of Iran-led peacemaking process. Iranian government supports different ethnic and militant groups to maintain its influence such as ethnic Tajiks and Hazara groups and other militant groups. After post-2014, the gradual drawdown of US armed forces from Afghanistan provides opportunity for Iran to exert its influence with the help of Indian factor. Both Iran and India are working together on different levels to address their mutual interests such as access to energy rich central Asian states, developing the infrastructure of Afghanistan for connecting it to the whole region.

2.2 Challenges for Pakistan-Iran Relations: Three levels of Analysis

Three levels of analysis provides outlook for understanding the challenges at International, Regional and State level. After 9/11, Pak-Iran relationship has faced tumultuous Challenges on three levels which are underlying factors for limited cooperation.

2.2.1 International level

The structural constraints of international level limit Pak-Iran bilateralism and hurdle for improving multi-dimensional cooperation. These are including US global hegemonic policies, rising of China and Saudi's factor that influences the regional politics. All these are considered interviewing factors for Pak-Iran bilateralism.

2.2.1.1 US Supremacy in Global Affairs

The analysis of international level provides an overlook of Pakistan-Iran relations in the changing dynamics of international system particularly after 9/11 attacks. The international realities of new world order consist upon the hegemonic ambitions of US and favor her predominance. The event of 9/11 is considered an important period as it transformed the US foreign policy into new guidelines for the next century to meet new challenges. The turbulent attacks of 9/11 on the twin towers, which are having symbolic

greatness of military and economic for US, changed the regional security situation drastically. The period of post-9/11 emerged as new period of US dominance in world affairs and for South Asia as well.

After cold-war, US emerged predominant actor on world affairs and US capitalism proved itself unchallengeable system. There would be no competitor of western capitalism as said by Francis Fukuyama. The international system waded into new century with turbulent attack on US soil in September 11, 2001 which envisaged new world order on the basis of US offensive hegemonic paradigm. Now, the challenge came from Islamic fundamentalism. The 9/11 event had greater significance when threat emerged from radical Islam, terrorist groups, non-state actors and there would be challenge of Islamic revivalism.

The US war on terror consisted upon period of struggle against invisible enemy. The post 9/11 developments were based upon the policy guidelines of President George H. Bush address to the joint session of US congress on September 20, 2001. He stated the US would respond offensively against the enemy. Moreover, He proclaimed that the US retaliation would not be based only operations against the persons who involved in 9/11 attacks rather than it would be a military campaign throughout the world against harboring states of terrorism. There would be preemptive strikes against terrorists groups where they located regardless of any region, state and boundary. It was the first time in the history when the US intervened directly in different countries on the base of policy of unilateralism. The policy of unilateralism affected the international security and challenged sovereignty of weak states. The unresolved issues of cold-war period and Kashmir and Palestine Issues are underlying reasons of happening 9/11 attacks.⁹⁷ 9/11 brought out new types of conflicts, violence, sectarianism and terrorism. Thus, the period of post-9/11 took structural changes at international level as well as it affected international peace.

It was part of Bush doctrine to invade Iraq that exacerbated chaos and abortiveness across the Middle East. The military interventions on the basis of unilateralism were not only

⁹⁷ Moonis Ahmar, "9/11 and the Changing Paradigm of Conflict Resolution," *IPRI Journal* 111 (2003): 3.

part of new world order rather than these proved US predominant and unchallengeable power at international power. The new millennium started with new world order showed new era of US imperialism. The GWOT affected Pak-Iran relationship. Pakistan revisited the discourse of foreign policy accordance to new challenges in terms of rise non-state actors as well as established strategic alignment with US.

The new world order (Bush doctrine) did not only affect the regional affairs of South Asia rather than it aggravated the bilateral relations of regional states and Pak-Iran relations as well. Bush doctrine allowed the US for massive involvement in the geopolitical affairs of Middle East.⁹⁸ The idea of greater Israel was also put forwarded that consisted upon enlargement role of Israel in the affairs of the region. In 2003, invasion on Iraq was the part of Bush doctrine. The new regional strategy was established for restoring US geopolitical interests that are oil and protecting Israel. The concept of Greater Israel is supported by US administration under different president of US particularity during the presidency of Donald Trump who decided to shift Israel's capital to Jerusalem.⁹⁹

The rising security concerns in Iran's neighborhood and Pakistan's strategic cooperation with US-led invasion is another challenge for anti-US Iran. Iran under the president of Ahmadinejad, who was highly conservative, rejected the US supremacy and her endeavors for maintaining peace internationally as well. Further, he portrayed the US as a great devil.¹⁰⁰ The enmity of US and Iran at different levels affected Pakistan's foreign policies choices. In addition, US anti-Iranian sentiment and Pakistan alignment with US in GWOT kept away both neighboring states.

Both countries has signed different agreements for enhancing trade and commerce relations especially Iran-Pakistan Gas Pipeline (IP). But these could not be materialized

⁹⁸ Philip H. Gordon and Philip H. Gordon, "The Bush Doctrine," Brookings, July 28, 2016, accessed July 22, 2018, <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/the-bush-doctrine/>.

⁹⁹ Israel Shahak and Michel Chossudovsky, ""Greater Israel": The Zionist Plan for the Middle East," Global Research Center for Research on Globalization, accessed July 22, 2018, <https://www.globalresearch.ca/greater-israel-the-zionist-plan-for-the-middle-east/5324815>.

¹⁰⁰ Dana Hughes and Amy Bingham, "Iran's Ahmadinejad Says America Entrusted Itself to the Devil," *ABC News*, September 26, 2012. <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/OTUS/irans-ahmadinejad-america-entrusted-devil/story?id=17328593>.

due to international economic sanctions on Iran. After the signing nuclear deal of Iran with world powers along with US resulted sanctions relaxation for limited time but the project of Iran-Pakistan Gas pipeline (IPI) could not be in progress due to the US pressure.

2.2.1.2 Major Powers' role in Pakistan-Iran Relations

The anarchical international system led towards competition for power enhancing where developing states have to manage their role on the basis of relative gain. The dynamics of South Asia (SA) as well as its geographical landscape has greater importance in global affairs. The populous and least developed region holds two nuclear rival states Pakistan and India. The politics of South Asia is determined by role of two regional players. The geostrategic importance of the region attracts global powers for geo-strategic and geo-economic ambitions. Thus the region has become the interplay of power politics by global powers.

The extra regional involvement is not new phenomena rather it is continued after end of colonial rule from the subcontinent. During the cold-war, the US and USSR resorted linkages in their respective allies for maintaining control over regional politics. The cold-war power politics influenced Pakistan-Iran relations. Further the Islamic revolution of Iran in 1979 portrayed different challenges for enhancing bilateralism. Similarly, Iran-US enmity and distinct foreign policy discourse is other challenge for improving relations with Pakistan.

In the initial the phase of Pakistan's independence, she jumped into western bloc leading due to its leadership cohesion with western capitalism as well as opposed USSR due to India's inclined towards communism. The geostrategic importance of South Asia brought two powers USSR and the US into the region. During the cold war, Pakistan-US cooperation remained in different fields such as military relations as well as social-political relations. Similarly, the US and China both have remained important player in the affairs of Pakistan particularly during cold war and later has attained all weather friend status. Pakistan also played mediator role during highly tensions periods of cold

war between communist china and US. It was the result of her mediation that both states came close.

China factor has become greater concern for the US who has geopolitical interests in the region. Pakistan also maintains relationship with the US instead of having strategic relationship with rival China. The geographical advantageous location of Pakistan makes it important for major powers. She is located on the Arabian and India Sea as well as sharing borders with China, India, Afghanistan and Iran. China is establishing closeness with Pakistan. On the other hand, the US maneuvers are India centric for securing geopolitical interest in South Asia. Iran faces geo-security challenges from US presence in Afghanistan.

In this backdrop, Pakistan-Iran relationship faces mountainous challenges in terms of divergent alliances and orientations with major powers. Iran anti-US approaches and its sanctioned economy are irritants for improving relations. Further, India-Iran rising nexus in Afghanistan as well as economic cooperation has been looked suspiciously by Pakistan. Meanwhile, rise of Saudi and US factor in Pakistan's affair limits her bilateralism with Iran.

2.2.1.3 Saudi Factor

Saudi Arabia always remains influential player in Pakistan's affairs. Pak-Saudi cordiality determines Pakistan's relations with neighboring Iran. Pakistan always stands with Saudi Arabia in the overwhelming crisis of Middle East as well as provides strategic support. Saudi Arabia's interests in Afghanistan are not core issue for its policy rather these contain pro-US ambitions. As well as her relations with Pakistan affects Pak-Iran bilateralism. She supports Pakistan for containing Iran's influence and enhancing role in Afghanistan for securing geopolitical interests particularly after the announcing US drawdown strategy from Afghanistan in 2014.¹⁰¹ Consequently, she is supporting Kabul government for avoiding other civil war as well as supported peace talks with Taliban.

¹⁰¹ Guido Steinberg and Nils Woermer, "Exploring Iran & Saudi Arabia's Interests in Afghanistan & Pakistan: Stakeholders or Spoilers -A Zero Sum Game? Part 1: Saudi Arabia," (Barcelona, Barcelona

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are close partners as well as their strategic, political and economic relations dated back to 1960s. Both countries have signed many agreements in different fields such defense and technology. Pakistan has provided greater assistance in the field of technology and defense in terms of training military personals of Saudi Arabia. In addition, Saudi Arabia rescued Pakistan's economy in trouble times by giving economic aid in terms of free oil as well as providing diplomatic support especially after the nuclear tests in 1998.

Saudi Arabia also provided help to Pakistan in wars against India in 1965, 1971 and supported Pakistan's stance over Kashmir. Pakistan-Saudi relations remained cordial irrespective of change in political and military regimes. However, the warmth relationship faced some flaws during political government of Pakistan People Party (PPP) due to its so called secular polices and closeness to Iran. Pakistan's fragile economy and its weak institutions compel it relay on external powers and needs support to overcome domestic and foreign obstacles.

Saudi Arabia has greater leverage to affect the internal as well external discourses of Pakistan due to profound reasons. The country's dominant population comprise the Muslims belong to convent with Sunni's interpretation of Islam as well as having ideological affiliation with Saudi Arabia. Pakistan a country which has deep rooted religious society and complex religious and ideological landscape considers the moves of Saudi Arabia in positive way.

The most population has closeness with Saudi Arabia due to having birth Place of Islam, custodian of two holiest sites of Muslims (Haramain Sharefain) as well having ideological commonality. During the Soviet-Afghanistan war, Saudi Arabia exacerbated its influence through promotion of jihadist ideology as well as gave financial support to establish Madrasas (Religious Education School). Saudi Arabia also has penetrated Wahhabi brand of Islam is the polity of Pakistan. The madrasas have greater leverage over public and society. Thus Pakistan's religious lines and educated society have been influenced through religious-ideological tools. Such kinds of public influence agendas

enable her to enhance relations with political and military elite for achieving geopolitical ends as well as for countering Iranian influence in Pakistan.

The support for nuclear armed Pakistan is strategic important for pursuit of securing regional interest and strengthening the role in Middle East affairs. Saudi Arabia close relationship with political elite enhances her role in domestic affairs. In 1999s, when chief of Army staff General Pervez Musharraf ousted the Nawaz Sharif regime from government, it was Saudi Arabia who protected Nawaz Sharif and gave safe heaven to Pakistan's dominant political party. Prior to this, Nawaz had established the good relations with Saudi Arabia. There is a strong military to military relation and these relations never disrupted and freeze.

Pakistan-Saudi Arabia's relations are not just conventional relationship rather it has strategic, deep rooted and inflectional in the foreign policy making process. During the Yemen crisis, Saudi Arabia requested strategic support to former ally Pakistan and it was rejected by the establishment of Pakistan due to closeness with neighbor Iran as well as changing dynamics of Middle Eastern political affairs. The rivalry of Iran and Saudi Arabia at the regional level affected the discourse of Pakistan's foreign policy.

2.2.2 Regional level

The analysis of regional developments after 9/11 gives structural regional constraints, challenges and hurdles for the relations between Pakistan and Iran. The post-9/11 developments affected the dynamics of South Asia as well as influenced foreign policy of Pakistan. In the post-9/11 developments, some regional developments led towards divergences between Pakistan and Iran and reshaped their relationship. The regional constraints for their relationship are mainly related to geopolitical developments of South Asia such as India's propagation against Pakistan for claiming terrorist state and her hegemonic moves, India-Iran geo-economic and geo-strategic partnership and rising concerns of Gulf States over CPEC. All these factors affect Pak-Iran relationship. These regional developments occurred after 9/11 as well as affected Pakistan's relations with Iran.

2.2.2.1 Changing Dynamics of South-Asia after 9/11

Pakistan-Iran relationship is dependent on regional environment of South Asia and West Asia or Middle East. After 9/11, the analysis of regional developments shows changing regional dynamics which alter geo-strategic interests of the regional countries. In the wake of 9/11 attacks, regional developments occurred in the populous region of South Asia. The 9/11 period was not only a transitional phase in the US foreign policy rather it changed international system and regional politics of South Asia as well.

The US administration under the rule of George W. Bush announced Global War on Terror (GWOT) internationally. It was decided invasion of Afghanistan for dismantling the footprints of Al-Qaida and extremist groups. The US strategy followed after 9/11 is known as Bush doctrine consisted upon unilateralism and preemptive response against terrorism that shower her hegemonic power as well as challenging other major powers like China and Russia.

Pakistan responded quickly over US declaration of war on terror for securing geopolitical and economic interests. Washington maintained quickly its traditionally relationship with Islamabad by neglecting the India concerns. India was a major competitor of Pakistan and having assertion of being regional hegemon of south Asia. US also maintained its strategic relationship with India by signing civil nuclear deal while Pakistan had allied with US over War on Terror. Pakistan's front line partnership with US raised Iran's concerns that affected their bilateralism. Iran's anti-Americanism hurdled in cooperation with Pakistan as well as rising Saudi factor impeded for bilateralism.

The policy portrayed hegemonic power of US and neglected the role of other major powers in regional system where US emerged predominant actor. The policy of unilateralism affected the security situation of South Asia and created geo-strategic concerns for all regional states. The conflict and cooperation has been evident in South Asia. For instance, there was emerged Pakistan-US alliance against Al-Qaida network, Indo-US strategic partnership in 2005, Indo-Afghanistan strategic alliance in 2011 and

Pak-China strategic cooperation.¹⁰² All South-Asian countries tried to join war on terror for their interests. For instance, Sri Lanka and Nepal concerns, both cooperated with US for getting support against its national insurgent group Tamils and moist which involved in terrorist activities.

2.2.2.2 Indian Hegemonic Moves vis-à-vis Pakistan

India's role in South Asia is primarily basis upon hegemonic aspirations.¹⁰³ The turbulent events of September 11 worsened the situation of the subcontinent and affected Pakistan-India relations badly. India responded war on terror positively because of having hegemonic desires and anti-Pakistan sentiments. In addition, India tried to exploit the situation for its geopolitical interest and also asked Washington for avoiding Pakistan by declaring it terrorism sponsor state.¹⁰⁴ India's strategists assumed alignment of US with war on terror would be beneficial for her hegemonic aspirations

On 15 September 2001, Pakistan decided to cooperate with international community to crush terrorism without involving of military action beyond its boundary. Although Pakistan had to face to political and economic damage being partner of US-led war on terror as it mentioned by President Musharraf in his speech but the decision was also inclusion of relative gain rather than total damage. The decision carried out two types of benefits. Firstly, Pakistan became front line state combating against terrorism that favors its Kashmir issue at international level. Secondly, Pakistan would get assistance economically and militarily from International community.¹⁰⁵ This created the regional balance with rival India. On the other hand, India could not afford such kind of US-Pakistan strategic relationship due to regional rivalry with Pakistan.

¹⁰² Mavara Inayat, "Conflict and Cooperation in South Asia Post 9/11: Implications for Pakistan's Security," *Margalla Papers* 17 (2013): 76.

¹⁰³ Muhammad Mushtaq and Muhammad Jawad Hashmi, "Regional Hegemonic Aspirations of India: A Review of Indian Nuclear Program," *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences* 32 (2012): 252.

¹⁰⁴ M. Jamshed Iqbal, "Role of the 9/11 and the US-led War on Terrorism in the Normalization of Relations between India and Pakistan," *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture* 26 (2005): 97.

¹⁰⁵ Muhammad Ishaque, et al, "Pakistan's Post 9/11 US Policy: Prospects and Constraints," *Pakistan Vision* 11 (2005): 57.

The regional developments compelled India to propagate the situation in its favor being opposed to the rising influence of Pakistan. India tried to stop the Pakistan-US strategic relationship and seeking to Washington declares Pakistan as terrorist state. Indian accused of Pakistan's government to harboring of terrorists groups for having linkages with Taliban and supporting militant groups. Furthermore, allegations were made on freedom fight in India-occupied Kashmir and was accused Pakistan as supporter of freedom fighters in Indian-held Jammu and Kashmir. In the initial phases of GWOT, Indian spreading negative narrative against Pakistan and tried to convince U.S that their strategic relationship with Pakistan was dysfunctional and would be damaged the objectives of GWOT.

India took leverage of 9/11 situation and accused Pakistan on supporting insurgents groups and freedom fighter in Indian-held Jammu and Kashmir. The Kashmir Issue was described as not it is struggle of Kashmiri people for self-determination rather it was motivated by Pakistan's interests in Kashmir. India propagated the involvement of Pakistan's militant groups in Kashmir with the help of Pakistan. The extremist groups Lashkar e Taiba and Jaish e Muhammad were involved in sending freedom fighters to Indian-held Kashmir. Indian put pressure strongly on US to ask the government of Pakistan shutting down these terrorist activities. In response, the president of Pakistan General Pervaiz Musharraf initiated crack down all kind of terrorist's organizations; Islamic extremist groups such as Lashkar e Taiba and Jaish e Muhammad and banned all organization which involved in sectarian violence on 12 January 2002.

Similarly, India enhanced influence in Afghanistan in post-9/11 period as well as it provided an opportunity for India to reestablish geopolitical linkages with newly government of Afghanistan. The newly established regime in Kabul after US invasion in Afghanistan on November 2001 was pro-west and anti-Taliban and it was highly supported by Indian government. Prior to this, Indian had not good relations with pro-Taliban regime in Kabul because it was highly under the influence of Pakistan.

India reestablished its strategic relation with Afghan's government and provided help economically for developing the infrastructure, assisted in the field of education and technology. On October 2011, Afghanistan and India signed strategic agreement (AIP).

In this, India provided strategic assistance to Afghanistan in terms of training security forces and providing sophisticated weapons.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, she gave training to Afghan woman officers in Indian military academy.¹⁰⁷ Indo-US nuclear deal and India's enhancement in militarization are the hegemonic aspirations that has created imbalance in South Asia. Moreover, she is working on the advancing missile technology. For instance, she has built the long range missile of Agni series that covers distance up to 5000km and these can target Europe, Japan and Middle East.¹⁰⁸

2.2.2.3 India's Investment on Chahbahar Port

India is establishing geostrategic linkages with Iran that is the part of India's encirclement policy against Pakistan. Moreover, India is investing huge amount over developing Chahbahar port. The port is located in southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchistan. The port possesses closeness of 950 km to Afghanistan with city of Milak as well as 1827 km away from Turkmenistan border. The port is located at the Gulf of Oman, Strait of Hormuz, closest to India Sea and having greater potential to for providing economic corridor for Indian into Middle East and Central Asia and Europe. The port is also located closely to Gwadar port and having merely distance of 72 km. In this regard, both ports are called sister ports.

Historically, construction was started on Chahbahar port in 1973 by the Sha of Iran. Later on, work was started in 1983 during Iran-Iraq war and subsequently proposed an initiative for further development took place in 2003 with the help of India. The project could not be materialized due to international sanctions on Iran. After Iran's rapprochement with west, Chahbahar port development agreement was signed with India on May 2016 during the international sanctions' relaxation period. The Chahbahar port is divided into two parts Shahid Kalantari and Shahid Beheshti. The port has intend to

¹⁰⁶ Arvind Gupta, "Strategic Partnership with Afghanistan: India Showcases its Soft Power," (Institute for Defense and Analysis, October 10, 2011.

https://idsa.in/idsacomments/StrategicPartnershipwithAfghanistanIndiaShowcasesitsSoftPower_agupta_101011.

¹⁰⁷ "Afghan women officers train at Indian military academy," *The Express Tribune*, December 13, 2017, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1583130/3-afghan-women-officers-train-indian-military-academy/>.

¹⁰⁸ Mushtaq and Hashmi, "Indian Nuclear Program," 259.

maintain Bandar Abbas port which is used 85 percent of seaborne trade and commerce as it is center trade with Russia and Europe. The port is not having many operations as Bandar Abbas port on the western part of country that is congested.

The Iran's congested sea port Bandar Abbas is not so much deep sea port which retains 2, cargo ships with having 50000 tons. The Chahbahar port is significant for taking down the burden of Bandar Abbas port as well as having potential for regional connectivity that makes it important strategically for both Iran and India. Since the changing dynamics of South Asia after 9/11, both are growing naval activities in Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea and enhancing influence in Afghanistan. Indian's hegemonic desires are evident in agreement of Chahbahar port and makes the project immense significant geopolitical interests.

India's ambitions consist upon the countering growing influence of China as well as encircling Pakistan lead toward strategic alliance with Iran. The geographical proximity of Chahbahar port with Gwadar makes them competitors for geopolitical, geo-economics and geostrategic objectives. India is investing greater amount for constructing Chahbahar and China is spending huge amount for developing Gwadar port would create rivalry for natural resources of Central Asia in the region. Iran's port Chahbahar and Pakistan's Gwadar have become epicenter of competition for economic and strategic objectives between India and China. India's warmth relations with US after signing civil nuclear deal and cordiality on the matters of Afghanistan and Central Asia are highly concern for China.

India's naval cooperation with US in Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf is greater concern for China. It would create disruption of oil supply and stop the supply of crude oil and Trade to china from energy rich states at the time of hostility with India or US on Taiwan issue. India is enhancing influence through sea power and strengthening the ties with Gulf States, Iran and Saudi Arabia. The rising cooperation between Iran and Indian on the matters of Afghanistan, Central Asia as well as the cooperation on Chahbahar port is highly concerns for Pakistan's geo-economics and strategic interests in the region.

Indo-Afghan nexus and India-Iran cordiality is part of India's strategy for encircling Pakistan and countering the growing influence of China. India is on the agenda of enhancing the influence in Central Asia through Afghanistan. She is investing huge amount on Iran's Chahbahar for reaching Arabian Sea that also highlights her inspiration of undermining the Pakistan-china's geo-economics objectives. India is rising in three regions South Asia, Middle East and Central Asia through her soft power strategies. She is advancing trade and economic linkages in these regions through connecting them by developing infrastructure and providing assistance in the field of Information and technology (IT). India's moves in other regions and developing strategic relations with Pakistan's neighborhood countries Iran and Afghanistan poses paramount security challenges for Pakistan.

India is developing infrastructure in Afghanistan, constructing roads, railways, investing in different sectors and giving access Afghanistan to sea through Chahbahar port. The mega plan of constructing Chahbahar port as well as making it hub for trade and commerce for regional countries and interlinking the port to Afghanistan and Central Asia are the strategies for India's rise. Indian's aspiration belongs to sabotage the Gwadar project as well as her strategic alliance with Iran is greater concern for Pakistan.

2.2.2.4 Gulf States Concerns over Gwadar Port

The developing project of Gwadar port holds not only geostrategic significance for Pakistan rather it consists upon paramount concerns of Gulf States. Many analysts assume that the port is having greater potential and it would be another Dubai on world's map. The economic potential of the port is the major challenge for Gulf States. Both Dubai and Gwadar have almost similar advantages, located on Gulf of Oman as well as having closer distance. Thus it will generate economic struggle in Gulf of Oman between two groups of countries Pakistan, China and Qatar on one side and India and United Arabs Emirates (UAE) on other side.

Dubai is situated in the southeast of Persian Gulf, located at center of coastal trade as well as having strategic influence in the region. It is geostrategic important and largest populous country in UAE. The developed infrastructure of Dubai and its two major ports,

Port Rashid and Port Jebel Ali, enable her as a hub for international trade, tourism and sports. In addition, the major revenue comes from real estate, foreign investments, aviation and having luxurious places. The beautiful and tallest buildings, largest construction projects, working international companies from 120 countries made her paramount significant in the world. Thus she has advantageous location that enables her opportunity for overcoming poor natural destiny as well as provides greater economic look in world's affairs.

As far Gwadar port, it has advantageous location and poses serious challenge to Dubai. The port is considered strategic location and a gateway of reaching Gulf region and Middle East for emerging economic power China and energy rich Central Asian States. The advantageous location of port gives the access to China and CARs and allowed them to reach Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf. China is also developing other projects in Gwadar such as constructing infrastructure of the city, establishing international airport, building infrastructure for developing industrial zones and developing hotels and restaurants. In addition, she is investing in different areas for meeting geo-economics ends.

As far Gwadar's potential and China's mega development in Gwadar, is greater concerns for Dubai. Dubai Investment Forum is working for persuading investment in Dubai, has raised the concerns over Gwadar and named it serious rival. In addition, such kinds of concerns were explained by the different regional stake holders. UAE have concerns over Gwadar port due to its comprising strategic and alternative position for trade and commerce. Likewise India is regional rival state and she is on the agenda of enhancing interests through using soft powers and alternative strategies. China's growing influence in South Asia and investment in Gwadar exerts strategic depth to Pakistan against India.

US being a hegemonic power also have concerns over China's rising economy particularly its economic projects via to South Asia. China is enhancing influence in Afghanistan by providing economic assistance as well its strategies for reaching to Central Asian state along with Russia are growing concerns for US hegemonic power in the region. As well changing situation in Afghanistan especially after the partial withdrawal of US military forces has deleterious regional implications. As far launching geo strategic and economic projects Chahbahar and Gwadar initiated by China and India

generated economic competition as well having implications over other regional countries.

The Gwadar port is considered game changer for regional geopolitics and having implications for Gulf States. Some other states also have shown ambitions and willingness for joining the project such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, Qatar and Russia. The rising concerns over Gwadar are having impacts on the bilateral relations between Pakistan and Iran. With regard to context, the convergences between Gulf States and Pakistan over Gwadar have positive and negative impacts of Pakistan-Iran relations.

2.2.3 State Level

The state level analysis provides overlook of challenges and issues for improving warmth relationship between Pakistan and Iran. In this study, there will discuss structural irritants and constrains those are hurdle for state to state interactions as well as for improving bilateralism. These constrains mainly belongs to domestic and state level challenges and irritants which must be addressed for improving cordial relations. The internal instability in terms of terrorism, militancy and socio-economic problems affects Pak-Iran bilateralism. Similarly cross border terrorism and emerging new alliances are also the matter of concern for each state.

2.2.3.1 Cross Border Terrorism

The problem of cross border terrorism creates not only contentions with Iran rather she also has warned Pakistan for many times. Above all, Iran has violated and intervened directly against terrorist groups inside the territory of Pakistan.¹⁰⁹The cross boarder terrorism emanating from the region Baluchistan is led by the insurgents and terrorist groups that work for geopolitical agendas. These terrorist activities deteriorate the relations between two states. Meanwhile, terrorists also infiltrate and use to change their locations. In addition, the problem of drug smuggling and illicit trade is also evident in the frontier region. The concerning issues and problems in the frontier region are

¹⁰⁹ Zia Ur Rehman, *The Baluch insurgency: linking Iran to Pakistan* (Norwegian peacebuilding resource center Report, 2014): 5.

divided into two categories for understanding. The first issue is Baloch insurgents groups and second is the issue of drug trafficking.

2.2.3.2 Baloch Insurgents Groups

The Baloch insurgent groups are the combination of ethno cultural and Islamic extremist forces which are operating for their geo-political incentives. Historically, Baloch ethnic groups belong to Baluchistan region which has remained independent for several centuries ago. In 19th century, it has been divided fiercely by Persians and British Empire. In 1928, the western independent part of Baluchistan merged with Reza Shah Pahlvi dynasty who took control over through military force against Qajar rule. Meanwhile, British Empire maintained control over other part of Baluchistan till the Pakistan's independence in 1947.¹¹⁰ The division of Baluchistan region into different countries division raised apprehensions in Baluch ethnic groups which resulted freedom struggle as well as started rebellion for separate homeland.

During British rule, Baluchistan comprised four states i.e Makran, Las Bela, Kharan and Kalat. After the partition, first three states willingly joined Pakistan while Khan of Kalat, Mir Ahmed Yar refused and declared independence. However, Khan agreed on accession on April 1948. The phenomenon of Baluch insurgency emerged after the annexation of Kalat state to Pakistan.

The Brother of Khan of Kalat, Shahzada Karim Khan rejected decision violently. He started militancy against the government of Pakistan to secede territory. The situation became worse after the declaring "One Unit" plan which raised concerns of local people. In 1970, Baluchistan has been declared the province of Pakistan after the abolition of "One Unit". The separatist and rebellion groups remained active from the independence as well as they fought freedom wars in 1958, 1963–69 and 1973–77 and 2005 and even they rose in revolt to-date.¹¹¹ The insurgency was the result of structural weakness in political system. Similarly, allegations were made on the political parties of Baluchistan

¹¹⁰ Ibid: 5.

¹¹¹ Asma Mahsood and Amanullah Khan Miankhel, "Baluchistan Insurgency: Dynamics and Implications," *Global Advanced Research Journal of Social Science* 2 (2013): 52.

for getting weapons from India and launching militant struggle for separation to destabilize the country.

The phenomena of insurgency became complex after the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979 as well as US led war on terror in Afghanistan in 2001.¹¹² In the wake of GWOT, Pakistan initiated steps for curbing terrorism against Al-Qaida's affiliated networks. Consequently, the insurgency in Baluchistan shifted into new pattern. The struggle for securing state-related interest became change after 9/11 attacks due to change in the landscape of international system, emerging threats from non-state actors as well as flourishing Islamic militancy. The nationalist separatist groups diverted into military struggle and named as Baluchistan Liberation Army (BLA). The non-state militant groups are also presence in Baluchistan such as Taliban, Al-Qaeda, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and Jundullah.¹¹³ Later on, separatist groups developed linkages with Islamic extremist organizations and they attacked ethnic Hazara Shia community as well as attacked the bordering security of Iran. The issue led towards rising security concerns over western border with Iran. They also launch terrorist attacked Iran's soil through infiltration by maintaining good relations with ethno-cultural people of Iran's Baluchistan. Similarly, they are indirectly involved illegal trade and drug smuggling. They facilitate and provide way to smugglers and drug traffickers and make money via taxation.¹¹⁴ For instance, Laskar e Jangvi, a prominent Islamic extremist group, has control over transit route of drug traffickers and earns income through taxation and protection.

Pakistan is facing security challenges at domestic level in term of rise of Islamic militant groups and separatist groups which are supported by India and Afghanistan.¹¹⁵ The growing Indian factor after the US-led war in Afghanistan as well as Indian policy of encirclement in terms of support to insurgents groups exacerbated the phenomena of insurgency in Baluchistan. The nationalist struggle converted into Islamic extremist fight

¹¹² Musarrat Jabeen , "Post 9/11 Baluchistan in Peace-Conflict Spectrum and International Dimensions" *Journal of Political Studies* 17 (2010): 30.

¹¹³ Khan, "External Dimensions," 109.

¹¹⁴ Tehseena Usman and Minhas Majeed Khan, "Drug Trafficking From Afghanistan to Pakistan and Its Implications," *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan* 50 (2013): 37.

¹¹⁵ Syed Fazl-e-Haider, "Is Baluchistan turning into an arena of geopolitics?," *Dawn*, September 11, 2006.

after getting support from Al Qaida and other Islamic militant groups such as Tehrik e Talaban Pakistan (TTP). The nationalist and militant groups formulated different militant groups Baluchistan Republican Army (BRA), united Baluch Army (UBA) and Lashkar e Baluchistan. The rise in such kind of insurgency is the result to geo-political and economic grievances and external involvement by regional and extra regional players.¹¹⁶

The growing security concerns over Pakistan-Iran's border and rise in terrorist attacks affect the relations. The terrorist groups began to launch attacks on border security guards of Iran in 2003. The group established in 2012 with the members of Jundullah after killed its mastermind Malik Rigi. The Jundullah, comprise of Islamic militant fighters, is enjoying good relations with the insurgents groups of Baluch nationalists as well as they groups provide safe havens to the Jundullah fighters in Pak-Baluchistan. The radical Islamic militant group Jash ul-Adal (Army of justice) which is operating in Sistan, is having Sunni jihadist ideology, has launched attacks against the security bordering guards and civilians. The Baluchi groups have fought wars with theocratic regime of Iran and Pakistan for gaining their autonomous region. In 2013-14-15 and 2016, Jaish ul Adl claimed a deadly attack on Iranian border guards where fourteen, nine and ten casualties were occurred respectively as well as some faced serious injuries.¹¹⁷ Iran's officials alleged over Pakistan that the attacks took place with the support of Pakistan's Baluchistan terrorist and separatist insurgent groups.

The stability in Baluchistan is prerequisite for peace in bordering region. Pakistan along with all-weather friend china has started socio-economic developments projects in Baluchistan. The prosperity will diminish the grievances of least developed and geostrategic important province of Baluchistan and install stability. China's One Belt one Road initiative (OBR) has made this region important geo-strategically and economically Baluchistan in global politics. The instability and unrest in Baluchistan favors India's geopolitical interests in different ways. For instances, instability will impede china from

¹¹⁶ Muhammad Khurshid Khan, et al, "Baluchistan Unrest Internal and External Dimensions," *NDU Journal* 26 (2012): 102.

¹¹⁷ Nicholas Cappuccino, *Baluch Insurgents in Iran* (United States Institute of Peace, 2017) <https://iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2017/apr/05/baluch-insurgents-iran>.

developing economic and geostrategic important project and prevent Pakistan for providing transit route to China for reaching enrich rich Middle East and Central Asia.

However, the government of Pakistan has been announced different projects for the development of Baluchistan as well as for constructing infrastructure. Mostly insurgents groups have been defused and diminished. Moreover, the reasons of insurgency must be resolved through diminishing the grievances especially related to health and education. The political stability is prerequisite for peace and stability across the province.

2.2.3.3 Drug Trafficking and Terrorism

The Islamic militants and insurgent groups are involved in drugs and narcotics trafficking, illegal trade, weapons and humans smuggling. The phenomena of smuggling and terrorism are closely interlinked with illicit and terrorist activities by insurgent groups. These activities has been become bone of contentions between Pakistan and Iran. Moreover, the militant groups also involved cross border terrorism and they wage terrorist against Iran's officials from Pakistan's Baluchistan.¹¹⁸ The geographical proximity of Baluchistan exists with the highly drug produced country, Afghanistan. Similarly, having ideal geostrategic important location makes Baluchistan good place for drug smugglers. The costal of Baluchistan is used for smuggling drugs and approximately it is the one-third of total smuggled drugs from Afghanistan. Moreover, the 30\$billions worth of drugs are smuggled from Afghanistan via Pakistan to other countries.¹¹⁹ Consequently, the region has become the center stage for of smugglers as well as weapon and drugs are collected in this region for smuggling to Europe and other regions.

The drugs and smuggled things come into Pakistan through Afghanistan because of having long border with inefficient control. Overall, there are used nine routes for drug smuggling across the world. Among on them six are passed through Baluchistan.¹²⁰ Drug traffickers collect drug and narcotics form Afghanistan and smuggle across the country.

¹¹⁸ Umer Karim, "Iran-Pakistan Relations: The Current State of Affairs" *Center for Iranian Studies in Ankara* (2017): 7.

¹¹⁹ Ali Dayan Hasan, *Baluchistan Caught in the Fragility Trap* (United States Institute of Peace, 2016), 3.

¹²⁰ Abdul Baseer Khan, "Baluchistan: Epicenter of Drugs Smuggling and Usage," *The Baluchistan Point*, August 28, 2015, <http://thebalochistanpoint.com/balochistan-epicenter-of-drug-smuggling-and-usage/>.

They send it to other parts of the country as well other states through Gwadar and Makran port. Local boats are used to reach illegal commodities to cargo ships, loaded them and these were received by other contractors. As well in West, these drugs are sent to Iran through Tafton boarder and illegal ways of large territory connected to Iran. Anti-narcotics force (ANF) proclaimed that Baluchistan has become vulnerable place to illegal trade, drugs and narcotics trafficking as well as human smuggling. Pakistan has gifted long coastline which it connects to different regions and gives access waterways. The large coastline line more than 800 kilo meters pass through Gwadar and Makaran coast become the region good place for smuggling throughout the world. Suck kind of activities carried out by terrorist group and they earned from these sources and used it in their terrorist activities.

The province has geographical proximity with Iran as well as having long coastline that has closeness to Gulf of Oman. This coastline is used by smugglers for reaching Persian Gulf as well as spreading drugs and illegal substances across the different regions such as Asia, Europe and Africa etc. The province has become the epicenter of drug and narcotic smuggling and illicit trade. It is result of its poor rule and law situation, least development, having geographical importance as well as its long coastline that makes this advantageous location for smugglers.

There is also a major problem of human trafficking and smuggling. Baluchistan border and Gwadar coastal line are used for illegal crossing to Iran for reaching Turkey. The phenomena of human trafficking is confused due to lack of legislation, poor law and order situation and to some extant migrants become victims by traffickers. The victims of smugglers or migrants mainly come from Center and South Punjab and Sindh areas and they are sent abroad through agents. There is nexus of criminal networks agents, facilitators and transporters. Moreover, different are involved such as money laundering fraudulent documentation, and identity theft.¹²¹ The underlying reasons of such kinds illegal activities are related to the grievances, lack of infrastructure development and poor law and order situation. Iran also has concerns on such types of trafficking and smuggling

¹²¹ *Smuggling of migrants and trafficking in Persons: A situational Analysis of Pakistan* (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2011), 20.

issues with the authorities of Pakistan. Therefore, twin provinces of both states signed an agreement in 2004 for enhancing incentives for the deprived people of provinces as well as for curbing illegal activities. Under this, Iran would provide assistance to the people of Baluchistan in the field of agricultural technology as well as in education sector.¹²²

2.2.3.4 Gwadar vs Chahbahar Port

Gwadar is port city of Baluchistan and having greater significance geo-economically geo-strategically. It is located on Makran coast closer to Indian Ocean and geographical existed in Sistan-Baluchistan province. Pakistan is projecting construction of Gwadar port through pilot project CPEC. On the other hand, Iran is improving economic relations with India as well as both have signed agreement for developing Iranian's port in Chahbahar. Gwadar and Chahbahar ports are considered sister ports and having closer distance of 72 kilometers. The Chahbahar port is having geostrategic and geo-economic importance for Iran and India as well as having potential for integrating trade in different regions i.e South Asia, South West Asia and Central Asia. Moreover, Iran is working on the connectivity of the port through railroads to Afghanistan and Central Asia and eventually it will increase its importance as compared to Gwadar port.¹²³

India is investing billions of dollars on multiple projects in Iran regarding construction of Chahbahar port as well as financing for developing the project of "Iran's Eastern Corridor". It serves India's strategic interest in terms of proving gateway to Afghanistan, Central Asia and beyond. Pakistan has highly concerns over India's activities in Chahbahar port that adversely prevented Gwadar for becoming internal hub of trade. Moreover, it also facilitates India's strategic depth against Chain's naval cooperation in Gwadar as well as its regional hegemonic aspirations. Such kind of Iran-Indo economic geopolitical bilateralism raises concerns for Pakistan as well as makes suspicions. This is challenge for improving bilateral relations between Pakistan and Iran. Pakistan's Gwadar

¹²² Muhammad Tehsin "Iran-Pakistan Relations: Challenges, Constraints and Opportunities," *FWU Journal of Social Sciences* 11 (2017): 45.

¹²³ Mohammad Arifeen, "Chahbahar Port: It's Importance for India," *The News International* (Rawalpindi), Business & Finance Review, November 22, 2011.

and India's Chahbahar and emerging geostrategic ties between India and Iran are having negative implication for Pak-Iran relations as well as these affect the bilateral relationship. (See Appendix I)

2.2.3.5 Strategic Importance of Gwadar Port

The geographical location of Gwadar port has strategic importance in the regional affairs of South Asia particularly after the investment of China for the development of the port. It holds economic benefits as well as geostrategic outcomes for Pakistan and China as well. Due to changing dynamics of international system, seas are important for more commercial advantages, fulfilling strategic and political purposes. Gwadar port is deep sea rooted as well it located at mouth of strait of Hormuz which is transit point of 2/3 world's oil. The oil activities on Arabian ocean and Persian Gulf can be easily observed through the port gives it strategic importance for major powers.

It is located in such province which is full of natural resources. Baluchistan's important for Pakistan is also because of comprising approximately 800 kilometer coastline out of total 1054 coastal area. It can be hub for international trade and shipment activities as well it can join three regions, energy rich central Asian states, South Asia and Middle East. It would increase development in the whole province, exploring tourism and creating new jobs. The port would provide prosperity for Pakistan through creating special economic zones and foreign investment.

The port also holds regional geo strategic importance especially after the changing dynamics of South Asia. It provides strategic depth as well as gives leverage to monitor Indian activities. The sea lines of communication (SLOCs) on Persian Gulf and strait of Hormuz can be monitored by the port. The port is important for China as far its economic purposes as well as its strategic interests in the region. The economic and strategic motives from CPEC have opposed India-Iran strategic and geo-economic bilateralism and Construction of Chahbahar port respectively. Iran has advantages over Pakistan's Gwadar due to upper hand, closeness to Central Asia and cordiality with Afghanistan. Iran will offer Afghanistan trade at low tariff. India, Afghanistan and Iran had already signed Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) for transit and transport infrastructure. It will

be huge economic setback for Pakistan and obstacle for geo-economics aspirations. (See Appendix II)

This chapter shows challenges for Pakistan-Iran relations. These are the factors that are the hurdles for cordial relations and create bitterness. Some of them related to security, geopolitics, major power politics and other of them are the result of Indian hegemonic aspirations. Pakistan is facing economic and domestic challenges and needs political stability. The international, regional and state level challenges are the intervening factors of their relationship. The influence of Saudi-Arabia and the US in the affairs of Pakistan affects Pak-Iran closeness. It is evident that both established closer relationship in beginning as well as they were closed in the pre-revolution era due to convergences. Therefore both successfully established economic organization ECO with the help of Turkey. During the Soviet-Afghan war, divergences emerged that diminished trust and tensions arose between both states. But both states revisited in the post-9/11 period and realized the full potential of their relationship. All these developments show that both states are natural allies and having natural intimacy.

Chapter 3

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PAKISTAN-IRAN RELATIONS

Pakistan-Iran relationship is based on ideational and materialistic factors which are the foundation of their cooperation and cordiality. There exist complex interdependence between Pakistan and Iran. Complex interdependence is different form Interdependence; in which there is merely political-economic and military interdependence. Complex interdependence refers to *a situation among a number of countries in which multiple channels of contact connect societies (that is, states do not monopolize these contacts); there is no hierarchy of issues; and military force is not used by governments towards one another.*¹²⁴ Pakistan and Iran are interlinked through multiple channels as well as both has never involved into use of military force for resolving disputes. Therefore, both countries can strengthen and maintain their cordial relationship through realizing the full potential of the opportunities. After 1979s, Pakistan-Iran relations have remained tense because of Afghanistan's crisis and Taliban factor. The fall of Taliban regime in Afghanistan has provided a great opportunity for improving bilateral relations between Pakistan and Iran.¹²⁵ In post-9/11, the relations increased between both states in terms of economic liberalism and geostrategic cooperation.

3.1 Closeness through multiple channels on the basis of Ideational Factors

Pakistan and Iran have diverse relationship due to multiple channels of interaction such as socio-cultural and religious bonds. Both are closed through multiple channels of interaction such trans-governmental and transnational channels. The ideological closeness creates interdependence between both states. Ideational factors comprise of ideology, thought, culture and values which play significant role in driving the decisions.

¹²⁴ Robert O. Keohane; Joseph S. Nye, "Power and Interdependence," *International Organization* 41 (1987): 731.

¹²⁵ Zahid Ali Khan and Shabir Ahmad, "Pakistan and Iran in Afghanistan: From Soviet Intervention to the fall of Taliban," *Central Asia Journal* 64 (2009): 2.

These factors provide identity and unite states and nations. Pakistan and Iran have not only geographical closeness but also have ideational linkages in their norms, culture and values. The ethno-religious similarities and socio-cultural linkages are the opportunities for enhancing cooperation and bilateralism.

3.1.1 Ethno-Religious Similarities

Pakistan-Iran relationship is primarily basis upon ethno-religious linkages. Both are adjacent with Baluchistan region that is not only frontier region but also it provides as ground of cultural and social commonality between both states. The common ethno-cultural history and geographical proximity interlink both states with each other. The line of Goldsmith divides not only borders of Pakistan and Iran but also divides the Baluchistan region and ethnic groups of the region in two different states. It starts from Koh-i-Malik Siah to Gwadar coastline on the Arabian Sea and separates two regions, namely South Asia and Middle East. On 31 August 1960, accord of border management agreement was signed. It is significantly important agreement for improving bilateral relations. The region of Baluchistan is a gateway and exists between South Asia and Middle East as well as Baloch community is common ethnic group which is scattered between two states. In addition, common ethnicities also exist in two different states and people of common ethnicities maintain social contacts with each other that are important for improving bilateralism. Moreover, Baluchistan has geo-strategical important for Pakistan because it comprises 44 percent of Pakistan territorially.¹²⁶

The Baluchistan region has history of ethnicity and ancient civilizations. The people of Baluchistan belong mainly from Baluch ethnicity. They live into their respective tribal cultures where Sardars are considered as a head for the each branch of the tribe. However, other ethnic groups also exist. The dominant ethnic group is Baloch which are 54.7 percent and 29 percent are Pashtuns. The ethnic group of Hazaras also lives in Baluchistan. They are Persian speaking and mainly belong to Afghanistan as well as they are straddled in Pakistan and Iran. After the Saur revolution in Afghanistan, they migrated to Pakistan and Iran. The common ethnic groups and common religion Islam

¹²⁶ Tehsin , “Constraints and Opportunities” 43.

play constructive role in the maximization of cordial relationship. The people to people contacts create natural intimacy for both states. Both states are not only close on the basis of border line through the province of Baluchistan but also close by having ethno-religious linkages.

The demography of Iran comprises of different ethnic groups whereas Persians comprise half of the population and others are Azairis, Gilaki, Kurds, Mizarri and Balochi. Likewise, Punjabi is the dominated ethnic group in Pakistan that is closer to Persians in Iran.¹²⁷ In addition, Pakistan and Iran share tri-junctional border which is connected with the provinces of Kharbar Pakhtununkha (KPK) and Baluchistan to Makran coast in Sindh and Sistan of Iran on the Afghanistan side. A long history of cooperation has been existed among tribes and ethnic groups of this land since many centuries ago.¹²⁸ These ethno-religious interlinkages are crucial that bounds Pakistan and Iran as well as provide an opportunity for improving bilateralism.

3.1.2 Socio-Cultural Linkages

The people of Pakistan and Iran are closed on the basis of similar social norms, values and cultural affinities. The culture is underlying element that provides identity and distinguishes one group of the people to other. Nations are separated through border but the genesis of separation of the group comes from the distinguish culture and identity. Historically, both states were also closed in the ancient times as well as had good relations. The Indus valley civilization and civilization of Mesopotamia were interlinked through cooperation and mutual pacts. Similarly, trade linkages existed and silver, copper and other goods were imported from Persia during the Harappan civilization of Pakistan. Moreover, when Aryans came into South Asia they made special contacts with Persians. It had impacted the south Asia society in the religion and believes.¹²⁹

¹²⁷Keith Crane, Rollie Lal and Jeffrey Martini, *Iran's Political, Demographic, and Economic Vulnerabilities* (California, RAND Corporation 2008), 38.

¹²⁸Manzoor Ahmad, et al., "Pakistan-Iran Relationship in the Context of Regional and International Challenges (2001-2013)," *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 4 (2014): 405.

¹²⁹ Aisha Rafique1, et al., "Pak- Iran Cultural & Historical Ties," *International Journal of Research in Applied, Natural and Social Sciences* 2 (2014): 146.

Their relationship is based on cultural, social and spiritual linkages. Iran has history of ancient Persian civilization as well as having rich in culture. Pakistan shares not only long border of 909 km with Iran rather both have common cultural norms and history.¹³⁰ The area, where Pakistan and Iran are located, has remained common hub for Indo-Persian civilization in terms of producing arts and poetry. The Iranian culture has significant impacts over society, norms and social values of Pakistan and particularly has socio-cultural influence in the western areas.¹³¹ The Persian culture influenced the society of Pakistan into two aspects material and non-material. As far non-material aspects, these are literature, thoughts, poetry and non-material aspects are architecture, dresses.

Common games are also existed such as polo, boxing and shooting as well as cooking styles. Furthermore, Persian language has greater influence over the languages of the subcontinent and particularly Urdu language. Many words of Urdu are borrowed from the Persian as well as National Anthem of Pakistan consists upon Persian words. Persian is also used in some areas of Pakistan such as Hazarasa and other groups. Such kinds of composition of norms and values favored Pakistan-Iran bilateralism in in beginning. In addition, these are important in promoting cordiality and constructive bilateralism. The people of both states are having composite ethics, culture and socio-political norms as well as having history of cross border interaction. Therefore, Pakistan and Iran are not only neighboring countries rather they are adjacent through common culture and norms on the basis of closeness during ancient times.

3.2 Regional Developments

Since 9/11, Pakistan and Iran are facing challenges and issue with respect to the developments at state, regional and international level. Further, the geopolitical developments have great impact and influence on the relationship of both states. In post-9/11 period, structural changes in regional politics generated opportunities and common environment that led closer to both states. Further, the US invasion of Afghanistan changed geopolitical environment and it impacted positively on Pakistan-Iran

¹³⁰ “Geography: The borders of Pakistan,” *Dawn*, October 17, 2009.

¹³¹ Raja Muhammad Khan, “Towards Harmonization of Pak-Iran Relationship,” *Margalla Papers* (2010): 89.

relationship. Prior to 9/11, Pakistan and Iran were facing hostile relations due to Taliban factor as well as trust-deficit caused coldness in their relations. In the wake of 9/11 developments, Taliban regime had been ousted that generated shared environment and convergences emerged between Pakistan and Iran.

Moreover, GWOT affected the regional politics of South Asia and Middle East. In 2003, the US invaded Iraq that created socio-political and security problems across the Middle East. The turmoil in Iraq generated sectarian strife, new wave of violence and caused of conflict in other countries of the region such as Libya, Syria and Yemen. In addition, it increased rivalry the between Iran and Saudi Arabia that has rivalry affected the security situation of Pakistan due to socio-cultural and ideational linkages with both countries. However, Pakistan's balanced approach enables her maintaining relations with both states. Similarly, Iran also balances between Pakistan and India for maintaining relations.

3.2.1 Common Positions in Afghan Affairs

Pak-Iran security is highly interlinked with the security situation of common neighbor Afghanistan. The instability, violence and turmoil in Afghanistan influences socio-economic situation of both states. After the fall of Taliban regime, both came closer on single agenda for the elimination of Taliban and Al-Qaida factions. With the fall of Taliban's regime, security's apprehensions diminished after the rising of anti-Taliban forces. In addition, Pakistan revisited the foreign policy on the basis of providing full extent support to US-led war on terror against Taliban and Al Qaida. These developments generated common positions and cooperative environment between Pakistan and Iran.

Prior to 9/11, their relationship became worse over the divergent approaches in Afghanistan and due to Taliban factor. Iran's security became vulnerable during Taliban's rule in Afghanistan and relationship became antagonistic. Due to Pakistan's support to Taliban, Iran's relations with Pakistan have been affected. The US invasion of Afghanistan brought structural changes in regional affairs. As a result, Pakistan and Iran came closer for maintaining peace and stability in Afghanistan. Therefore, mutual

enthusiasm was evident between both states when the foreign ministers of both states visited Afghanistan after the US-NATO occupation in Kabul.¹³²

In the wake of 9/11 attacks and after the US invasion in Afghanistan, both states also faced common issues which were dealt by mutual understanding. In 2001, both agreed on Pakistan-Iran Joint Ministerial Commission on Security for establishing mutual cooperation against terrorism, controlling illicit activities as well as curbing sectarian violence.¹³³ Pakistan and Iran, being neighboring states, have to face common challenges and problems from instability and violence in Afghanistan. Moreover, both states also hold greater leverage in matters of Afghanistan due to socio-cultural and historical linkages with Afghan's society. In addition, weak conditions in Afghanistan socio-economically affect the neighboring states in terms of refugees' problems, illegal trade as well as drugs and narcotics smuggling.

The Afghan society is divided on the basis of ethno-linguistic lines into Dari Kabuli version of Farsi, and Pushto speaking tribes. These ethnic groups are scattered into Pakistan and Iran. Thus both countries are having leverage for enhancing the influence through using soft powers such as media, books and etc. Afghanistan's progress and prosperity is closely interlinked with the active support by eastern and western neighbors. The capital of Afghanistan, Kabul, is close to Pakistan while the western big city of Herat is close to Iran. It provides easiest way for reaching Caspian Sea as well as gives way for acquiring oil from Turkmenistan. Similarly the total distance from Kabul to Karachi is 1398 kilometers while from western part Herat to Iran port Bandar-Abbas is 2121 kilometers. This shows that such distance is convenience for each side instead of replacing one route.¹³⁴

Consequently, the cordial gestures between Pakistan and Iran are crucial for development of Afghanistan economically and socio-politically. Pakistan-Iran relationship also favors

¹³² Zahir Shah and Ijaz Khalid, "Pakistan-Iran Relations in the Changing Global Scenario Post 9/11," *Journal of Applied Environmental and Biological Sciences* 5 (2015): 208.

¹³³ "Pakistan-Iran Relations: Challenges and Prospects," (Pakistan, the Centre for Pakistan and Gulf Studies, 2014): 9.

¹³⁴ Pavlo Ignatiev, "Afghanistan: Balancing between Pakistan and Iran," *Indian Journal of Asian Affairs* 27 (2015): 48.

the US geopolitical interests in Afghanistan despite the later has rivalry with Iran. Because it provides chance to US for engaging Iran on the matters of Afghanistan and limits total break up with Tehran. Despite of having closeness with the US, Pakistan does not show any antagonism against Iran. However, Pak-US cooperation always remains of concern for Tehran. The controversy of Iranian Nuclear program and international economic sanctions on Iran halts geo-economic ambitions of Pakistan.

The tripartite summit of Pakistan-Iran-Afghanistan has provided opportunity to curbing terrorist activities and created a common ground for mutual coordination. There is still unrest and volatile situation in Afghanistan which would increase after the complete withdrawal of the US forces. The phenomena of Taliban rise is another threatening variable for Afghan security. Moreover, it would create power vacuum that will fill by other powers such as China and Russia. Meanwhile, US drawdown strategy put forward mutual gestures between both states. This will enhance engagement between Pakistan and Iran after demolishing of the intervening factor of the US.

3.2.2 Pakistan's Posture in Iran-Saudi's Rift

The sectarian divide between Arab states of Persian Gulf or Arab Gulf states and Iran as well as divergent political policies at regional level creates conflictual landscape where each state involves in proxies against each other. The historical differences between the sects of Islam are manipulated by regional powers for their geopolitical agendas. Such kind of rivalry has extreme implications for Pakistan where Islam is predominant ideology followed by most of the people. The foreign policy discourse of Pakistan consists upon the principal of good relations with all Muslims countries particularly Saudi Arabia and Iran. Pakistan always adopts balanced approach towards Saudi-Iran rivalries and shows neutrality instead of being partner on the expense of other. She gives importance to both states and maintains positive relationship with each other with having geopolitical and economic orientations.

Pakistan has good relation with all States of Persian Gulf. The great share of remittance comes from the working class of Gulf States. Almost three million Pakistanis work in the gulf region and make four billion US dollar remittance each year. In this regard, Gulf

region is important economically and it provides economic opportunity for Pakistanis workers. For this reason, Pakistan's relations with Gulf States are more cordial than Iran. In fact, Gulf States along with Iran are Muslims dominated states and full of natural resources. In addition, they capture strategical importance in global affairs. Pakistan always remains important for Gulf Arab states because Pakistan's military strength provides them counterweight against Iran's rise in the region. Historically, Pakistan has always maintained positive relations with all energy rich Gulf States regardless of their differences in terms of their divergent strategic and geopolitical interests. Meanwhile, these states provided greater support in the difficult times such like during natural disasters as well as assisted strategically and diplomatically such during the wars with India and in the times of natural disasters.

Iran looks suspiciously Pakistan and Saudi Arabia bilateralism due to later has greater influence in the affairs of Pakistan. During Soviet-Afghan war, Saudi Arabia supported Afghan's jihad and assisted Pakistan for holy war (Jihad) that generated sectarianism and socio-political problems for Pakistan. Pak-Saudi multidimensional relationship depends upon religious culture of Pakistan which comes closer to Saudi Arabia rather than Iran. The political configuration of Pakistan's policy as well as rational foreign policy choices enables her to more closeness to Saudi Arabia. Similarly, it's historical linkages with Iran, dynamic military capability and balance approach over Gulf rivals make it important in the Middle Eastern affairs.

In the aftermath of 9/11, the rift between Arab Gulf states and Iran widened with the changing dynamics international political system and regional political affairs. The US invasion of Iraq in 2003 created socio-political insecurity and worsened security conditions which generated extremist and radical militants. Later on, these militant became shared militant group under the umbrella of Islamic State (IS). The emergence of Islamic State of Iraq later became in Syria which was supported by Gulf States for their geopolitical ends. The Arab spring which affected the Monarchies of Gulf states and it was the response of deprivation for political and civil rights. Likewise Syrian crisis and Yemen crisis augmented the problems within Gulf States that resulted the calculus of regional power diverted to Iran's centric. The oil producing countries (OPEC) led by Saudi Arabs made an alliance along with US and Israel. On the other hand, Iran along

with other allies Russia and China made opposite bloc and influenced the Middle Eastern affairs for their geopolitical ends.

The regional divide on sectarian bases such as Sunni dominated Gulf States and pro-Iran Arabs states such as Iraq and Syria poses greater challenge for balancing the foreign policy discourse for Pakistan. Moreover, Saudi Arabia requested to Pakistan for sending military troops during Yemen war led by Islamic military alliance.¹³⁵ Pakistan, having a strategic ally of Saudi Arabia, was in huge pressure from neighboring Iran because Yemen war was like proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Consequently, Pakistan responded the request on technical basis by not direct involving in the war and avoiding mistrust with Iran. Pakistan maintains balance behavior on every Saudi's move against Iran and shows positivity with brother country.

3.2.3 Iran's balancing between Pakistan and India

Iran's relations with Pakistan are mainly based on balanced approach between Pakistan and India. Iran maintains good relation with neighboring Pakistan due to socio-cultural similarities and geographical proximity. Similarly, she maintains cordiality with India for meeting geo-economic and strategic ends. Further, both have developed strategic partnership in terms of agreeing Indo-Iran defense agreement which was signed between Iran defense and logistic minister and Indian Naval Chief and the Chairman of the Chief of Staff Committee.¹³⁶ Such kinds of mutual gestures show common geo-strategic aspirations.

India-Iran relationship is multifaceted and based on economic and geopolitical strategic reasons. She has full of natural resources, namely oil and gas and stand on the world's fourth largest in oil reserves and second largest in natural gas reserves.¹³⁷ Due to economic sanctions, she could not get beneficent from her huge natural oil resources. On the other hand, India's economy is global emerging economy of the world along with having second largest world's population. She is the big buyer of Iranian oil in

¹³⁵ Omer Aslan, "Pakistan: Balancing Between Iran and Saudi Arabia, the Sha, Ayatollahs and Kings," *Al Sharq Forum* (2017): 42.

¹³⁶ Ali, "the Post-Imperial World" 10.

¹³⁷ "Iran-International Energy Data and Analyses," *U.S. Energy Information Administration* June 19, 2015, [1.http://www.eia.gov/beta/international/analysis_includes/countries_long/Iran/iran.pdf](http://www.eia.gov/beta/international/analysis_includes/countries_long/Iran/iran.pdf).

international market. She imports 80 percent of crude oil and 40 percent natural gas from Iran which is necessary for maintaining her economic growth.¹³⁸ Indo-Iran cooperation is highly motivated for energy thrust. In return, Iran maintains her economic liberalization through doing trade with Iran, acquires technical assistance, receives refined petroleum products and to some extent can overcome economic isolationism.

On matters of Afghanistan, policies of India are supportive to Tehran's enthusiasm. After 9/11, India supported economically to new Afghan regime and provided technical and strategic assistance in fields of training Afghanistan security personals. With the toppling of Taliban regime, Pakistan lost her influence which was gained during Afghan-war in the result of supporting Pushtone dominated jihadist elements and Taliban. India replaced influence of Pakistan by supporting new regime in many ways. In addition, Iran established good relationship with new regime in Kabul because she was not confident with Taliban regime due to ideological differences and divergent policies.

India is investing in Afghanistan at large scale on the development of country's infrastructure. She wants to access energy-rich Central Asia through using Afghanistan. India and Iran are both working in Afghanistan on shared agendas. In 2000, Iran and India along with Russia agreed on idea of new International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC) through Caspian Sea by avoiding Suez Canal for reaching Northern Europe.¹³⁹ However, the project could not be materialized due to lack of infrastructure and weak institutions in CARs and in the states of Persian Gulf.

After the completion of the drawdown, India and Iran will be key players in Afghanistan. Meanwhile, the strategic environment of South Asia in terms of Sino-Pakistan strategic relationship poses challenges to India's rise. Therefore, India is enhancing influence in the region through ushering influence in Afghanistan for maintaining regional hegemony and countering China's rise.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu, *The United States, India and Iran: Managing A Delicate Balance* (New York, Center on Cooperation International, 2016): 8.

¹³⁹ Ignatiev, "Pakistan and Iran," 52.

¹⁴⁰ C. Christine Fair, *India in Afghanistan and Beyond: Opportunities and Constraints* (New York, the Century Foundation, 2010), 5.

The other area of Indo-Iran cooperation is Chahbahar port that has importance geo-economically. India is working on the development of the port for reaching energy-rich Central Asian States (CARS) through connecting landlocked Afghanistan to Iran's seaports.¹⁴¹ The failure of JACPOA was huge setback for economic agreements of India with Iran. It raised apprehensions over the Indian investment and also affected on the trade with Iran. Similarly, two other projects of oil field had been affected such as Farzad-B oil field in Tehran and South Pars gas field.

On the other hand, Iran maintains good relations with Pakistan through cultural and diplomatic gestures for balancing and avoiding totally alienation with Pak-archrival India. Iran always stands with Pakistan on Kashmir issue and condemns the violations of human rights by India. In addition, Pakistan shows neutrality on Middle Eastern issues and does not support one player on the expense of other. Pakistan maintains strategic relationship with Saudi Arabia for achieving geo-economics and strategic interests and meanwhile she has cordial relations with neighboring Iran

3.3. Pakistan and Iran formal interactions

Pakistan and Iran have greater opportunities in the field of socio-economic developments. In addition, both have signed different bilateral agreements which provide common way for strengthening bilateralism. For instance, both have agreed on trade and commerce bilateralism, energy cooperation and security related agreements.

3.3.1 Trade and Economic Relations

There are vast opportunities in economic domain between both states. Iran, being second largest country in natural gas reserves, provides Pakistan energy opportunity to overcome energy crisis as well as energy transformation will diminish her economic isolationism as well. Historically, both were close in economic and trade relations during the era of Sha of Iran. The irritants in promoting trade relations are related to internal and external factors like instability in Pakistan, lacking of banking system, international

¹⁴¹ V. Suresh and K. Ramesh, "India-Iran relations: Prospects and challenges," *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations* 9 (2015): 382.

economic sanctions on Iran, her distinguish foreign policy outlook and divergences between Pakistan and Iran in global and regional affairs. The Afghan factor highly influences their bilateralism, creates trust-deficit that eventually affects trade and socio-economic agreements. However, both have established some economic linkages through signing agreements in the field of socio-economic developments. Due to external and internal factors, both could not get full potential of these agreements. However, these socio-economic agreements are having greater importance for creating more economic interdependence.

In the aftermath of 9/11, the convergence of strategic and geopolitical environment emerged in Afghanistan which resumed their bilateralism. With the positive developments in Afghanistan, they agreed to reestablish trade and economic relations. In March 2004, both agreed for the relaxation over duties on commodities through signing Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA). Pakistan gave concession on 338 items and in return Tehran gave duty concession on 309 items. Eventually this agreement was significant development for reaching Free Trade Agreement (FTA). Such kind of economic and Trade liberalization is conducive for cordial relationship. Pakistan-Iran trade balance remained in favor of Iran during the fiscal year of 2003-2004. In next year during 2009, Pakistan was the fifth trade partner of Iran with 1 billion dollars annually.¹⁴² Pakistan imported mineral commodities, steel and oil and in return Iran imported rice, meal, paper and fruit.

Trade and Economic relations are important for enhancing economic interdependence and cordial relationship. Currently, trade volume is low between two states. Pakistan is placed 11th largest trade partner of Iran by International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the year 2013. The trade volume with neighboring states Iraq and Turkey stood at \$12 billion and \$22 billion respectively. China is the biggest trade partner with the trade volume of \$40 billion while has not shared border.¹⁴³ In addition, both are trying to boost their economic relations. They have established Joint Economic Commission (JEC) and signed Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) for ultimately to reach Free Trade Zone (FTZ).

¹⁴² "Pakistan-Iran Relations", 10.

¹⁴³ Aziz, "Iran-Pakistan Relations," 29.

Both are working for enhancing the trade and economic relations. In the visit of the vice president of Iran for International Affairs, Ali Seedlou signed three agreements as a Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) for the promotion of trade and economic relations. Both agreed to promote trade volume worth of five billion US dollar and announced assistance for the construction of Iran-Pakistan gas pipe line.¹⁴⁴

CPEC is the best opportunity for energy rich Iran as well as it provides chance for the promotion of economic ties. In March 2016, Iran's President Hassan Rohani visited Pakistan and met with Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. Both agreed for boosting economic and trade ties which are necessary for regional development.¹⁴⁵ Both agreed to enhance bilateral trade volume of \$5 billion by 2021.¹⁴⁶ However, it is difficult to boost economic ties with Iran due to the US pressure and economic sanctions. The diplomacy tools should be used for taking relaxation in promoting trade.

3.3.2 Agreements in Energy Sector

Energy is considered an important element in maximization of state's economy as well as energy security has become foremost agenda for state's survival and stability. Now it has become the part of geopolitics. The oil and gas named as hydrocarbons are the main source for energy needs. Pakistan-Iran cooperation in energy sector is not only beneficial for its crippling economy rather it has positive implications for whole south Asia. Pakistan's geographical location as well as her geographical proximity with energy rich Iran provides opportunities where Energy transformation can help for crippling economy of Pakistan as well as it diminishes Iran's isolationism. Pakistan is facing great shortage of electricity which affected the country's economic growth rate and humans' life as well. Both states have agreed on different energy related agreements such Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline (IP) as well as having agreements of electricity transformations in

¹⁴⁴ Manzoor Ahmad, Zahir Shah and Jehangir Khan, "Pakistan-Iran Relationship in the Context of Regional and International Challenges (2001-2013)," *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 4 (2014): 414.

¹⁴⁵ Usman Javed, "Toward Stronger and Economic Relations between Pakistan and Iran," *The Diplomat* June 26, 2016, Accessed February 28, 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2016/06/toward-stronger-economic-relations-between-pakistan-and-iran/>.

¹⁴⁶ Claude Rakisits, "Pakistan-Iran Bilateral Relations: More Growth, But Not Close Part One: Afghanistan, India and China," *Future Directions International* (2017): 6.

the frontier region. In 2014, Iran gave 1174ME electricity to Pakistan which includes 174MW power for Makran Division, Gwadar and 1000MW of electricity for Baluchistan and national grid.¹⁴⁷ During the fiscal year of 2016-17, Iran has exported total 482 million kilowatt-hours electricity to Pakistan which is equal to 5% of total Iran's electricity exports with the.¹⁴⁸ In addition, Iran is exporting electricity to Afghanistan and Turkey and working on the project of energy supplier hub for regional countries. Furthermore, Iran's ambassador to Pakistan Mehdi Honardoost proclaimed that Iran is ready to enhance electricity supply to Pakistan for reaching 3000MW.¹⁴⁹

Energy is the key element for country's growth. The per capita energy consumption rate is low in Pakistan which is standing at approximately 456 kilo watt hour (KWh). The other Asian countries' per capita energy growth rate is 646 KWh which is greater than 30% of Pakistan.¹⁵⁰ Eventually such shortage has implications on state's economic growth and compels it to fulfill from energy rich Iran. Pakistan fulfils its energy needs by importing oil and gas from Middle Eastern states primarily from Saudi Arabia. South Asia is important region in global politics but the disagreement over energy pipeline routes is greater problem. India is growing economic and her demand will be doubled in next decade similarly with other regional countries. Therefore, energy routes have become major concerns for US-India relations. For instance, in 2005, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice raised concerns over Tehran-New Delhi discussions over gas pipeline project.¹⁵¹

The global oil reserves are depleting and now these are for more 42 years. Similarly gas reserves will remain 61 years more. Pakistan is facing seriously energy crisis which will be great problem for state life in long run. The geographical disposition of energy rich states such Central Asian States (CARs) and Iran provide a great chance for Pakistan to

¹⁴⁷ "1174MW electricity to be imported from Iran" *Custom Today*, December 9, 2014, <http://www.customstoday.com.pk/1174mw-electricity-to-be-imported-from-iran/>.

¹⁴⁸ "Iran Power Export to Pakistan Up 5%," *Financial Tribune*, December 10, 2017, <https://financialtribune.com/articles/energy-economy/77618/iran-power-export-to-pakistan-up-5>.

¹⁴⁹ "Iran to Increase electricity supports to Afghanistan, Pakistan" *The Nation*, April 09, 2018, <https://nation.com.pk/09-Apr-2018/iran-to-increase-electricity-export-to-pakistan-afghanistan>.

¹⁵⁰ Anzar Mahmood, et al, *Pakistan's Energy Import Options* (Proceedings of 2nd International Multi-Disciplinary Conference, 2016), 2.

¹⁵¹ John E. Peters, *War and Escalation in South Asia* (California: RAND Corporation, 2006), 55.

overcome the energy crisis. The gas pipeline (IP) is essential project to overcome the crisis without searching other alternative route. Historically, the project conceptualized by both states in 1989 and next year India joined the project. In 1999, India became partner officially after removing her apprehensions over the use of territory of Pakistan for reaching to India.¹⁵² The pipeline starts from the South Perls gas field, passing through Bandar-Abbas, Iranshahr and Khuzdar for reaching Sui to Multan. In 2009, India quitted from the project and the partners remained were National Iranian Oil Company, Sui Northern Gas Pipeline Limited, and Sui Southern Gas Company Limited. The total length of the pipeline is 2,775 kilometers which exists From Iran side 1100 Km (730 miles), and Pakistan 1000 Km. The cost is US \$ 7.5 billion and gas exports 22 billion cubic meters per year.¹⁵³

The project is significantly important for some profound reasons. The demand and supply equation elaborates the necessity of the project. The demand and supply of energy resources are increasing day by day which compel the states for reaching urgent energy routes. In this regard, IP is important for economic development of the whole region. It will connect to all regional states through economic interdependence.

The reasons of delay in the project are related economic and political reasons and the economic sanctions on Iran as well. There are number of players who are willing to invest in the project such as British, Russia, and Iran and Pakistan national Petroleum companies. The political acceptability of project requires realistic approach by enhancing collateral energy trade. China is emerging influential payer in regional political and having the status of de-facto regional hegemon. The project would be useful to other stakeholders Russia, India and US. The use of effective diplomatic for convincing all stakeholders and realization of benefit of project will provide a chance for the completion of IP. Furthermore, the economic and socio-politically importance of IP compels Pakistan to implementation of the IP agreement even with some delay. However, IP got immense

¹⁵²Muhammad Umar Farooq, "Pakistan-Iran Pipeline Project; a Liberal Perspective," *ISSRA Papers* 4 (2012): 119.

¹⁵³ *Ibid*: 121.

important after joining China and proposed to invest \$2 billion by connecting this project to Gwadar port.¹⁵⁴

3.3.3 Security Agreements

The security of both states closely interlinked with each other due to geographical proximity, convergence of regional security environment as well as having ethno-religious linkages. Historically, both states remained closed for neutralization of security constraints through dependency over other territory on the idea of strategic leverage during cold-war period under the Sha of Iran. Pakistan and Iran share frontier region through the province of Baluchistan which itself is poorest and vulnerable due to unrest and volatile security situation. The frontier region terrain is mountainous and desert oriented which is attractive place for terrorists. On the other hand, the region has become hub for drug smuggling and illicit activities for different terrorist groups. Furthermore, the fragile situation of Afghanistan as well as rise of terrorism after 9/11 heightened the volatile situation and cross border terrorism. To address all these challenges, both states have been signed different security related agreements.

Different insurgent groups are operating in Baluchistan region and they change their location between two states. The insurgent Baloch group Jundullah which is based in Iran's province of sistan-Baluchistan along with two branches JaishulAdl and Jaishul Nasr. They have developed substantial linkages in the Baluchistan province. The judullah's founding father Abdul Malik rigi was executed by Iran in June 2010 with the help of Pakistani authorities. Similarly, his brother Abdul Rauf Rigi was arrested by Pakistan authorities in 2010 and later in 2014 shot dead in Quetta. Meanwhile Iranian authorities have been launched different combat operations inside the territory of Pakistan against such kind of groups. In May 2014, both state agreed for elimination of terrorist groups and illicit activities by initiating joint operations.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴Zahir Shah and Ijaz Khalid, "Pakistan-Iran Relations in the Changing Global Scenario Post 9/11" *Journal of Applied Environmental and Biological Sciences* 56 (2015): 211.

¹⁵⁵ Safdar Sial, *An analysis of emerging Pakistani-Iranian ties* (Nowegian Peacebuilding Resources Center, 2015): 3.

In February 2013, both are signed comprehensive bilateral agreement for cut down all illicit activities, drug and narcotics smuggling as well as for the total elimination of cross border terrorism. In 2014, there signed nine bilateral security agreements in the visit of Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to Iran. These were the inclusion of counter terrorism agreements as well boarder security measurements. A High Border Commission was established for the prevention of money laundering and financial support to terrorist groups. In addition, two more agreements were signed for information sharing related to money laundering and one other agreement for the prison exchange.¹⁵⁶

3.4 Geographical and Strategic linkages

Pakistan and Iran have geographical and strategic linkages that adjacent both states such as shared security concerns, geographical and oceanic proximity.

3.4.1 Shared Security Concerns

Pakistan and Iran are not only geographical, historical and cultural close states rather they comprise the common security regional environment. They have neither involved in any dispute over the territorial issue nor have disputed borders. They are located in different regions such South Asia and West Asia. Further, they have distinguished historical backgrounds in terms of Pakistan faced colonial rule while Iran remained free of any colonial rule. But their security calculus and strategic imperatives led to them into strategic cooperation and alliance. For instance, the cold-war period was highly vulnerable phase for both sates due to emanating threat from Soviet expansionism. They neutralized the vulnerability through strategic relationship through joining US-led Baghdad pact and later converted it into Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). Moreover, both were the supporters of local Afghanistan warlords against Soviet's invasion during Afghan war in 1979. So the threat perception and strategic shared calculus compelled them for responsive measures instead of having respective geopolitical interests.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid: 3.

The ideological factor plays significant role in making the foreign policy. The attitudes of individuals shape policies of the government. It is important to know for the policy makers that how people do think differently.¹⁵⁷ The ideology plays significant role in shaping attitudes of the individuals. Both states have common religion Islam and it is a dominant theory in decision making which lead towards both into mutual junctures against anti-Islamic forces. However, Iran's dominated Shiite brand of Islam, her regional rivalry to Saudi Arabia and different political systems affect the Pakistan's foreign policy. The religious intimacy is underlying factor for giving status to Iran as brother country. In addition, common religion also gives shared response against anti-Islam and to some extent shapes common security challenges.

Further, the primary reason of shared security environment is related geopolitical factors such as geographical proximity with each other and with common neighbor Afghanistan. The turmoil and instability in Afghanistan raises security concerns for both Pakistan and Iran while former is also facing security tensions on eastern border with India. Further, both feel vulnerability from the presence of the US military forces in Afghanistan. Furthermore, the socio-political and security affairs of Afghanistan are highly connected to Pakistan-Iran security challenges. All these factors make shared security calculus. Both states cannot neutralize security tension unless developing coordination in security issues. Therefore, both have signed different security agreements for curbing cross border terrorism and controlling illicit activities. However, multilateral cooperation is prerequisite for ensuring security particularly in Pakistan.

3.4.2 Cooperation and interdependence for Mutual Prosperity

Pakistan and Iran are located in a common geo-strategic landscape where bilateralism and cooperation can promote prosperity across the whole region. They belong to different regions but strategic compulsion and security regional posture brings two states closer to each other. Iran is gifted with very important geo-strategic location along with having abundant natural resources. Their relationship is highly dependent over third country relations. Iran is located in Gulf region with distinguish foreign policy

¹⁵⁷ Nicholas Fred Martini, "The role of ideology in foreign policy attitude formation" (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 2012).

outlook, anti-US oriented and challenging US hegemonic aspirations. Whereas Pakistan's liberal perspective and so-called cooperation with US limits Pakistan for improving relations with Iran. Meanwhile the US sanctions over Iran as well as the US pressure on Pakistan hinder their relations. However, mutual bilateralism is benefited for Iran and Pakistan as well as it will flourish prosperity across the region.

3.4.3 Geographical and Oceanic Proximity

Geography is very important in defining state's interests, power as well as determines foreign policy decision making. Moreover, it is important for the state's security, defense and it plays an important role in the geopolitical configurations. It defines geographical location with neighbors and has greater share in promoting relations with neighboring states. Accordingly, Geographical location plays significant role in shaping foreign policy as well as in drafting national interest. It defines neighbor states there are geographical and oceanic proximity between two states which dated back to common land.

In Beginning, Pakistan's geography was divided into Eastern and Western hemispheres (East and West Pakistan) where underlying distance was one thousand Miles along with hostile India between them. It is important to note that Pakistan is located in South Asia whereas it has easily access to Central Asia, Middle East via Afghanistan and Persian Gulf respectively. Moreover, Geographical interconnectedness is strengthened with the cultural and spiritual linkages to Central Asian States and Middle Eastern countries on the basis of shared historical configurations. Additionally, it can provide access to warm waters to landlocked energy rich CARs via Afghanistan and western hemisphere of China. Pakistan is located in the surrounding of big neighbors China and India as well as having strategical important oceanic proximity.

Historically, Pakistan's western hemisphere Baluchistan province and Iran were under the same empire of the Achaemenians and the monarchies of Ghazna. Similarly it was regarded as one unit strategically during British rule India. There were exist sea oriented trade linkages which remained constant until the development of other infrastructure road

and railways.¹⁵⁸ Both countries comprise geo-strategically an important landmark on world's energy routes. The Makran Coast is important which connects Arabian Sea to Indian Ocean whilst Persian Gulf is important which located on Caspian Sea.

3.5 China Factor

China factor is important in emerging Pakistan-Iran bilateralism as well as it plays significant role in shaping geopolitical environment. China's economic relationship with South Asian countries as well as her strategic and multi-dimensional relationship with Pakistan gives greater leverage to China in the regional politics. Further, China has established economic and geopolitical linkages with Iran. Meanwhile, Pakistan-US relationship has been worsened due to security and geopolitical reasons. After the US drawdown from Afghanistan in 2014, rift between US and Pakistan started due to dilution of security concerns. However, Pakistan remains important for the US until the completion of reconciliation process and peace talks in Afghanistan. In this regard, the China factor has become important geo-strategically and economically.

Pakistan-China economic bilateralism has profound implications for Pak-Iran relations. CPEC is pilot project which is considered game changer. China is full aware of geostrategic importance of CPEC. It fulfills not only china's economic and commercial needs rather than it is significant for preserving strategic interests. In fact, it will able to China for monitoring the US-India naval movements in Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean and it will give access to control the sea trade from strait of Hormuz. Further, it will provide alternative transit route for china and shortest way to access Persian Gulf. Gwadar port connects china through it western hemisphere which is least developed than eastern hemisphere. The hemisphere will develop after the completion of passing energy routes in this region. CPEC is substantial strategic defender of China and Pakistan against India's hegemonic moves in the region and counters the influence of the US in the region.

China is emerging global economic power and having greater influence in the geopolitics due to has great share of world's economy. The 21st century is considered as Asian

¹⁵⁸Khalida Qureshi, "Pakistan and Iran- A Study in Neighborly Diplomacy," *Pakistan Horizon* 21 (1968): 33.

century where Asian regional powers China and Russia will dominate the US in global affairs. Russo-China bilateralism poses challenge for the US hegemony across the globe. It is important to discuss China factor that has great influence in regional environment of South Asia.

3.5.1 Chinese and Russian Responses to US Hegemony

After the outrage of 9/11 attacks, every states of the world highly condemned the turbulent event by providing full support to the US against terrorism including China and Russia. Both states have competitive relationship with the US at the international level as well as challenge hegemonic policies of the US particularly in the affairs of Mideast. Moreover, Russia already (former Soviet Union) has remained antagonistic in cold-war period. Their historical convergent backdrop provided both states china and Russia to adopt pro-west policies in accordance to new threat of international terrorism on rational bases. Although, China and Russia both have different nature of interaction with the US but commonality also exists in their nature of relationship. Both are having fear of threat to the rise of US in their regions. China is playing pivotal role in South Asian affairs along with Russia.

Russo-China relationship with US in the aftermath of 9/11 shapes geopolitical environment at global level. In addition, this study defines implications for Pakistan-Iran relationship. In the beginning of GWOT, both joined the US-led war for protecting geopolitical interests in changing dynamics of international system. The foreign policy choices were carried on rational conclusion of security environment in their regional perspective. Moreover, the subsequent developments of post 9/11 and the US unilateral decisions portrayed the confronting landscape for the relations between United States and these two states.

As far China concerns over GWOT, she joined GWOT in the initial phase due to facing domestic security challenges in terms of radical extremist and separatist movements in the province of Xinjiang. The chinses extremist groups were highly influenced by Islamic extremist militants working in Afghanistan as well as in Central Asian. The Uyghur, a distinguish identity group in the province of Xinjiang western part of china,

uprisings for their rights are highly influenced by radical militant groups. The foreign infiltration in the Muslim dominated region come in practices from the neighboring countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan and interlinked central Asian states. When the airstrikes carried out on Afghanistan 2001, china provided full support against Taliban. Moreover the US had claimed four Uyghur groups in terrorist watch list and some of their personals were prisoned from Taliban controlled village.

On the other hand, the post 9/11 developments were beyond to the elimination of terrorism and extremism rather than believing on constant intervention to overthrow the challenging regime. The War on terror further enhanced to invasion on Iraq in 2003 and exaggerated to direct interventions in the Middle Eastern affairs such as in Libya and Syrian crisis and aggression on Yemen. As far developments on South China Sea for encircling china as well US military presence in South Asia posed challenge for geostrategic interests of China.

In 2004, the report of 9/11 commission proclaimed Central and Eastern Europe as a region of potential affected by terrorism.¹⁵⁹ Similarly Balkans region has been considered vulnerable for terrorists activities. As far Russia's response on war on terror, it was not quite different to US retaliation against Taliban and extremist groups. The President Putin, coming in power in 2000, also called for international measures against Taliban regime in Afghanistan and banning the Islamic extremist groups which were operating in Balkan region and getting support from Al Qaida. Russia supported the sanctions on Taliban and harboring state along with US in the United Nations. The Tragic attack of 9/11 came closer to each state on common cause to crush extremist elements throughout the world.

Both shared common objective but the Russia's perception about terrorism was quite different to US perception. Former believes that the terrorism is inside state phenomena generated within the state due to badly situation such as poverty, political disorder and social welfare deficiency. However, Moscow provided assistance to Washington preemptive strikes on Afghanistan as well as supported in Central Asian states to

¹⁵⁹ "9/11 Commission Report," March 11, 2018, <http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/index.htm>.

eliminate extremist groups. The footprints of Al Qaida had spread over central Asian states as well to Georgia and Chechnya. US considered terrorism in Balkens as reason for the engagement in the region.¹⁶⁰ As far concerned to Chechnya, the Putin administration proclaimed it the result of infiltration of extremist foreign fighters and their linkages to Chechnya's militants groups. Moreover different extremist groups emerged in Central Asian Republicans States (CARs) were the security concerns to Russia. The neutralization of threat would be resolved through aligning the War on Terror for common enemy.

In the initial stage, the preemptive strikes were favored Moscow's ambitions and even provided some kind of support. But the US expansionism towards different states in the Balkans and extra involvement in the regional affairs has threatened to Russia's geopolitical interest. In addition, these developments became divergent point of exit to the war. The preemptions, which were the inclusion of Bush grand strategy, extended to Iraq, Syria and Yemen debited the conflictual situation for major powers. As US concerns over Iran's activism in Middle Eastern affairs neglected by Russia due to geopolitical interest in the region. In the Syrian crisis, Russia supported anti-US powers along with non-state actors and protected Assad's regime. As far the different parts of the US strategies of war on terror were limited accepted and mostly condemned on different levels.

The changing dynamic of Afghanistan after the withdrawal of the US forces in Obama tenure provided a chance for Russia to enhance influence in the affairs. Russians having good relations with Iran can reshape the situation in its interests. Russia and Iran have friendly relations despite former history of imperialism. Their relationship is based upon pragmatic necessity. Both have geostrategic relationship particularly when Moscow transformed three Kilo-class submarines.¹⁶¹ Moreover, Russia also had incentives in Pakistan's grand economic project with China. Due to changing regional dynamics and

¹⁶⁰ Steven Woehrel, "*Islamic Terrorism and the Balkans*," (Washington, D.C: CRS Report for Congress, 2005), 8.

¹⁶¹ By man, *Iran's Security*, 59-60.

developments, she has come closer to Pakistan. In this regard, Iran and Pakistan would establish cordial relations after having another common partner of Russia.

3.5.2 Emerging China-Russia Nexus in South Asian Affairs

China is playing significant role in South Asian politics through maintaining multidimensional relationship with Pakistan, economic support to Afghanistan and economic and trade relations with India and Iran. Meanwhile, the regional configurations are developing geopolitically where new alliances are on emergence and formers are on decline. In post-cold era, Russia limited itself to bilateralism with India, a key regional player, for geo-economic interest. In the wake of 9/11, US invaded Afghanistan that generated geopolitical and security challenges for Russia.

The post 9/11 developments affected South Asia affairs which compelled Russia for showing activism by taking comprehensive measures against terrorism and drug trafficking. Furthermore, Russia asserted for the projection of effective relationship with key regional countries India and Pakistan. Similarly, it was proclaimed for restoring peace and stability through constructive engagement with regional states and non-state actors as well.¹⁶² Generally, Russia foreign policy considerations are mainly based upon the security reasons where instability and terrorism are the matters of geopolitical concerns.

Historically, Sino-Russian intimacy formed in the beginning of cold war against anti-communism bloc. The relationship could not maintain cordial due to Soviet's divergent approached in Tibet crisis, Cuban missile crisis as well as support to India during China-India in 1962. The post cold period set the US global hegemony as well as US-China relations started to worse due to respective geopolitical orientations. After cold war, the strategic and geopolitical changes in international system led towards China-Russia rapprochement the relationship which culminated with strategic partnership in short times. Consequently, both became strategic partners in 1996 as well as their relations

¹⁶²Vladimir Moskalenko and Petr Topychkanov, "Russia and Pakistan: Shared Challenges and Common Opportunities," *Carnegie Moscow Center* (2014): 4.

enhanced paramount level with the signing the treaty of cooperation and friendship in 2001.¹⁶³

Later on, Sino-Russia bilateralism enhanced with the visits of highly official form both sides which resulted economic, political, cultural and strategical linkages. Furthermore, Sino-Russia bilateralism enhanced at significant level in the Chinese premier Xi Jinping high level official visit to Russia in 2013. The mutual gestures has not only diminished bitter history animosity of cold rather it restored mutual interest at global level. Consequently, both states support each other on regional and international level. China supports Russia in the volatile situation in Middle East as well as later push back on issue of South-China Sea.

Moreover, Russia intended to cooperate with China on the matters of South Asia. In February 2012, Putin described Russia's foreign policy over south Asia in his article "Russia and the Changing World". He outlined the perceptions over China in detail as well as discussed possible mutual gestures for resolving geopolitical issues.¹⁶⁴

Generally, Sino- Russia bilateralism is the result of action or reactions of the US maneuvers in South Asia as well as for protecting shared geopolitical interests through containing Indo-US partnership. Indo-US strategic relationship provides support to regional hegemonic aspirations as well as it counters China's influence. Accordingly, the 9/11 developments favored US hegemonic desires as well as it envisioned South Asia epicenter for geopolitical interest among global actors. China-Russia intimacy in South Asia affairs is result of some geopolitical and strategic factors such as US military presence in Afghanistan, war on terror and US strategic relationship with India.

3.5.3 Pakistan's Strategic Relationship with China and Russia

Pak-China relationship dated back from the recognition status to new born government of People Republic of China (PRC). The positive gesture led toward the

¹⁶³ Shabir Ahmad Malik and Vikas K. Jambhulkar, "China-Russia-Pakistan Strategic Nexus: A Beginning of New geopolitical Great Game in South Asia," *International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Literature* 6 (2018): 107.

¹⁶⁴ Vladimir Putin, "Russia and the Changing World," *Moscow News*, February 27, 2012, <http://themoscownews.com/politics/20120227/189488862.html>.

status of All-weather friend to china. The Sino-Pakistan bilateralism has reached a high level great momentum which generated multilateral cooperation. China assisted Pakistan economically, politically and strategically for geopolitical interest. Meanwhile, China is playing constructive role in Pakistan's affairs as well as having significantly leveraged in South Asian affairs. Historically, the common threat perception from India's aggression led towards strategic partnership. Moreover, both have established multidimensional relationship cooperation in different field instead of having cultural, social and historical differences. Their relationship enhanced to regional and global context after "Bandung Conference" in 1955. Both were agreed for enhancing multi-dimensional relations in economic, political and socio-cultural linkages. In fact, the convergence of geopolitical interests are played role in strengthening bilateralism as well as it led them to supporting each other's on different issues.

Moreover, shared interest and similar threat perception led towards interdependency among both states for gaining strategic and geopolitical interests. In periods of hardships, China always come to rescues through extending support via diplomatically, economically , politically and strategically. It also extended support on international forums in the times of international pressure over Pakistan and sided diplomatically such as Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the G-20 etc.¹⁶⁵ In return, Pakistan always stood with China's stance over different issues such as Taiwan or Xinjiang crisis as well as provided support in the geopolitical affairs of South Asia.

Pakistan-Russian bilateralism is new regional development which has profound implications for the regional environment as well as has positive implications on Pakistan-Iran relations. Historically, their relations were worse due to Pakistan's alignment with western bloc. Moreover, Russia's hostility increased when Pakistan decided to support Afghan Mujahedeen against Soviets forces during Afghan war (1979-1989) by establishing strategic relationship with the US. In the subsequent years of cold war, their relations could not be flourished due to Pakistan's closeness with US as well as

¹⁶⁵ Asma Rashid, "Pak-China Partnership: US and India's Response," *Margalla Papers* 21 (2017): 249.

Russia maintained bilateralism with India. After 9/11, there were occurred some changes on regional level which allows other players to intervene in the region. The downfall of Taliban regime in Afghanistan, rising militancy and terrorism as well as US military operations in Afghanistan created un-stability in Afghanistan and problems for other states. Moreover, the US and India established strategic relationship as well as their bilateralism enhanced in Afghan affairs. Such kinds of developments influenced Russian's approach to South Asian affairs and especially towards Pakistan. The US policy of "Asia's Pivot" and "Chain's string of pearl" has implications for regional countries in emerging power balancing equations. Consequently, the triangular relationship among three nuclear powers China, Russia and Pakistan might pose serious challenge to US domination.¹⁶⁶

The India-US growing multilateral and strategic relationship and China-Russia intimacy generated a policy shift in the Russian's approach to Pakistan. There are underlying factors which leads towards new geopolitical alliances in South Asia. Pakistan-Iran Relationship is extremity independent on external factors and geopolitical environment of South Asia. The Cold war period was envisioned with struggle between two blocs for their respective geopolitical ends in South Asia. So Pakistan's alignment with western bloc influenced its relationship with Iran. With the demise of bipolarity in international system as well as emergence of new global powers has changed the international environment.

Pakistan and Russian were agreed to boost economic relations and both have signed 2\$billion agreement for North-South Gas pipeline on 16 October 2015. The gas pipeline will cover the distance form Lahore to Karachi. In August 2015, the strategic cooperation was established after signing as agreement for purchasing Mi-35 'Hind-E' attack helicopters form Russian. Meanwhile, Russia has started to provide diplomatic support to Pakistan on different issues. Furthermore, their bilateralism enhanced after conducting joint-military exercise. Pakistan has established strategic convergence with China and

¹⁶⁶ Shabir Ahmad Malik, Vikas K. and Jambhulkar, "China-Russia-Pakistan Strategic Nexus: A Beginning of New Geopolitical Great Game in South Asia," *International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Literature* 6 (2018): 107.

Russia in the changing regional dynamics of South Asia which also strengthened triangular relationship.

3.5.4 China's Increasing Influence

China is emerging global economic player economically as well as having geopolitical influence worldwide and South Asia particularly. China is a dynamic state, containing border with fourteen states and has established close relationship with the states on the basis of peace promotion and economic liberalization. It is growing fast economy and contributing regional politics through using soft power strategies. China is on the strategy “going west” and investing in Pakistan’s Gwadar as well as establishing gas pipeline that will run through Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan toward Iran.¹⁶⁷ Similarly, China’s investment will be beneficial for the development of western part as well as give access to energy rich regions and Iran. The international political fate is shifting from Europe to Asia due to rise of dynamic Asian actors such as China, India and etc .Accordingly, it is considered Asia century due to geopolitical developments across the globe. China is maintaining its rise by projecting peaceful rise as well as establishing relationships through economic engagement with different states. China is investing in Pakistan for developing infrastructure. Meanwhile, US is increasing the role in global and Asian affairs through agreeing pacts with Australia, South Korea, Japan, India and ASEAN states. These motives are for the increasing pressure and containing China’s rise in the region of Asia pacific and India-pacific regions. For the containment of China’s economic rise, US with its allies signed Trans-Pacific agreement on 6 October 2015 for enhancing trade and economic opportunities with the regional countries as well as for curtailing China’s trade with ASEAN states.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ John Gordon, et al, *Domestic Trends in the United States, China, and Iran: Implications for U.S. Navy Strategic Planning* (California: RAND Corporation, 2008), 88.

¹⁶⁸ Asma Rashid, “Pak-China Partnership: Us and India’s Response,” *Margalla Papers* 21 (2017): 250.

Chapter 4

FUTURE PROSPECTS OF PAKISTAN-IRAN RELATIONS

Pakistan and Iran are natural allies and their relations never involve any territorial dispute as opposed to Pakistan's relations with other neighboring states India and Afghanistan. The closeness between Pakistan and Iran is dependent on convergences and divergences at state, regional and international level. Further, the external factors like structural constraints and geopolitical developments determine bilateralism or declination between both states. The convergences enhance bilateralism while divergences lead them in different ways. In the light of changing dynamics, the structural convergences provide more intimacy and closeness such as China's emerging role, common positions in Afghanistan and having common wave of anti-Americanism. Meanwhile, divergences also exist in terms of Pakistan-Saudi Strategic partnership and Indo-Iran geo-economic ties make suspicions and divergences. Although, the balancing act by both states makes tactical entente.

The changing dynamics of global politics play constructive role in enhancing bilateralism and usher convergences such as Pak-Iran cooperation in Afghanistan and the US drawdown strategy in Afghanistan. Pakistan is developing good relations with Afghanistan and keen interested in restoring peace because stable Afghanistan is imperative for Pakistan's internal security.¹⁶⁹ However, divergent variables also exist and affects the relationship in terms of Indo-Iran nexus, India's increasing role in Afghanistan along with Iran as well as Pakistan's strategic and economic closeness with Saudi Arabia. All these variables, factors and scenario are discussed for analyzing futures prospects.

4.1 Convergence and Divergence at International Level

At International level, the changing dynamics and developments shape cooperative and competitive environment or divergences and convergences which play significant role in determining further cooperation or competition in Pak-Iran relations.

¹⁶⁹ Safdar Sial, *Pakistan's role and strategic priorities in Afghanistan since 1980*, (Norwegian Peace Building Resource Center, 2013), 1.

The complex interdependence in Pak-Iran's interaction and role of major powers along with changing dynamics of South Asia and Middle East elaborate future picture of collaboration between Pakistan and Iran. For instance, Iran's bilateralism with China and Russia challenges US hegemonic aspirations and paves positivity for increasing relations with Pakistan.

Conversely, Iran's anti-US rhetoric restricts activism with pro-US Pakistan. Moreover, Pakistan's strategic relations with Saudi Arabia create distance with Iran for the enhancing relations. These intervening factors are on decline in terms of Pakistan's showing enthusiasm with Iran and adopted successful balanced approach over the affairs of Middle East. The role of China has enhanced in South Asian particularly after CPEC and One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative and it provides an opportunity where Pakistan-Iran-China can develop trilateral relationship for enhancing trade and economics. In addition, the US has declared drawdown strategy of military forces from Afghanistan as well as trust deficit and bitterness also exists between Pak-US relations particularly over the issue of terrorism. In this regard, Pak-US bitterness would create more closeness of Pakistan with Iran.

Pak-Iran relationship has been influenced by divergent geopolitical maneuvers of Saudi Arabia and Iran. In addition, Pak-Iran relations also have been remained tense over the of Pakistan's ties with the US and Saudi Arabia as well as due to their influence in internal affairs of Pakistan. The strategic and economic linkages to Saudi Arabia and geographical proximity with Iran compel Pakistan for adopting balanced (not-conflictual) approach regarding rivals states.

4.1.1 Pakistan's Successful Balanced Approach to Iran-Saudi Rift

Pakistan has balanced approach regarding Saudi Arabia and Iran and remains neutral in their conflicts and rivalries. Moreover, she always tries for mediation to break off tensions between both states. Indeed, Saudi Arabia and Iran were having cordial relations during pre-revolution era and they were members of western bloc against communist bloc. Iran-Saudi bitterness enhanced after the fall of Sha of Iran and advent of Islamic Revolution in Iran. The new regime of Iran challenged the regional status quo

and opposed the legitimacy of regional monarchies. The tensions exaggerated into the rivalry because of respective geopolitical interests. Moreover, Iran adopted anti-Americanism rhetoric in foreign policy and opposed involvement of US in the regional affairs of Middle Eastern.

The policy of expansionism was carried out for spreading Islamic revolutionary narrative across the Muslims countries. Thus, Tehran's anti-US regional aspirations and challenging US hegemony by annoying US regional allies Saudi Arabia, Israel and other Gulf States created dichotomy with Saudi Arabia. Pakistan has close relations with both states on basis of common culture and religious linkages. Iran-Saudi rivalry in the regional affairs affects Pakistan's stability and security.

Historically, Saudi Arabia and Iran both have established linkages in Pakistan. The security of Pakistan was highly affected during the penetration of Saudi petrol dollar in Afghan-Soviet war in 1979 as well as after Islamic revolution of Iran. Saudi Arabia enhanced role in Muslims world particularly Pakistan through economic assistance and petrol dollar. She enhanced the influence in Pakistan through economic and diplomatic support. Iran adopted the expansionism for propagating Islamic Revolution into Muslims countries particularly Pakistan through using socio-cultural and religious linkages. There was seen in rise of sectarianism, violence and extremism which flourished across the country that affected socio-cultural lines of Pakistan.¹⁷⁰ As for Iran-Saudi rivalry in Middle East, the rising tensions and sectarianism in Middle East polarize socio-political and security implications for sectarian oriented sub-continent Pakistan. Saudi-Iran rivalry and proxies are not only in the interest of Pakistan rather it heightens socio-political and security concerns. Thus Pakistan always tries diminishing the tensions which are not in her interest as well as her efforts for reducing tensions between gulf rivals ensure sectarian harmony and promote socio-economic advantages.

Pakistan's foreign policy consists upon improving relations with other Muslims countries as well as she always plays mediator role in conflicts among Muslims countries and remained equidistant. Historically, she tried to resolve issues and conflicts which

¹⁷⁰ Aziz, "Iran-Pakistan Relations," 28.

escalated tensions in Muslim world instead of being partner with one against other. During eight year of war between Iran and Iraq (1979-1988), Pakistan initiated peace mission when President Zia ul Haq visited Tehran for resolution of the conflict.¹⁷¹ Moreover it was the result of Pakistan's efforts when the premiers of both states met in Islamabad on the sidelines of OIC summit which provided an ice-break in their relationship.¹⁷² Similarly, the incident of Mazaar Sharif and the massacre of Hazaras and killings of Iran's diplomats by Taliban in 1997 created warlike situation. The issue was resolved through Pakistan's mediation.

After Soviet retreat in Afghanistan, Pakistan enhanced influence over Afghan's affairs through resorting power to Taliban factions which were antagonists to Tehran's geopolitical and theoretical aspirations. Pakistan along with Saudi Arabia recognized new government. This raised Iran's concerns. Saudi Arabia is the strategic partner that always helped Pakistan during difficult times particularly in the war times with India as well as in the economic crisis.

Pakistan's strategic linkages with Saudi Arabia and cultural and historical intimacy with Iran compel her for adopting balanced approach as well as it leads Islamabad for mediation between them to resolve differences and conflicts. Pak-Iran relationship has different phases of cooperation and competition accordance with the geopolitical regional developments. Generally, natural intimacy and geographical closeness always restrain to both Pakistan and Iran from conflicts even having not growth nor contentious.

The recent turmoil in Middle East in terms of Yemen crisis and Saudi-led coalition attacks on Yemenis generated two different fronts between Iran and Saudi Arabia. The regional divide exist into two blocs in terms of Iran's strategic linkages to Syria and Pro-Iran factions like Hizbullah, anti-Israel force of Hamas and Saudi-led Islamic Military Alliance (IMA) and Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC). The IMA is also supported by US. For instance, US president Donald Trump declared support

¹⁷¹ William Branigin, "Zia Visits Tehran on 'Peace Mission,'" *The Washington Post*, September 28, 1980, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1980/09/28/zia-visits-tehran-on-peace>.

¹⁷² Kashif Mumtaz, "Pakistan's Mediation Efforts in Saudi-Iranian Tensions," (Islamabad, Institute of Strategic Studies, 2016), 1.

to IMF. Such kind of military alliance augmented tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia as well as it disrupted the balance of power in Middle East.¹⁷³ The turmoil in Middle East fuels rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Moreover, both consider each other existential threat.

Considering these regional dynamics, Pakistan is facing great challenges from these regional development in making foreign policy decisions. In addition, Pakistan also took initiatives for mediation on the recent sectarian strife in Middle East. The security of Pakistan is closely linked with the security of Middle Eastern. For instance, she had to face spill over impacts of rising militancy in Iraq and Syria during the rise of Islamic States (IS). The sectarian-political narrative has been escalated by rising conflicts in the region of Middle East such as Yemen war and Syrian crisis. Pakistan is facing long standing sectarian challenge that has affected the whole society. From 1989 to 2014, there were killed 4734 Persons in Sectarians conflicts.¹⁷⁴ The sectarian issue can be resolved through mediation between Iran and Saudi Arabia as well as both can play an important role in reducing or augmenting sectarian strife.

Since the revolution, Iran is working on expansionist policies. She is enhancing influence in regional affairs through coherent policy by undermining regional and global challenges. The regional developments and structural changes after 9/11 provide opportunities for Iran. For instance, toppling of Taliban's regime and fall of Saddam Hussain in Iraq provided opportunity for enhancing influence in regional affairs. After 9/11, the strategic calculus favored Iran's geopolitical agenda as well as proved the US polices catastrophic and failure regarding Iraq, Libya and Syria. Consequently, Iran has ushered influence successfully in the region through strategic partnership with Russian and economic ties with China that has ensured Iran's rise. Along with, Iran has made in

¹⁷³Ladislav Garassy, "Trump's Islamic Military Alliance Threat to Regional Stability," *Foreign Policy Association*, October 11, 2017, <https://foreignpolicyblogs.com/2017/10/11/trumps-islamic-military-alliance-threat-regional-stability/>.

¹⁷⁴Kashif Mumtaz, "The Middle East in Flux: How Should Pakistan Respond?" *Strategic Studies* 35 (2016): 143.

roads with Shiite populations in Qatar, Kuwait, UAE and Saudi Arabia and some regional developments also have favored Iran's rise.¹⁷⁵

Iran enjoys cordial relations with Saudi's neighbor Oman as well as having economic relationship with UAE which makes it second largest trade partner after China. Moreover, Iran has enhanced influence into North Africa and Central Asia and maintained linkages with Shiite Muslims of Nigeria. She also raised concerns and highlighted volatile situation in South Nigeria internationally where Shiite factions fought with Boko Haram militants.¹⁷⁶ After the nuclear deal or Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JACPOA), Iran was going to gain some economic advantages but it has been proved failed by the unilateral withdrawal of the US. However European powers continued to support Iran diplomatically. To some extent, it augmented Iran's prestige at international level. By considering all these changing dynamics, Pakistan-Iran bilateralism would be enhanced after advancing economic relations. Pakistan's geo-economic and geographical compulsion limits to balance approach regarding rival states

The rivalries between Iran and Saudi Arabia are deep-rooted, based upon ideological differences and the result of maximum interference of extra regional players. Thus the success of Pakistan's mediation is limited. Moreover, Pakistan's engagement with both rival states can reduce security concerns and sectarianism within the country. However, the policy of self-dependence, on a rational basis irrespective to Saudi Arabia and Iran, is necessary for maintaining historical and cultural linkages with Iran. The independent foreign policy is a prerequisite for maximizing state's interest while tightrope behavior limits opportunities. Moreover, the changing dynamics of the whole region have greater implications for Pak-Iran relations. However, it is needed to adopt a pragmatic approach.

4.1.2 Pakistan-Iran-China Trilateral Relationship

Pakistan and Iran are having cordial relationship from the inception. However, it also has a history of cooperation, competition and having worrisome relations in different

¹⁷⁵Nazir Hussain and Mansoor Ahmed "Rising Iran: Implications for the Middle East and Pakistan," *Strategic Studies* 36 (2016): 29-31.

¹⁷⁶ "The rise of Iran as a regional power: Shia empowerment and its limits," *NATO Review Magazine*, <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/2016/also-in-2016/iran-regional-power-tehran-islamic/EN/index.htm>.

phases of interaction on the basis of changing dynamics of global politics. The commonality exists in their interaction with China that remains cordial at all times. As far the relationship with China, Pakistan and Iran are having geo-economic and geopolitical relations while former has strategic partnership with China as well. However, the reasons for contentions in relations emanate in their interaction with third country. For instance, Iran has concerns over Pakistan's interaction with Saudi Arabia and the US and similarly Pakistan has concerns over Indo-Iran cooperation.

Moreover, China is advancing role in the geopolitics of Middle East through supporting Russo-Iran's bloc. As far Pak-Iran relations with US and India, divergent exists because of Pakistan's cordiality with US whereas Iran has anti-Americanism narrative as well as having geo-economic ties with India. Moreover, Saudi factor and persistence of sectarianism in Pakistan complicate the bilateralism with Iran. Historically, Pak-US cooperation raised concerns for Iran during Soviet-Afghan war and especially after the 9/11 developments. On the other hand, Iran-India bilateralism has seriously repercussions for Pakistan that would limit further bilateralism.¹⁷⁷ These changing dynamics are the genesis for the formation of new alliances.

Their interaction with third player such as Washington and New Delhi dismays each other especially in the post-9/11 developments. For instance, Indo-Iran geo-economic collaboration over Chahbahar port raised concerns of Pakistan. In addition, political and ideological differences also exist between India and Iran. In this backdrop, Pak-Iran cooperation with China provides strategic hedge against US and gives economic opportunity and common posture for improving bilateralism. Iran considers China an important ally because of her diplomatic and economic support to Iran to overcome the isolationism. In addition, Iran is important state for China because Iran provides leverage against the US influence in Gulf region.

The formation of triangular relationship is clearly assessed in the combination of three scenarios, geopolitical matrix of Afghanistan, China's soft power politics, string of pearls

¹⁷⁷ Muhammad Salman Khan, "Pakistan-Iran-China Triangle: A Game Changer in the Region?," *The Dialogue* 9 (2014): 116.

and increasing role of Shanghai cooperation organization (SCO). The greater South Asia (South Asia plus Afghanistan and Iran) is facing socio-political challenges as well as is passing through the regional developments. All these changing dynamics formed new alliances and strategies.

The geopolitical matrix of Afghanistan has diluted into transition after US drawn down strategy from Afghanistan as well as after shift in Washington's approach regarding South Asia. The US-led war in Afghanistan has proven economic burden for US economy and it has provided free ride for other players. Pakistan-US relations have been strained after killing of Osama Bin Laden (OBL) on Pakistan's soil.

Indo-US strategic cooperation emerged after 9/11 developments which also contains China's growing influence. There was no sole objective of US-led war against terrorism rather it belongs to the containment of china's influence. China looks the presence of the US military forces as encirclement of China because US already has military bases in Japan and South Korea. China raised concerns over ISAF and US forces airbases and perceived it threat for People Republic of China (PRC) and considered it as the US hegemonic aspirations. The closeness of Afghanistan issue to South Asia politics along with India's rise halts China's geopolitical aspirations. The stability in Afghanistan is conducive for China's economic strategy. Similarly, the chaos in Afghanistan has spillover effect on Pakistan's security which ultimately halts the China's massive investment and CPEC. The stability is profound concern of Center of the Beijing's policy. Indo-Pak rivalry on different fronts in Afghanistan raised security apprehensions. Iran-US antagonism and anti-US Tehran's approached led to closeness with China.

The regional China-dominated organization of SCO is the significant part of Triangular relationship. In addition, Afghanistan also got the membership of SCO and she has become matter of concern for SCO. The members of SCO have raised distress over the deteriorated situation in Afghanistan. The solution of the crisis in Afghanistan has been suggested by SOC on realistic foundations which proclaims of demising extra regional involvement, active role of neighboring states and resolving the issues on the understanding of state's internal dynamics. In this regard, Pakistan and Iran are key

neighbor players, having potential to resolving the crisis through using their respective influence.

China is becoming economic player through multi-dimensional and multidirectional growth. The 'String of Pearl' is China's national grand strategy which encompasses china's rise in military modernization, economic boom and diplomatic weight. Thus, China is evolving international strategies through projection of soft power politics, extending the influence Afghanistan-Iran and Pakistan as well as contains Washington's hegemonic maneuvers. Now the focus of the global politics geopolitical has been shifted to Asia. In addition, this century is considered Asian rise where China is emerging as predominant actor.

The regional and international implications of CPEC also favor Pakistan-Iran bilateralism. The enmity of Iran with the US and her policies against the US hegemony lead her to more close with major powers Russia and China. The growing influence of China in Pakistan through CPEC is positive sign for the promotion of Pakistan-Iran's relations. China has need of unprecedented flow of oil, gas and raw materials for ensuring economic rise which requires Sea Lines of Communications (SLOCs) with energy rich states. Therefore, she is enhancing economic relations with energy rich Iran as well as it will also ensure access to CARs. All these developments are the opportunities for promoting trilateral relations among Pakistan, Iran and China.

4.2 Structural Changes at Regional Level

The role of external factors in the bilateral relationship is evident in the different phases of Pakistan-Iran relationship. In addition, the regional environment is decisive actor for defining their relationship. The instability in Afghanistan, GWOT and the US geopolitical ambitions affects Pak-Iran cooperation. Further, Iran's anti Americanism and sanctioned economy limits cooperation with Pakistan. It has been achieved major goal of GWOT after the US drawdown strategy, killing of Osama Bin Laden (OBL), and elimination of Al-Qaida footprints. The shifts in the US policies regarding Afghanistan and changing strategies have geopolitical and economic implications for Pakistan and Iran.

4.2.1 US Disengagement from Afghanistan

The US drawdown strategy confirms gradual withdrawal of US forces till 2024. The withdrawal of NATO and US forces generated reconciliation process in Afghanistan and diverted intention to viable political solution through negotiations. The presence of US forces in Afghanistan is not in the interest of tristate Pakistan, Iran and China. The closeness between the three states would enhance after post-exit period of US from Afghanistan. The US drawdown strategy regarding Afghanistan holds regional implications and ensures possible cooperation between regional key partners Iran and Pakistan. As far Pakistan-China geo-political partnership, both are increasing influence in Afghanistan through providing assistance in reconciliation process. In long turn, Pak-China strategic partnership will lead towards cooperation with Iran after adopting coherent strategy for achieving shared geopolitical goals.

The presence of the US in Afghanistan influences Pakistan-Iran bilateralism as well as this is hurdle for trustworthy coordination with Iran and affects as an intervening variable. Iran looks the presence of US as existential security threat due to geographical proximity with Afghanistan and closer distance of the US military forces to Iran's strategic assets. Iran considers it encirclement and security threat. Further, she looks Pakistan with suspicion due to its closeness with US. Pak-Iran natural intimacy and closeness would not further develop on the level of cordiality till removing of the US factor from Afghanistan and Pak-US cordiality.

Historically, Pakistan-Afghanistan relations has remained unease and hostile over different issues even former assisted Afghanistan economically and strategically especially during refugees crisis and Soviet-Afghanistan. Further, Pakistan faced devastated loss from the chaos within Afghanistan after the Afghan war and during GWOT. The drawdown strategy provides changing discourse of Pakistan's foreign relations with Afghanistan. Pakistan's long term goal in Afghanistan is peace and stability which is to be ensured by non-interference, developing mutual interest and with the initiation of Afghan's government-led talks. Pakistan's post-2014 strategy must be

supportive to US and NATO withdrawal as well as the withdrawal will also diminish grievances and vulnerabilities the people of Afghanistan.¹⁷⁸ Further, Afghanistan is facing chaos, instability and violence due to internal power sharing problems between Kabul and Taliban. In addition, US-NATO presence halts the situation socio-politically in terms of rising concerns of people of Afghanistan and makes ground for local warriors and Taliban for battlefield.

The US-Afghanistan strategic partnership agreement ensures long term relationship particularly in post-exist period of US drawdown. The agreement concludes for allowing five more US military bases in Afghanistan. In addition, it will provide strategic capability to Afghanistan against China-Pakistan strategic partnership.¹⁷⁹ Moreover, it will allow Afghanistan that her soil would be use against Pakistan and Iran on the basis of counter terrorism as similar to previously US counterterrorism initiatives during OEF in Afghanistan. Thus it has greater implications for Pakistan-Iran security. Thus Pakistan will have to adopt pragmatic approach for enhancing relations with Iran. The policy should be formulated with considering China's role that will reduce concerns and counter further influence of the US.

4.2.2 Dwindling US-Pakistan Relations

Pakistan-US bitterness and their differences have positive implications for Pakistan's relations with Iran which already has anti-US aspirations. The US factor plays as intervening variable in the bilateral relationship. Moreover, Iran always looks distortedly Pak's maneuvers with US. It is subject of contentions between both states. Pak-Iran relations have been strained over Afghanistan issue in terms of supporting to respective groups and having divergent factions. Pakistan's tilt remains with US-led geopolitical interests while Iran remains antagonistic against US police. In addition, Pak-US bilateralism is time-tested, motivated by geopolitical and geo-strategic environment.

¹⁷⁸ Aamir Hashmi and Muhammad Saif ur Rehman, "The Drawdown of US and NATO Forces from Afghanistan in 2014- Implications for Pakistan," *NDU Journal* 28 (2014): 70.

¹⁷⁹ Syed Hussain Shaheed Soherwordi, "Withdrawal of American forces from Afghanistan (Endgame): Issues and challenges for Pakistan," *Journal of Political Studies* 19 (2012): 137.

The geostrategic compulsions take away Pakistan and take more closeness between India and the US. The US tilt towards India has been evident during the US-Afghan policy under President Trump. The US administration showed vital aspiration for joining India's efforts regarding trade and export in Afghanistan as well as she announced co-sponsorship with India in trade and investment fair in September 2017.¹⁸⁰ Further, the drawdown strategy also favors Indian geopolitical aspirations in Afghanistan.

The accusations over Pakistan by the US as state's sponsoring of terrorism and providing safe heaven to terrorists widened the gap between Pakistan and the US as well as it showed trust-deficit at large. Pakistan rejected all the accusations and responded angrily.¹⁸¹ Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Ghasemi responded with supporting Pakistan's stance as well as criticized the US for alleging blames against Pakistan. The trust-deficit in Pakistan and US will lead towards divergent approaches in regional affairs.

Historically, Pakistan-US relations never remained consistent or normal rather they passed through ups and down with the changing regional dynamics. During the cordiality with US, Pakistan received strategic and economic assistance but not enough what required in difficult times. During the period of US President Ronald Reagan, US policy of South Asia was base three objectives, containment of USSR, lessen Indian dependence over USSR and nuclear non-proliferation in the region.¹⁸² For containing Soviet's rise, US developed strategic relationship with Pakistan. After the disintegration of USSR, the relationship went into decline and the US relations with India improved. Pakistan has remained strategic partner of US during 1950s, 1980s and after September 11, 2001. But on the other hand, their relations have remained tense for having divergent outlooks over regional developments such as after Soviet-Afghan war and Indo-US strategic and

¹⁸⁰ Sourina Bej, "What Trump's Afghanistan Policy Means for India," *The Diplomat*, July 15, 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/07/what-trumps-afghanistan-policy-means-for-india/>.

¹⁸¹ Salman Masood, "Pakistan Angered by Trump's Claim That It Does 'Nothing' for U.S" *The New York Times*, November 19, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/19/world/asia/pakistan-trump-imran-khan.html>.

¹⁸² Munawar Hussain, "Pak-US Relations: An Historical Overview," *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture* 37 (2016): 74.

nuclear partnership. Besides of having strategical cooperation, Pakistan is the most sanctioned country in the World.¹⁸³

After 9/11, strategic relationship between Pakistan and US developed again but their relations went to declination after killing of Osama Bin Laden (OBL). Meanwhile, the US dependence on Pakistan in Afghanistan has been shifted to India. Now the US is working on the withdrawal mechanisms through taking initiatives of peace process by engaging regional players. Generally, it is assed clearly that Pak-US relationship always remained worrisome in the periods of absenting security convergences.

In this Backdrop, Pakistan is now maintaining cordial relations with anti-US nations Russia, China and Iran. She already has developed strategic cordiality with China. On December 24, 2018 Pakistan's foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi visited Iran for strengthening bilateralism. It was the part of government's policy of outreach in the neighborhood.¹⁸⁴ In addition, the foreign minister also visited Russia and China. The new regional dynamics of South Asia has led Pakistan towards more closeness with China and India has established closeness with the US. India is improving geo-economic relations with Iran. Pakistan-Iran bilateralism would flourish through after adopting pragmatic approach by Pakistan and Iran as well.

4.2.3 Pakistan-Iran Cooperation over Afghanistan

Pakistan-Iran cooperation over the matters of Afghanistan is positive gesture for their improving relations. The issue of Afghanistan has been become bone of contention since long time. However, the changing developments and the initiation of reconciliation process have provided common gesture on the matters of Afghanistan for maintaining peace and stability. The Change in Tehran's approach occurred in 2009 which it was favored talks and diplomacy which provided support for Pakistan's narrative.¹⁸⁵ Prior to this, diplomatic measures were arranged with Taliban for curbing chaos and peaceful

¹⁸³Ibid: 62.

¹⁸⁴ "Foreign Minister Qureshi pays his maiden visit to Iran," Ministry of Foreign Affairs Government of Pakistan, 24 December, 2018, <http://www.mofa.gov.pk/pr-details.php?mm=NzQ2MA>.

¹⁸⁵ Rafique, "Nuclear Deal," 19.

settlement but Iran rejected such diplomatic measures. Such development proved mutual gestures where Iran helped negotiations with Pak-backed Taliban.

During Soviet-Afghan war, both supported Afghan's jihad for respective geopolitical interests. After Soviet's retreat, both played divergent role and marginalized the situation for respective interests. Iran's geopolitical interest was related to giving power to northern alliance and ethnic-Hazars Tribes in the political process. Iran's moves regarding Afghanistan were primarily based on protecting Shiite people. So the situation in Afghanistan has been manipulated by both countries for their geo-economic and geo-political ends.¹⁸⁶ Further, the instability and chaos in Afghanistan rose security apprehensions for both Pakistan and Iran. After 9/11, it was adopted coercive measures against Taliban which debited more turmoil and Chaos.

Afghanistan is landlocked country that is having more dependence over key neighbors Pakistan and Iran. The geographical position of Afghanistan connects its borders between the two dynamic neighbors. It joins with Pakistan from the eastern side including Kabul and Iran from western side including province Herat. Pakistan and Iran are having cultural and historical leverage in the ethno-religious norms of Afghanistan. In addition, both states have great leverage and potential that gives power for influencing the matters in Afghanistan. Further, both states manipulate the events in their geopolitical interest. The landlocked country is dependent on both states' ports such as Karachi port and Bander-Abbas Port. Afghanistan has easy access to use Karachi port through Eastern territory while access to Iran's port is convenient through western hemisphere Herat which is quite close to Iran.

Both countries have discussed possible scenarios of cooperation regarding Afghanistan turmoil. As far as Trump's strategy to Afghanistan, both have agreed for maintaining peace and stability in Afghanistan through diplomatic measures and negotiation with Taliban. On 11 September 2017, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Foreign Minister of Pakistan, discussed with Iranian President Hassan Rohani for possible cooperation in Afghanistan

¹⁸⁶ Ignatiev, "Pakistan and Iran," 48.

and enhancing bilateralism through improving trade and commerce.¹⁸⁷ The presence of US-led NATO forces has raised security concerns for Iran and hurdles the role in peace talks with Taliban. In addition, US-Iran enmity has restricted Iran's potential role in Afghanistan that is key regional player.

4.2.4 Divergence in Pak-Iran Relations

Pakistan and Iran are having divergent alliances and policies that are hurdles for improving bilateralism. The geo-strategic developments in South Asia and Afghanistan generate structural constraints for both states. All these are related to India's rise and China's emerging role in South Asia. The structural constraints related to India consist upon her emerging role in South Asian in terms of world's growing economy, strategic partnership with the US, her soft power politics in Afghanistan and India-Iran-Afghanistan tripartite geo-economic partnership.

South Asia has become the center stage of global politics. The post-cold war developments diluted US intentions to South Asia particularly after nuclear tests by both states India and Pakistan in 1998. In post-cold era, US developed cordial relations with India. In 2000, US president Clinton visited India and he neglected to visit Pakistan for having observations over dictator rule that ousted political government. In this visit, US signed economic agreements with India for enhancing wide-range institutionalized cooperation and debited food aid of \$170 million in FY 2000. On Kashmir Issue, US gave three options, respect to line of control (LOC), diplomatic measures for resolution and avoiding use of force. The options were in favor to India's aspirations.¹⁸⁸ Further the US acknowledged India's regional role. The visit was very important for US policy regarding South Asia policy and this paved way forward for India centric policy.

US-India partnership is based on geo-economic reasons such as India's growing economy and strategic importance of Indian. Further, massive Indian's elite and skilled people migrated to US, as compared to Pakistan, who has access in congress administrative

¹⁸⁷ Naveed Siddiqui, "Khawaja Asif Talks regional security with Iran President Rohani," *Dawn*, September 11, 2017, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1356974>.

¹⁸⁸ Syed Ali Sarwar Naqvi, "The United States and South Asia," *Margalla Papers* (2010): 6.

bodies and eventually they attract policy makers. In the aftermath of 9/11, US developed strategic relationship with Pakistan on the tactical bases but resorted strategic alliance with India on wider geo-strategic calculations. US tilt toward India is for countering China's rise as well.

On the matters of Afghanistan, India is exaggerating role through using soft powers politics and collaborating with Kabul for resolving socio-economic and geo-strategic problems. India's influential role along with Iran in Afghanistan raises apprehensions of Pakistan. In addition, Afghanistan also has remained the point of contention between Pakistan and Iran in Soviet-Afghan war, Taliban rule and after the developments of 9/11 for power sharing mechanism. India has acquired leverage in Afghanistan through using soft power strategies. Further, she has constructed Farkhor Air base in Tajikistan at Afghan-Tajik border is the part of hegemonic desires and for containing china's influence in Central Asia and Afghanistan.

India's interests in Afghanistan consist upon geopolitical configurations such as for reaching Central Asia (CARs) and West Asia. Thus, soft power politics has been used by India in terms of investing billions of dollars and diplomatic good will gestures. Such kind of Indo-Afghan bilateralism is geo-economics and geo-political challenge for Pakistan in terms of adversely affection on her bilateralism with Iran in Afghanistan. India also has established nexus with Iran in geo-economic area of Chahbahar port project without considering geographical irritant of Pakistan. India-Iran bilateralism has been established with the passage of time through using effective diplomatic measures.

In the aftermath of Islamic Revolution in Iran and Soviet-Afghan war led towards distance between Pakistan and Iran which became opportunity for rival India. The post-cold war divergences over Afghan affairs as well as alignment with Taliban faction widened the gap. In 2003, Iran president Khatami visited India on it National Day as chief guest and signed strategic partnership. Both have developed economic, political and military relationship. Further, they agreed for developing regional trade route International North South corridor which links Mumbai via Chahbahar to Afghanistan and Central Asia and via Bandar Abbas to Europe. Iran considers India as strong partner which diminishes its isolation in terms of buyer of oil exports. The Chahbahar gives India

economic ease for oil and gas imports and access to CARs without dependence over Pakistan. India has enhanced its role in regional geopolitical affairs through getting support by US diplomatically and strategically.

4.2.5 Divergence over Afghanistan

The peace process has been initiated by regional and global players for maintaining peace and stability in Afghanistan. All external players, regardless of neighboring states Pakistan, Iran and CARs, are having common objective peace and stability but they are divergent over the nature of peace talks with Taliban. Russia has arranged many peace talks through involving key players in Afghanistan for gaining peace and stability. In 2017, Moscow arranged talks on peace in Afghanistan along with major stakeholders of Afghanistan, China, India, Iran, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. But the US and NATO were not present in these talks.¹⁸⁹ The US perceived that Moscow is arming Taliban which halts US geostrategic interests. This shows divergent outlook of Afghanistan among global players.

4.3 Convergence and Divergence at Bilateral Level

At state level, Pakistan and Iran have some convergences that ensure improvement in bilateral relationship. In addition, some issues and challenges exist which may hurdle for the relationship. Both states have strategic cooperation, having socio-economic agreements as well as having shared socio-cultural elements. All these factors are discussed for analyzing future prospects of Pak-Iran relationship.

4.3.1 Strategic Cooperation against Terrorism

Pakistan and Iran has developed strategic cooperation against cross border terrorism that is constructive measure for improving bilateralism. Both are located in shared geostrategic environment where security and peace is interlinked with each other.

¹⁸⁹ Amna Ejaz Rafi, "Divergent outlook on Afghanistan," *The Express Tribune*, April 27, 2017, accessed February 28, 2018, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1394226/divergent-outlook-afghanistan/>.

Security and survival are the primary interest of any states which is ensured by diplomatic relations, alliances and maintaining cordiality with neighboring states. Both states have common security apparatus in terms of having common security and territorial vulnerabilities. The regional geopolitics environment, where geography involves for securing political and security interest has significantly impacted on their bilateralism and shapes security and strategic perceptions.

As for Iran's security concerns, these are mainly related to West Asia particularly Persian Gulf Region and then to northern and eastern side. On the other hand, Pakistan becomes vulnerable from India's aggression and then from Afghanistan. Any development in Persian Gulf or South Asia has great implications for both states. It is due to shared geostrategic regional contiguity that both states rely on each other. The regional security complex plays an important role in formation of cordial relations.¹⁹⁰ Historically, Pakistan and Iran allied with US through strategic pact whereas India adopted non-alignment. Pakistan-Iran alignment with the western bloc was the result of common orientations and shared security challenge that took both states into partnership.¹⁹¹

Iran's behavior towards Persian Gulf and its rivalry with Saudi Arabia has negatives implications for Pakistan. Similarly, Pak-US closeness undermines Iran's enthusiasm with Pakistan. Likewise, Iran-India cooperation has concerns for Pakistan. The change in geo-strategic environment affects the bilateral relationship. For instance, the period of post-Islamic revolution and post-cold era brought structural changes which affected both states relations. After 9/11, the presence of US security forces and Pakistan's role in GWOT as a frontline state raised Iran's concerns. The fall of Taliban regime, the shift in Pakistan's approach regarding Afghanistan after 9/11 and US drawdown strategy reshape geostrategic environment that takes positive directions for the bilateralism. In addition, Pakistan has adopted a policy of total elimination of extremist elements including Taliban and militant groups that provides an opportunity for improvement in Pak-Iran relationship.

¹⁹⁰ Barry Buzan, *People, States & Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era* (Colchester: European Consortium for Political Research Press, 2016), 26.

¹⁹¹ Alam, "Strategic Dimensions," 528.

The security issue has become major concern for all states after 9/11. Both have established strategic relationship against terrorism particularly related to cross border terrorism. In 2001, both states agreed over the cooperation against terrorism and established ministerial commission for resolving security issues. The forum provides intelligence level cooperation against drug smugglers and terrorists that operate in the frontier region.¹⁹² There are hold meetings regarding security issues at top political and security level. In December 2018, Pakistan's speaker of National assembly Assad Qaisar met with his counterpart Ali Larijan and retreated bilateral measures against terrorism.¹⁹³

This kind of strategic convergence is important in changing regional dynamics and provides an opportunity for multi-lateral cooperation in defense and other strategic areas. There is exist great potential for cooperation in the field of defense due to Pakistan has developed industry of small and light weapons. Such kind of bilateralism will help Iran's industry.

4.3.2 Emerging Geo-Political Convergence

The changing dynamics of South Asia highlight emerging convergences between Pakistan and Iran such as Iran's ambitions for joining CPEC as well as Iran's offer for providing assistance for completing gas pipe line project (IP). In changing regional political scenario, Pakistan cannot develop economy and stability without establishing relations with Iran. Pakistan and Iran are bound in historical and cultural intimacy and both are located geo-strategic close and shared environment. The geopolitical interests compel both states for mutual coordination.

4.3.2.1 CPEC and Iran's Ambitions

Pakistan is establishing pilot project with China, known as CPEC, that has great regional implications as well as it would enhance commerce and trade with Iran. In the world of globalization and regionalism, CPEC provides an economic opportunity for

¹⁹² Shah, "Dynamics and Prospects," 70.

¹⁹³ "Iran, Pakistan vows cooperation in fight against terror," Press Tv, December 8, 2018, <https://www.presstv.com/Detail/Fr/2018/12/08/582310/Iran-Pakistan-Ali-Larijan.i>.

regional countries for creating geo-economic hub for trade and commerce. Iran comprising great geostrategic importance in terms of having India Sea and Caspian sea and proximity to strait of Hurmuz. She is the second largest country in Middle East and located between Eurasia and West Asia. Iran is developing Chahbahar port with India's help and this bilateralism has been shown negatively in Pakistan. Iran has showed inclination towards CPEC which has great implications for both states. Iran's cooperation over CPEC will provide opportunity to china for sharing IPI project. The envoy of Iran Mehdi Honardoust said, "Iran is desirous of participating in CPEC which is one of the greatest projects in the history of the region."¹⁹⁴ Further, Iran's perception regarding two ports is related to cooperative mechanism and it is said that Chahbahar and Gwadar port are sister ports and both are complimentary not conflictual. This perception removes Pakistan's rising concerns over Chahbahar. The rhetoric has enhanced the geostrategic importance of CPEC especially when it will be joined by Iran.

Gwadar port is warm water, deep sea port located in the province Baluchistan, the largest territorial province of Pakistan. The Gwadar or Makrain coast is famous for its rich geographical location as well as its holding largest coastline. It is located at the apex of Arabian Sea, near strategic important transit point 'Strait of Hurmuz' and connects to Karachi about 630 km , 75 km away from Iran's border as well as 450km from world's sea-oil transit route in Persian Gulf. Historically it was the under the suzerainty of Oman since 1783 and it was purchased by the government of Pakistan on 8 December, 1958 at the cost of US \$3million.¹⁹⁵ It was underdeveloped and used for fishing purposes by locals until launching the developments projects for the port. It was integrated into Baluchistan province on 1 July 1977 by government of Pakistan.¹⁹⁶

Later on, Government of Pakistan (GoP) decided to make it for commercial and economic purposes and launched plan for the development of the port. Moreover, GoP initiated a plan to interlinked Gwadar with other parts of the country through roads and

¹⁹⁴ "Iran desires a role in CPEC," *DAWN*, September 10, 2016, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1283098>.

¹⁹⁵ Shaikh M. Ali, "Baluchistan, the forgotten province of Pakistan," *The Pakistan Forum*, September 3, 2015, <http://thepakistanforum.net/2011/06/baluchistan-the-forgotten-province-of-pakistan/>.

¹⁹⁶ Zahid Ali Khan, "China's Gwadar and India's Chahbahar: an analysis of Sino-India geo-strategic and economic competition," *Strategic Studies* 32 (2013): 81.

railways in 1993. The GoP officially started construction of port on 22nd March 2002 with the help of China. The construction plan carried out into two phase, one of them inclusion of three multiple ship berths and other included nine additional birth. The port's total construction plans for fully operational as well its connection to other parts of the country is costly about to US \$46 billion and now it valued to \$62 billion.

Gwadar port has potential to enhance regional connectivity by providing sea line to landlocked and energy rich central Asian states. These states have not access to warm water and could not transfer their mineral to the World. The port would provide a connectivity to these state as well enable them to interact international market through Gwadar port. The port also gives access China to Middle Eastern and provides shortest way for reaching energy rich states. In addition, China is working for enhancing trade relations with the Middles Eastern states. In this regard, she requires consistently in flow of energy and oil from energy-rich Middle East.

The geostrategic significance of Gwadar port provides chance to the states of other regions for enhancing trade through using this port. The problematic and conflict oriented regions of the world such as Middle East and South Asia would be stable through realizing the full potential of regional connectivity opportunity. As Liberalist paradigm believes that conflicts and chaos among the states would be resolved by the promotion of trade and commerce among them. The commerce activity holds mutual benefits and rationality rejects the disruption of such of beneficial activity. The procedure leads towards peace.

After 9/11 events, the changes emerged at international levels as well as terrorism arose as global threat to peace and security. The subsequent changes in Middle Eastern politics such as Syrian crisis as well as Yemen crisis affected US hegemonic interests in the region. China, being a competitor of US economy, challenges the US polices regarding Middle East along with Russia and possesses multi polarity. The developments in Middle East have divided major powers and new alliances have been seen.

CPEC holds substantial importance in global affairs. The dream of China for economic rise and becoming regional hegemon in South Asia could not be fulfilled unless the

successful completion of CPEC. China's position would be strong after the operationalization of Gwadar port due to its preservation of china's economic and strategic interests. The drawdown strategy of the US provides a chance for China to flourish her influence in Afghanistan. China-Russia emerging ties will pose great challenge to the US hegemony particular after the completion of CPEC.

CPEC is economic oriented and geo-strategic significant project for both Pakistan and China and having impacts on international level. It will enhance china's activism and her influence in south Asia especially in Arabian Sea, Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean. The emerging super power china is on the grand strategy "strings of pearls" and is escalating naval activities which are counterweight for rival India. The Gwadar port development is carried out on the basis of modern construction as well as it is consisted upon development of Baluchistan's infrastructure, constructing roads and railways to interlink with other parts of Pakistan, through Kashgar border, to China. A long railway route of 4000km would be constructed from Gwadar to Kasghar for reaching china through the province of Xinjiang. The Gwadar port is alternative transit route for Chain's energy thirst and provides shortest and safe supply line. China uses long distance for oil transportation from Persian Gulf to Beijing and oil exports reach China via Strait of Malacca. It takes long time, heavy duties and costs. China can overcome security through using CPEC in terms avoiding problems in South China Sea. It will give protection from any aggression of India because of her influence in Indian and Arabian seas.

At regional level, CPEC provides connectivity among regional states for trade and commerce. It enhanced China's influence and enables leverages to penetrate other states. CPEC is part OBR initiative which serves China's geo-economic interest. The regional significance of the project limits India's hegemonic aspirations and exaggerates her bilateralism with Iran over Chahbahar port. In terms of geostrategic and economic advantages, both Chahbahar and Gwadar port are competitive due to geographical proximity and similar conditions.

4.3.2.2 Peace Pipe Line or IP Project

Economic interdependence and trade relations are key indicators for analyzing state's relations to other. The economic relations between Pakistan and Iran are very low. In 2014, the trade volume was \$229 million which is lowest level in this decade.¹⁹⁷ Further, Pakistan is facing huge energy crisis and shortage of gas and electricity which would be overcome through developing energy linkages. The analysis of Pakistan's energy consumption shows that 49.5% of needs are met through natural gas.¹⁹⁸ Therefore, it is significant source and Pakistan's life line. Energy is necessary for strategic purposes and economic wellbeing as well. The demand of energy has been raised in the era of globalization. Thus energy will become biggest challenge for any state in next century. Pakistan's energy sector is weak and poorly managed despite economic growth with raising the demand.¹⁹⁹ Similarly Pakistan is also facing great shortfall in electricity which affects industrial sector.

The IP is essential for fulfilling the energy demands of Pakistan as well as it would improve the bilateral relations. The project is not only energy based rather it also holds sociopolitical benefits. After aligning of IP with CPEC, it will provide energy connectivity to China and having potential for reaching India as well. Thus the project is called peace project which will connect different regions through energy transformation. The economic interdependence will usher peace and prosperity between both states. Pakistan can complete this project by using pragmatism in decisions. However, internal stability and determination will require for the practicality of the project.

4.3.2.3 Peace Process in Afghanistan

The Afghan's factor has remained bone of contentions between Pakistan and Iran. But after 9/11 common gestures emerged in Afghanistan that brought two states close to

¹⁹⁷ Salim Ahmed, "Call for Promoting-Pakistan-Iran Bilateral Trade Relations," *Pakistan Observer*, February 21, 2016, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1394226/divergent-outlook-afghanistan/>.

¹⁹⁸ Arshad H. Abbasi, et al., "Rethinking Pakistan's Energy Equation: Iran-Pakistan Gas Pipeline," (Islamabad, Sustainable Development Policy Institute, 2014), 2.

¹⁹⁹ Muhammad Arshad Khan and Usman Ahmed, "Energy Demand in Pakistan: A Disaggregate Analysis," (Islamabad, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, 2009), 6.

each other. Afghanistan became flash point of major powers after US intervention in 2001. Due to the complexities of different issues in Afghanistan in terms volatile situation, stability is far away from the dream particularly after the withdrawal of USSR in 1990. Afghanistan is facing security and stability challenges due to involvement of external major powers. The instability in Afghanistan is great economic, political and security challenge for Pakistan which has 2600 kilometers long border with Afghanistan and Iran as well. Pakistan has to face different kinds of problems from the unstable Afghanistan in terms of weapons and drugs smuggling, border management crisis as well as facing security problems due to having long porous border. In addition, peace and stability in Afghanistan is the common objective for Pakistan and Iran.

Historically, the peace and stability process in Afghanistan has been started since 9/11 but the complexities of the issues are great hurdle for achieving the goal. Due to different wars in Afghanistan, Instability and chaos has ushered in Afghan's society as well as infrastructure has ruined. The chaotic society has created vacuum of power that led towards the influence of major powers in the affairs of Afghanistan for their geopolitical ends. After 9/11, India, being an emerging player in international politics, filled the power vacuum and enhanced influence by using soft power strategies such as providing assistance to new born government in the field of economic for the development of infrastructure as well as abetted aid for developing different projects in energy and technological fields. In the field of education, India started a project, named knowledge corridor, with the government of Afghanistan which included students exchange programs and giving aid for educational developments. The Indianan factor in Afghanistan is geopolitical and strategic concern for Pakistan.

In the changing dynamics of South Asia, Pakistan has to counter Indian's threat from its two borders, such as, eastern boarder that links to India as well as western border which links to Afghanistan. Indian moves in Afghanistan are totally based on geopolitical ends threatening to Pakistan's vital interests. She wants to access energy rich CARs through enhancing influence in Afghanistan. She is developing Chahbahar port with help of Iran to provide access warm waters to landlocked countries Afghanistan and CARs. In

addition, Indian intelligence agency is working in Afghanistan and has opened office in Kandahar and Galaband near Pakistan's border.

4.3.2.4 Pak-Iran Cooperation over Afghanistan

The Afghan crisis is the foremost challenge for strengthening Pakistan-Iran bilateralism as well as their relationship has remained hostile due to divergent approaches in Afghan affairs. In the changing regional scenarios, US drawdown strategy put forward new developments regarding Afghanistan such as in terms of rise of new actors for geopolitical dominance. In addition, peace and stability is common interest for both states. There were held number of peace talks along with Taliban forces by the key regional players Pakistan and Iran but these were failed due to lack of consensus between regional players as well as having divergent geopolitical interests. After Taliban downfall and establishment of US-led government in Kabul, Iran imitated socio-economic projects and assisted new government. In 2011, Iran and Afghanistan agreed on energy transformation and ultimately Afghanistan became the fourth largest partners with having energy exports of US\$2 billion.²⁰⁰ Given to economic and political aspiration, it shows Iran's strategic interest in future. It will lead towards the cooperation with regional and extra regional players. The peace process is prerequisite for achieving geopolitical and economic interests.

Iran supported Pakistan during cold war period for countering Soviet influence as well as its foreign policy goal consisted upon containing communism through engaging South Asian states. The Afghan crisis generated different geopolitical and strategic outlook which resulted tense relationship. The fall of Taliban regime provided cooperative environment where both states came closer due to common interest of peace and stability. The security situation in Afghanistan affects Pakistan and Iran. Therefore, both countries have established consensus over Afghanistan deteriorated situation. Both have signed Joint Declaration on directions of bilateral cooperation in January 2009.²⁰¹

²⁰⁰ Barzegar .K, "Iran's Foreign Policy in Post-Taliban Afghanistan," *Washington Quarterly* 37 (2014): 120-22.

²⁰¹ Shah, "Dynamics and Prospects," 71.

The US-led war in Afghanistan ousted Taliban from power but still non-state militants and pro-Taliban's insurgent groups are active for restoring power. The power vacuum in Afghanistan has led towards massive extra regional involvement in fragile country that has generated complicated poster. The economic oriented discourse of China allows influential role in Afghanistan which restrains Indo-US hegemonic moves. After initiating mega economic project CPEC, role of China has been emerged at devastating level for Indo-US strategic interests. Now, Pak-US strategic cooperation is minimizing and replacing by all-weather friend china. Pakistan's Indo-centric foreign policy discourse and US-India rising cooperation promote new alliances. The Sino-Pakistan ambitions in Afghanistan consists upon the enhancement of soft politics for reaching energy rich CARs. China is expanding the influence in South Asia by using pro-economic agendas. Further, she is enhancing role in Afghanistan through Pakistan and poising challenge for the US hegemonic interest in Afghanistan and across the region.

History of Pakistan-Iran relations shows that both countries remained closed in pre-revolution era. After the Islamic Revolution, external factors such as cold-war and post-cold politics influenced their relationship. Afghanistan remains bone of contention for both states and volatile situation in Afghanistan creates security problems and generates cross-border terrorism that affects Pakistan-Iran natural affinity. However, post-9/11 developments generated different picture of world and took change in Afghanistan. The recent developments in Afghanistan such as US-led peace talks with Taliban and the role of Pakistan have implications for the both states Pakistan and Iran. China emerging role in the politics of South Asia can create closeness tri-lateral closeness among Pakistan, Iran and China.

Pakistan-Iran relationship is based upon primarily external and internal factors. Both are close on the basis of shared history, culture and religion. The changing regional dynamics and emerging new trends in South Asia have positive implications for Pakistan-Iran relations. For instances, China's emerging role in South Asia, Indo-US strategic nexus ,China closeness with Iran and peace-process in Afghanistan is developing closeness between Pakistan and Iran. Moreover, convergences of interests between Pakistan and Iran develop trust-worthy relationship. Similarly, Iran's generously support to Pakistan

on Kashmir issue and common interests in Afghanistan are the factors that take more closeness between both states.

CONCLUSION

Pakistan's relations with Iran primarily reflect the condition of extensive complex interdependence. The situation characteristically represents complex interdependence as seen from the vital importance of the multiple channels of contact between the two countries, absence of a hierarchy of issues with changing agendas and the minor role of military force as policy instrument. The inherent strategic tensions in the bilateral relations as discussed in the chapters represent the existence of realist dynamics; but the realist dynamics do not dominate Pakistan's relations with Iran. Pakistan and Iran are natural allies on the basis of cultural and historical linkages. Their relationship is deep-rooted, based on socio-cultural and ideological factors. Both states are having complex interdependence in their relations. They interact by using formal and informal channels such as state to states interactions through economic, political and security channels as well as informal channels such as interaction of the people of both states through socio-cultural linkages. People of both states consider very closer to each other. Moreover, both states experienced a geopolitical and strategic environment and they have never involved in any territorial conflict. Persian language has greater impact on Urdu as well as it has influenced the poetic tradition of sub-continent. Prior to independence of Pakistan, Persian language remained official language under the Mughal emperors and the frontier region was a common place. The region Baluchistan was expanded into Iran and people of that region were free to move into the country.

The interests of both states are interdependent. Interdependence has been defined "when there are reciprocal [though not necessarily symmetrical] effects among countries among actors in different countries."²⁰² In the beginning, both came closer and formed strategic relationship. The regional developments, in terms of cold-war politics in South Asia and shared security challenges, led them into security interdependence for containing communism and countering sociopolitical and security challenges. They joined strategic pact of CENTO (1955-1979) with the US. In addition, they also formed an organizational

²⁰² Jacksen and Soresen, *International Relations*, 144.

body of ECO for enhancing economic regionalism. Both states remained in cordial relationship and enjoyed multi-dimensional relationship in first phase of 1947-1979.

The first phase of cordiality (1947-1979) changed towards limited cooperation after regional developments. For instances, Islamic Revolution of Iran occurred in 1979 and Soviet-Afghan war erupted. The structural changes and geopolitical developments at both, regional and state level influenced bilateral relationship. For instances, Soviet-Afghan war (1979-1989), divergent policies in common neighbor Afghanistan, Afghan's crisis and Taliban's factor are the major regional developments that influenced relations between Pakistan and Iran. In addition, their relations became highly tense during Taliban rule in Afghanistan due to divergent outlooks on the matters of Afghanistan's politics. However, the fall of Taliban regime, after 9/11, generated convergent landscape and common positions which led them both states closer on the basis of common objective. Further, both realized that instability and turmoil in Afghanistan was not in the interest of both states.

The event of 9/11 brought about regional and international changes that raised challenges for improving bilateral relations. The rise of terrorism, GWOT and Pakistan's frontline role in GWOT raised concerns for Iran. She looked Pakistan-US bilateralism suspiciously. Similarly, Iran's anti-US posture and rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran limits her role for further coordination with Pakistan. After the 9/11, the US enhanced role in global politics on the agenda of countering the challenge of international terrorism as well as emerged as predominant power at international level. Further, the shift in international affairs in terms of New World Order (NWO) by Bush administration influenced Pakistan-Iran relationship. It started new war in the Pakistan's neighborhood Afghanistan that raised Iran's security concerns. Pakistan decided to join US-led war that made suspicions for Iran.

Moreover, US invasion of Afghanistan generated socio-political problems which provided ground for major powers in Afghanistan's affairs. At regional level, the security of South Asia was affected by the turmoil in Afghanistan particularly after 9/11. The changing dynamics of South Asia complicated the situation. For instance, Indo-US strategic partnership and Pak-US socio-economic bilateralism reshaped the regional

politics. In addition, Indo-Iran and Indo-Afghanistan emerging ties possess serious challenges for Pakistan. In addition, both experience irritants at state level that are hurdles for close relationship such as terrorism and instability, cross border terrorism and sectarianism influence the bilateral relationship.

Despite of issues and challenges, both states have opportunities at state, regional and global level and relations can be developed after realization of full potential of opportunities. By taking the advantages opportunities, bilateralism and mutual enthusiasm would be enhanced after undermining challenges and issues between both states. Pakistan- Iran relations are characterized by number of common factors such as shared history and culture, common religion, geographical proximity as well as the people of both states consider closeness with each other. In addition, structural developments also favor common interest. Both states have common friend and have developed socio-economic relations with China. Further, China's rising influence in South Asia and Middle East by using soft-power politics ensure possible cooperation among three states on common objectives and will prospectively shape triangular relationship among China, Pakistan and Iran as well. In addition, the recent developments in Afghanistan, in terms of the US withdrawal strategy from Afghanistan and Pakistan-Iran supportive role in peace talks, has created positivity and common objective that are important for improving cordiality between both states. Further, both have signed socio-economic bilateral agreements that are important for improving bilateral relation after taking full advantages of these agreements. Pakistan and Iran have balance approach in establishing relations with other rival states. For instances, Pakistan adopts balance approach in maintaining relations with Saudi Arabia. Similarly, Iran supports Pakistan over the issue of Kashmir and adopts balance approach in navigating relations with India.

The futuristic prospects of the relations between both states can be assessed on the basis of understanding challenges and opportunities. The challenges and opportunities explain convergences and divergences at state, regional and international level between both states. The structural convergences will ensure prospectively cooperation. For instances, removal of external constraints such as common positions in Afghan's affairs after US drawdown, OBOR initiatives and CPEC, China's increasing role in region as well as

Iran-China ties give convergent posture for Pak-Iran cooperation in futuristic outlook. In addition, some scenarios determine structural constraints which hinder further bilateralism. For instance, Indo-Iran strategic and economic convergence, Pak-US potential cordiality, Pak-Saudi strategic and economic cooperation, Indo-Iran-Afghanistan tripartite geo-economic agreements are the divergent factors that show conflictual or contested outlook for Pak-Iran bilateralism.

Findings

- Pakistan and Iran have complex interdependence on the basis of historical linkages and socio-cultural bonds. The relationship has passed through ups and downs in the course of historical evolution. Both were strategic partners in pre-revolution era but afterwards they could not maintain cordiality.
- Since 9/11, both are facing mixed kind of interaction that is based on cooperation and competition. For having interdependent geo-strategic environment, both states' interests are aligned. The existing challenges in Pakistan and Iran relations include structural constraints, divergent alliances and different domestic political systems. For instance, Pak-Saudi cordiality, Iran and India strategic and economic partnership, anti-Americanism rhetoric in the foreign policy of Iran, and liberal and pro-US policies of Pakistan are hurdles for development of cordial relations.
- The opportunities also exist for improving bilateral relations in spite of having challenges and issues. Pakistan and Iran are having complex interdependence on the basis of shared history and socio-cultural linkages. Further, they are close on the basis of shared geostrategic environment, common religion and cordial interaction with common partner China. Moreover, both have never involved any territorial dispute and conflict. Therefore, they have great potential for the establishment of multidimensional relationship by realizing the full potential of opportunities through undermining intervening elements and issues.
- The future prospects are dependent over the changing dynamics of global and regional environment. Some scenarios ensure cooperation and coordination such as Pak-Iran developing relations with China, emerging cooperation over Afghanistan especially after the US drawdown strategy. However, structural

constraints also exist which are hurdle for prospectively cooperation such as Iran-Indo nexus, Indo-Afghanistan-Iran tripartite agreement and Pak-Saudi strategic partnership.

Recommendations

- Pakistan should adopt pragmatic approach in dealing with structural constraints for securing mutual benefits. The coherent and effective policy is the more important prerequisite for overcoming challenges, annoying external pressures and promoting economic relations with Iran.
- Pakistan's domestic stability is major concerns for developing good relations with Iran. Therefore, political stability, curtailing militancy and sectarianism and total elimination of cross border terrorism are necessary for the promotion of cordial relations.
- Pakistan must use all diplomatic tools for promoting economic engagement with Iran. In this regard, Pakistan must take help from China and Russia. Pakistan should maintain economic trade with Iran through barter trade as adopted by European countries with Iran.
- Pakistan should adopt comprehensive balanced approach between Saudi Arabia and Iran. In this regard, Pakistan must go forward to promote energy relations with Iran.
- Having mega project of CPEC, Pakistan must engage neighboring countries Afghanistan and Iran, for containing the role of India. Pakistan should engage Iran and Saudi Arabia over geo-economic and security issues for resolving disputes.

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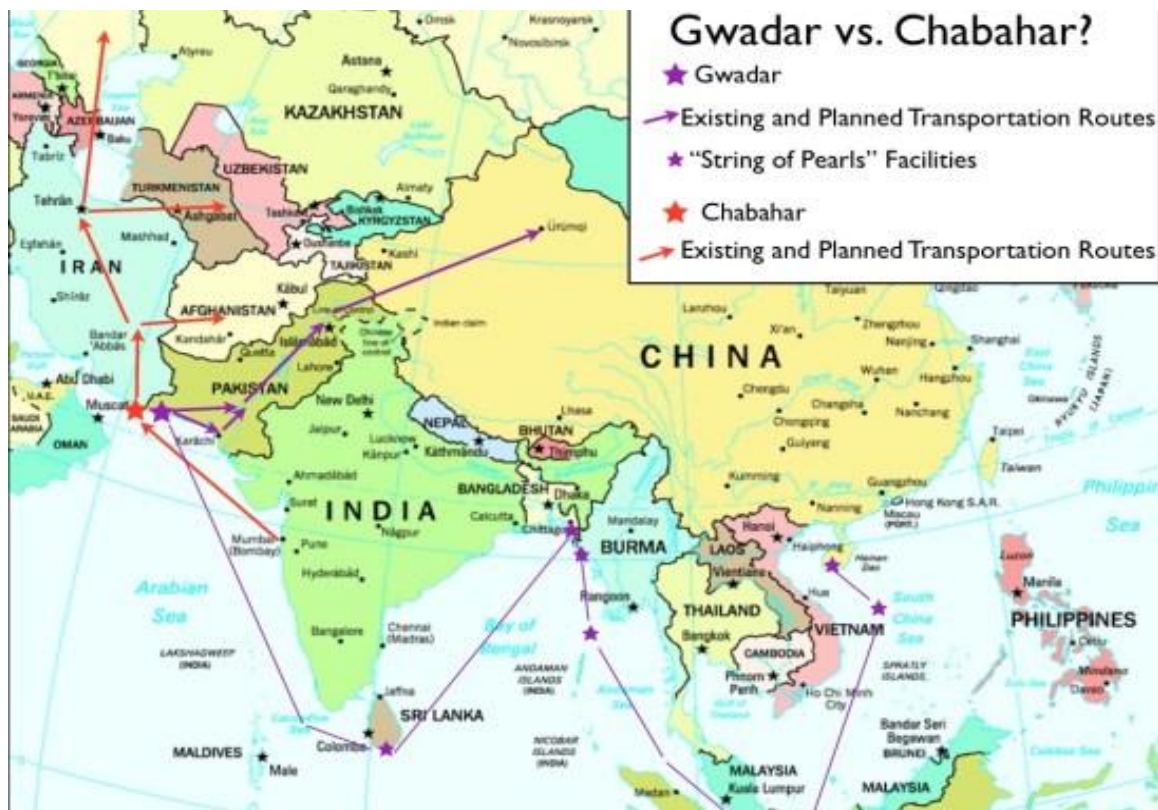
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Appendices

Appendix-A: Gwadar vs Chahbahar



Source: <http://southasiajournal.net/irans-offer-to-pakistan-to-join-chahbahar-reflects-its-trust-deficit-with-india>

Appendix-B: Gwadar Port



Source: <http://southasiajournal.net/irans-chabahar-port-is-where-asian-and-middle-eastern-rivalries-collide/>.

Appendix-C: China's String of Pearl



Source: <https://www.indiatimes.com/news/india/here-is-all-you-should-know-about-string-of-pearls-china-s-policy-to-encircle-india-324315.html>.