

## Artículo de investigación

**Asia Pivot: Strategic Repercussions for Pakistan**

Asia Pivot: Repercusiones estratégicas para Pakistán  
Pivô da Ásia: Repercussões Estratégicas para o Paquistão

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**Abstract**

One of the important debates in the post 9/11 global politics has been the growing significance of the Asia Pacific region. The great powers of the world have understood that the future of world's attention would be Asia Pacific region. This is in line with the significant military, economic, technological and diplomatic achievements of the regions. As a result, the United States introduced its famous policy known as "the Asia pivot" that has serious implications on the region in general and Pakistan in particular. The article investigates the Asia pivot policy of USA that has changed the course of region's security. This particular policy brought changes in inter-state relations, while for some it proved virtuous and for others it brought problems. Pakistan, a country that has long maintained smooth relations with China and need-based relations with America faced serious upshots post arrival of this policy. It remained with scant options and policies to deal with the new impediments. This article focuses on those impediments and challenges that Pakistan can face due to the changes in geopolitical setting of the region. It also tries to unfold the secrets of new breakups and patch up between different states and allies in such whirling scenario of the region.

**Keywords:** Asia Pivot, inter-state relations, geopolitical changes, global politics.

**Resumen**

Uno de los debates importantes en la política global posterior al 11 de septiembre ha sido el creciente significado de la región de Asia-Pacífico. Las grandes potencias del mundo han entendido que el futuro de la atención mundial sería la región de Asia-Pacífico. Esto está en línea con los importantes logros militares, económicos, tecnológicos y diplomáticos de las regiones. Como resultado, Estados Unidos introdujo su famosa política conocida como "el pivote de Asia" que tiene serias implicaciones en la región en general y en Pakistán en particular. El artículo investiga la política de giro de Asia de EE. UU. Que ha cambiado el curso de la seguridad de la región. Esta política particular trajo cambios en las relaciones interestatales, mientras que para algunos resultó ser virtuosa y para otros trajo problemas. Pakistán, un país que ha mantenido durante mucho tiempo las relaciones fluidas con China y las relaciones basadas en la necesidad con los Estados Unidos, enfrentó serias oportunidades después de la llegada de esta política. Se mantuvo con escasas opciones y políticas para enfrentar los nuevos impedimentos. Este artículo se enfoca en los impedimentos y desafíos que Pakistán puede enfrentar debido a los cambios en el entorno geopolítico de la región. También trata de revelar los secretos de nuevas rupturas y parchear entre diferentes estados y aliados en un escenario tan arrollador de la región.

**Palabras claves:** Asia Pivot, relaciones interestatales, cambios geopolíticos, política global.

## Resumo

Um dos debates importantes na política global pós-II de setembro tem sido o crescente significado da região Ásia-Pacífico. As grandes potências do mundo entenderam que o futuro da atenção do mundo seria a região Ásia-Pacífico. Isto está de acordo com as significativas conquistas militares, econômicas, tecnológicas e diplomáticas das regiões. Como resultado, os Estados Unidos introduziram sua famosa política conhecida como “pivô da Ásia”, que tem sérias implicações na região em geral e no Paquistão em particular. O artigo investiga a política de pivô da Ásia dos EUA que mudou o curso da segurança da região. Essa política específica trouxe mudanças nas relações interestaduais, enquanto, para alguns, mostrou-se virtuosa e, para outros, trouxe problemas. O Paquistão, um país que há muito mantém relações tranquilas com a China e relações de necessidade com os Estados Unidos, enfrentam sérios resultados após a chegada dessa política. Permaneceu com poucas opções e políticas para lidar com os novos impedimentos. Este artigo concentra-se nos impedimentos e desafios que o Paquistão pode enfrentar devido às mudanças no cenário geopolítico da região. Ele também tenta desdobrar os segredos de novas dissidências e remendos entre diferentes estados e aliados em um cenário tão agitado da região.

**Palavras-chave:** Ásia Pivô, relações interestaduais, mudanças geopolíticas, política global.

## Introduction

Since years, United States of America has been stuck in the quagmire of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan whilst ignoring the most promising regions of the world which prove to be decisive for the interplay of great powers (Park, 2012). One of the regions that America has been ignoring all this time was East Asia where lies the world's second largest economy (Kazianis, 2013). During the Obama's administration, USA shifted its interest from Middle East and Europe towards East and South Asia. The key figures of the American government, Hillary Clinton (secretary of States), Joe Biden (Vice President), President Barack Obama and various think tanks worked on formulating the complete foreign policy of USA towards East Asian region. This resulted in the formulation of famous Asia pivot or re-balance strategy of USA towards East Asia.

Asia pivot, also known as re-balance strategy of America nearly adds all the states of Asia Pacific. USA understood the fact as early as Obama's administration that the future of geo-strategic relations and economy lies in this region. The US policy of rebalance doesn't only involve government but involve social, economic, and people to people relations (Saunders, 2013). Since the very commencement of the rebalance strategy of America towards East Asia, American government seems deeply locked in the security concerns of the region thus needs deeper attention towards the region (Nathan, 2015). If one scrutinizes the 'Asia-pivot', it gives the complete overview of 'new great game' between China and America due to advancement of USA in the region unsurprisingly is bitter in the eyes of

China. The notion of new great game is practical due to the shift of economic, social, political and institutional focus on the East Asian region in which the Chinese have had the upper hand while the American involvement with each state that lies in Asia pacific invites doubts for China (Zhao, 2015).

The time when Obama's administration introduced the pivot, it was thought that US wants to pull its forces from the messy Middle East (Shambaugh, 2013). However, the states in Asia pacific region welcomed the arrival of USA in the region while few states such as China saw it with skeptic lens. The Asia pivot policy of USA arose many questions on which to conduct study is much important. Though Asia pivot is a strategy proposed specifically for the Asia pacific region but it has its numerous impacts on the states surrounding Asia pacific region. The study investigates one of such states that has geographical proximity with China and shares historical relations with America over war i.e. Pakistan. The important question is how presence of USA impacts Pakistan in the course of growing ties with China? What options are left for Pakistan in the wake of new strategic environment in the Asia pacific region with the introduction of US strategy of Asia pivot?

## Theoretical Debates

Theatrically, the national interest of USA has insisted it to abandon its attention on Middle East and Europe and thus it shifted its attention to the region of Asia Pacific. However, facing the daily

degradation of economy at home, due to the unending war in Afghanistan and Iraq has put American economy in immense pressure. The rising economy of China and the economic transaction of the region has brought America closer to the continent and the strategy of Asia pivot is highly the result of the bigger national interests of USA. While the interests of America are not only confined to the economy of the region but it also has much to do with its own military position in the world (Fischer, 2017). To remain the most capable military giant in the world it has to check the progress of China and halt its influence in its own vary region due to which the pivot strategy is taken very seriously by the American government.

As there is no regulatory or central authority in the world to control the ambitions of the states, it's necessary for the states to protect themselves on self-help basis. The Chinese rise of power gives the sentiment of the anarchical structure and responsibility of each state for its security. The counter strategy of America to maintain its position in the anarchical structure is to keep check on the rising power of China which isn't possible without stationing closer to its boundaries (Christensen, 2015). Whereas the concept of capabilities is interlinked with the components of anarchy and structure in the case of US pivot for Asia. USA not only want to keep check on China by becoming the part of Asia pivot but also expand its capabilities in terms of economy, military and technology to remain on top. As Asia pacific is famous for its economic interactions, America wants to join and take economic benefits from the region whereas stationing in navy and joint military exercises will get it more in position of military capability (McDonald, 2018). The only competitor of US today is China and the polarization game suggests win-win situation in which relative gains are only acceptable. The America is currently in competition with USA to maintain unipolar system and remain the hegemon of the world.

The first question that this study investigates is how presence of USA impacts Pakistan in the course of growing ties with China? Neorealism provides insight on the geopolitical shifts and engaging with alliances. It can be traced back to US geopolitical shift and alliance with NATO to overcome the threat of USSR in Eastern Europe (Walt, 1988). This old concept given by neorealism is directly applicable to today's position of USA in Asia pacific region. Previously,

USA formed military alliance with European states to overcome the threat of USSR. Today, US is forming social, economic, military and people to people contacts with the states of Asia pacific to overcome the rise of China. Moreover, security dilemma is a basic concept that brings states in competition. Due to which the minor powers either balance or bandwagon with the mightier powers. In this case, theory is quite valid to the first inquiry of this study. Pakistan is the middle power between both the great powers and thus has to choose between one of it but this will result into grave consequences for Pakistan as both remain important.

In addition, as per neo-realism claims, the structure of the world is anarchic and each state is responsible for its security (Jackson, 2016). In such an anarchic system where states have to make their own security, less powerful states align with the mighty states for their survival. The proponents of realism such as Hobbes, Carr, etc. have also claimed that there are three main things that states care about which include their prestige, survival and economic gains (Ibid). This vary set of assumption is also picked by the proponents of neorealism who believe that states do ally with other states for their survival, economic interests and prestige. Pakistan's alignment with one power and ignoring the other can either include the reason of economic gains for state and people at home, survival of a state or international prestige of being a sovereign state with sovereign decision making.

Moreover, what options are left for Pakistan in the wake of new strategic environment in the Asia pacific region with the introduction of US strategy of Asia pivot? The very famous quotation by Thucydides which is quoted for all forms of realism i.e. "Strong do what they can and weak suffer what they must" (Handel, 2016). This realist quotation suits the situation of Pakistan in the tug of war between China and USA. Pakistan being weaker power as compared to both, China and America, have to ally itself to one state because both of them have entirely different ways. While choosing any of these powers will have repercussions on Pakistan's security and survival equally. Thus, Pakistan will leave with only few options for its survival, prestige and economic benefits which it could gain at one end.

## Understanding Asia Pivot

The first element of the Asia pivot policy is making and strengthening alliances with the states of East Asia in order to build strategic confidence and to maintain security of the region. USA has recently bounded itself in alliances with different nations such as Philippines, Thailand, New Zealand, Australia, South Korea and Japan - though USA didn't have historic bounding with these nations. The Japanese- US partnership is exemplary in this regard as USA has been cooperating and maintained its relations with Japan both in the reign of Democratic Party as well as Liberal Democratic Party. The cooperation of both parties was quite evident when Japan was hit by the triple-disaster (earth quake, Tsunami and nuclear crises) in 2011. Moreover, US-South Korean relations are also very old and prominent in the region where USA supports South Korea to confront the challenges it faces in South East Asia, Afghanistan and Gulf of Aden. Meanwhile, USA has also extended its relationship with Australia and the Philippines and Thailand.

The second element of the policy is refining relationships with emerging powers. Though America has been expanding its friends and allies in the region, the efforts of USA will still need an ally which is an emerging power in the region. America will need China's cooperation to stay peacefully in the region. Both states have been involved in number of dialogues ranging from the environmental degradation to the strategic and economic negotiations which were started in 2014. These negotiations were not only for the purpose of dialogues but also to deal with the highlighted security issues regarding North Korea and Iran. Chinese analysts had also realized soon after the commencement of the policy that the Asia pivot policy was to contain China but it is believed that pivot for Asia has more to do with economic, political and strategic interests than narrowly containment of China (Sutter, 2013).

Additionally, USA has not only focused itself on China as an emerging power of the region but has realized that India in the Indo-Pacific region has been expanding itself towards East Asia and is evidently an emerging power. USA wants to expand its economic relations with India because it's a very big market and its strategic location for American goods can prove good for American economy. USA and India have exceeded their relationships after India introduced its look-East

policy which was a clear gesture that India was shifting its major interests towards East. India and USA have recently signed an agreement in 2016 regarding Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) which will provide logistic support and supplies for the military of both states and will result in improved understanding between the military of both states. (Pant, 2016) Both, India and USA are skeptic of China as the only player in East Asia, thus working hands in hands to contain China to become a single player or the formidable power in the whole region. (Teresita C, 2013).

Japan on other hand remained an ally of America since 1960s when both states signed the treaty of Mutual Security Treaty. The relations among both states have flourished since then. Japan is highly dependent on America for its security as well and to settle its dispute with China or at least to keep up its claim on disputed waters of South China Sea. In 1997 and in 2005, the Mutual Security Treaty was again visited which furthered collaboration between both states. (Dian, 2013).

The third element is economic diplomacy. As the East and South Asian region is known for its economic interaction with the states across the globe. American companies and private sector want to invest in the region. For the economic diplomacy, USA has already taken an initiative of Trans-Pacific partnership in which the states around Pacific will join hands together to work as economic community and will bring all the Pacific economies together. The states which are not yet prepared to join TPP have another platform naming (ASEAN) the Expanded Economic Engagement (E3) initiative which will prove that TPP is aspirational not invitational. US- Korea free trade agreement is one of the trademarks that both states set up as this will eliminate 95% tariffs on industrial goods within the 5 years of the commencement of the partnership.

Another component of the said policy is engagement with multilateral Institutions. Multilateral institutions today have as much relevance as States. These multilateral institutions are responsible for stability, peace and cooperation among states around the globe. America has recognized its need to join these institutions in order to enlarge its presence in the region – as evident in the case of US active presence at ASEAN. Feeling the absence of leader's level forum, President Obama made a decision to join East Asia Summit where all the issues of East Asia would be discussed including

strategic nature issues regarding disputes on South-China Sea and aggravations of North Korea.

In additions, respecting universal norms and values is an integral part of the Asia pivot policy. America is a flag bearer of human rights and democracy and thus is focused to export its ideology in this part of the world as well. Though having ties with states of all types in Asia pacific region, America has political disagreements with all the states not having democratic ways. America has been successful in shaping Myanmar/Burma behavior towards its people which was quite strict towards the minorities. Myanmar has also announced to free prisoners of war. Moreover America is also monitoring the region through the international agencies for the protection of human rights. The message of America in the region is the respect for human rights.

One of the most important components is enhancing military presence in the region. The military presence of USA in Asia pacific region has increased after the beginning of the Asia pivot policy. America is eager to send its troops to the states in Asia pacific region if any state is willing for the joint military exercises. Moreover, America's naval presence in the region has also increased for the navigational purpose. USA has also deployed its 2500 marines in Darwin and its naval bases are also in Singapore. American government also wants to increase its military in the region to overcome the threats which are emerging from the states like North Korea.

Some of the states of Asia have reservations on American motives in the region such as Indonesia and Malaysia and remain careful but few states such as Vietnam, Thailand, Singapore and Philippines have overwhelmingly welcomed USA in their region. China remains the strongest opponent of the policy. While America is trying to engage with the neighbors of China by binding itself to various treaties of cooperation in various fields with those states such as South Korea, Japan, Vietnam etc. One of the biggest rivalry after the introduction of Asia pivot have been among Trans pacific partnership introduced by USA for the Asia pacific states and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) introduced by China. Both states have started competition in the region. (Behm, 2016; Yu, 2017)) One of the economic reasons of America in the region is

to exclude China in major problems and advantages from the region. (Sebok, 2014).

### Regional Context

China views Asia pivot development as a counter strategy of America to influence its political and economic rise. In the years to come, the relations between US and China will be more restrained as the relations of China's neighbors deepen with USA. This will also change the strategical environment of Asia pacific region and hopes of better relations between China and USA will be decreased. One of the senior colonel in People's Liberation Army told America's think tank delegation that "You have your Pearl Harbor and 9/11, we have our 1999 (Ratner, 2013). China's 1999 refers to attack of Chinese embassy by USA in Belgrade during NATO's campaign in Serbia which was a clear message for China for not to interfere in the matters of USA. These shows China's concern about US physical presence in Asia pacific and the threat it feels from arrival of USA.

Beside the government, public too have their concerns over America's massive presence in the region and introduction of Asia pivot policy. US-China relations in the lens of Chinese population were measured hostile from eight percent in 2010 to twenty six percent in 2012 (Ibid). Moreover, the people and government of China share the views that America wants to maintain its hegemonic designs in the world and to make it hard for China to expand its economy and power. This perception of China about US comes with a reason. These include strengthening ties with South Korea, Japan, and Philippines while also making ties with emerging powers like Indonesia and Vietnam. China has so far figured out how USA is using some states against China by dramatizing issues between them. For example sensationalizing South China Sea dispute and creating barriers between Philippines, Vietnam and China. This will not only embarrass China but will also invite USA to play its major role in security affairs of the region (Sheng, 2012). On the Presidential visit of Clinton in 2012 to China, the Chinese news agency Xinhua news recommended US "stop its role as a sneaky troublemaker sitting behind some nations in the region and pulling strings" (Micheal S. Chase, 2012).

One of the main portions of dispute is the South China Sea. While all the states call it dispute, China shows it as an integral part of its state on the map establishing line which stretches from China to the coasts of Vietnam, Burma, Philippines, Taiwan, Malaysia, and Brunei (Cronin, 2012). USA and Chinese relations kept obstructing each other on the issue of South China Sea after USA started involving itself in Asia Pacific affairs. China has had the issue of US involvement in the indigenous calamities and also strengthening regional regimes (Savage, 2017). US has called upon China to revisit its action in region in August 2012, the top Communist party news agency, the People's daily told Washington to "shut up" for dividing the nations (Buckley, 2012).

China has also taken serious considerations on Mr. Panetta announcement that in 2020 the naval troops will re-posture their position at 50-50 from Pacific to Atlantic to 60-40 (Shangri-La Security Dialogue, 2012). US also has plans to make capabilities that will include communication advancements, new bombers, surveillance capabilities, modern submarines and electronic warfare technologies (Cliff, 2007). Obama's administration also announced back in 2012 that America will further advance its access on the places which are geographically troubled (Ratner, 2013). These places include deployment of marines in Philippines and to check activities around it will also deploy its naval troops in Australia, the process which has already taken place. US decided a total number of 2500 US marines in Darwin. However, the budget which USA is utilizing in Asia and its troops really do disturb China and any mismanagement of these policies and troops can heighten tensions between both.

Japan has been the biggest support of USA in the region with the settlement of issues regarding Okinawa Island. Japan has been America's oldest ally in the region. Since Cold War both countries have extended their understanding in security and economic relations while Japan has remained America's 'unsinkable Aircraft Carrier' for this entire region (Dian, 2013). Tokyo has decreased its military budget in its years; in a situation where China is on rise. In 2013 the tensions over Senkaku/Diaoyu Island increased as more than 1000 Chinese vessels entered the maritime space of Japan. This was a time when America came for the protection of Japan as it's legally committed to protect Japan in case of attack as per the mutual cooperation and security treaty

between Japan and US in 1960 (Shibusawa, 2018).

Japan has had welcomed American initiative in its region because Japan had been concerned of Chinese expansion. China and Japan have had the dispute in East China on Diaoyu/Senkaku for which Japan seeks moral support from USA as Japan has so far nationalized three islands of Senkaku and this intensified conflict over the disputed islands between the two states. Both states want the annexation of the islands because of oil and gas reserves plus the strategic position of the island including most crucial communication line across the islands. Though America has been rejecting that it sides Japan against Chinese claim but the bilateral security agreement between both, Japan and America, binds America to side by Japan. (Japan-US security treaty- 1960, 2014). In addition, Japan also fears the rising power of North Korea and the state's ambitions. The acquiring of missile technology by the state is worth disturbing for other states in the region due to the hostile behavior of North Korea.

Japan had recently faced problems with China in 2012 regarding a dispute of Senkaku Island when Chinese fishermen ships abandoned Japanese patrol vessels which warned Chinese ships not to enter Japan's waters. This led to the detention of Chinese's fishermen ship captain and crew by Japan for which China behaved reluctantly and detained Japan's three businessmen in China. It was followed by halt of export that China provided Japanese tech industry. However, release of Chinese crew and captain normalized relations between the two but the fear of China's unexpected behavior in the region was increased in the eyes to Japan. This incident followed Japan's more alignment to the West as its dependent on them for security. This is said to be one of the reason because of which Japan has showed great response on the arrival of USA in the region.

Asia pivot has to do with all the states of Pacific region (Stuart, 2015). South Korea, however, is one of the important states for USA to achieve its strategy. South Korea has been supportive to US strategy of rebalance mainly because of the threat of North Korea and its increasing military capabilities that could jeopardize the situation of states of the region and their respective economies. When Obama in 2013 visited ROK (Republic of Korea) for the first time, he exclaimed that the alliance of US and ROK

“should continue to serve as a linchpin for peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and in Asia” (Jung-Yeop, 2015).

Asia pivot is the US strategy that will not only help or hurt some states in the vary region for which the strategy was planned for but it will also help or hurt some states that have always been confused to choose between America and China – as in the case of Pakistan. Pakistan lies in the South Asian region and shares its borders with India in East, Afghanistan in West, China in North, Iran in South-West, and Arabian Sea in South. Historically, Pakistan’s foreign policy had not been uniformed. It sometimes showed allegiance to USA and sometimes it had normalized its relations with Soviet Union (Now Russia). After 9/11, relations between both states were highly the product of interests which were impossible to attain without the presence of any of these states. Recently especially after America has shown her shift towards India after the strategic announcement of Asia Pivot, Pakistan has inclined herself more towards China. China which is the rising power in East Asia has remained all-weather friend of Pakistan. This inclination towards China has not only been inclination towards China but towards Asia or probably East as we call it.

### **Contemporary Geostrategic Quagmire and Options for Pakistan**

Since the commencement of the Asia pivot policy of US, the relations between Beijing and America got restrained. This had much to do with Pakistan as the interests of Pakistan lies with both, Washington and Beijing. As identified earlier that Pakistan will remain with limited options due to the US - China rivalry and Pakistan’s all weather friendship with China. While on other side, US has strengthened its diplomatic and security ties with India. This has furthered put Pakistan into confusion as India has remained a declared enemy of Pakistan since long. America’s partnership with India is thus very alarming for Pakistan. US administration has also been impolite to Pakistan on different occasions because of which the choices of Pakistan shrank more. After the President Trump’s New Year tweet about Pakistan which reads that US has been foolishly giving aid to Pakistan and has already given \$33 billion in past 15 years while they got nothing in return. On this statement, Pakistan’s foreign minister Khwaja Asif said that America is a friend who always

betrays (Ahmed, 2016). While the general public of Pakistan got also irritated of US behavior of accusing Pakistan every time. Different student unions, earlier this year were involved in agitating against US chanting “Death to America” and “Death to Trump” in Lahore and Islamabad.

National Security Strategy (NSS) was announced by the Trump administration to safeguard the interests of US and its allies only. It also aims at giving a concept of such balance of power that can only strengthen US itself and its allies whereas China and Russia on other side are trying hard to corrode American interests, its power and its security. However, Pakistan is very much devoted to increase its strategic partnership with China. While it’s also slowly and gradually trying to improve its bilateral relations with Russia. The NSS supported the US role of enhancing strategic ties with India while Washington has chosen India to be its ally in Indian Ocean and take a role of leadership and suggested that ‘we will deepen our strategic partnership with India and support its leadership role in Indian Ocean security and throughout the border region.’ The role actually is given to India to check on the Chinese rising influence in the region. This is the major reason that Pakistan cannot walk side by side to Washington policy of strengthening India in the region and moving itself to the allies who can safeguard Pakistan’s interests is the source of contempt for Washington.

Pakistan’s nuclear weapons are most important part of Pakistan’s security as to deter any nuclear or non-nuclear aggression from Indian side. While the reasons of Pakistan’s development of nuclear weapon is to finish necessity of foreign military hardware and be capable of making its own weapons which enables Pakistan to suppress its bandwagon policy especially with reference to USA. Since the very inception of Pakistan’s nuclear weapon, America is not leaving any stone unturned to abolish Pakistan’s nuclear arsenal and it has also expressed its views on Pakistan’s nuclear weapon on December 18, 2017 via NSS that Pakistan’s nuclear assets are not safe and secure. While NSS continued to ‘encourage Pakistan to continue demonstrating that it is responsible steward of its nuclear assets.’ While NSS rightly expressed that Indo-Pak hostilities could lead to nuclear war between the two. However, NSS remained bias as it totally ignored the hawkish behavior of Indian ruling elites; Prime Minister Modi and the

Airforce chief have straightforwardly expressed of surgical strike on Pakistan. This could not only bring Pakistan and India on the brink of nuclear war but also give a hostile image to the overall South Asia security environment. To the bias to NSS, this was totally ignored.

Nevertheless, America on various occasions have put their guilt on Pakistan by blaming Pakistan for its failures in Afghanistan and have time and again accused Pakistan for providing safe sanctuaries to Afghan Taliban in Pakistan. This statement has remained offending for Pakistan. While America has one of the best armies in the world but its limits are shrinking and boundaries seem predefined. On August 21, 2017, President Trump highlighted the frustration of America stating, "I share the American people's frustration. I also share their frustration over a foreign policy that has spent too much time, money, energy and many lives-trying to rebuilt countries in our own image instead of pursuing our security interests above all considerations" (Jaspal, 2017).

Pakistan on other hand is trying to satisfy America which has been an old way of Pakistan while not realizing that global strategic setting has been changed and keep on changing as the matter of days. This geostrategic change is good for Pakistan in one way while it can be proven negative in another way. First, Pakistan is losing its importance for Washington as latter is growing its ties with India while Pakistan is reinforcing its ties with China. The changing global geostrategic setting and restrained relations with US demands the revisit of our defense policy which clearly interprets to deter the aggressive designs of global and regional powers.

These all developments started after Pakistan started making closer ties with China and rejected the view of Trump administration of South Asia. The negative part of rejecting the American view of South Asia was suspension of 255 million dollar military aid to Pakistan. While Pentagon repeatedly claimed that US will take unilateral actions in areas of divergence in Pakistan. While statements from Pentagon freshens the memory of Salalah base attack when American airstrike martyred 24 Pakistani soldiers and officers deployed on Salalah check post on November 2011. Thus, to avoid any such incident in future Pakistan needs to work pragmatically on its defense policy rather

remembering the sacrifices of Pakistan in global war against Terror.

Thus, Pakistan needs to rely on a 'self-help' system to protect itself from the foreign aggression and it needs to revisit its defense policy and strengthen the security of it. Secondly by revisiting Pakistan's defense policy doesn't mean that it should challenge USA or its patron in South Asia but to be ready against any foreign threat as well as to deter both regional plus global powers against adventurism in Pakistan (Jaspal, 2018).

Pakistan is now slowly and gradually allying itself with China, Russia, Iran and Turkey. Because of the Trump administration behavior and Pakistan's ruling elites believe that its interests can better be fulfilled with Eastern and small powers than America. Pakistan and US needs to work on their strategic ties to re-build on common grounds as the transactional model of US Pak ties is about to collapse. US thus needs to understand that the relations between the states are always constructed on the common grounds, there are strategic implications for Pakistan in India and Afghanistan as there are for America in both states. Thus the relations between Pakistan and US are not moving on the good terms; if US wants an ally like Pakistan, it has to understand Pakistan's limitation and its security issues when it comes to India and Afghanistan while on other hand if Pakistan needs its diplomatic ties to be balanced with USA and China both then it need to revisit its foreign as well as defense policy.

Historically, relations between Pakistan and Russia have always remained on odds as both states always had doubts against each other. Pakistan on one hand remained a closer ally of America which also became a reason of disintegration of Soviet Union while Pakistan had remained fearful of Soviet Union/Russia because of its proximity to India. Traditionally Russia and India were one of the biggest allies of each other. With the changing geostrategic settings, Russia and Pakistan are trying to rebuild the trust between them and the dawn of relations between both states have already been set. In International relations, interests are of central importance around which the politics of nations revolve. In the case of Russia, Pak drift and then remaking of ties in new geostrategic setting, interests played the central game.

Russia, however for a long period of time have remained India's biggest arm partner and enjoyed Indian market for its arms for the long

time but after 2014 US surpassed Russia and became India's biggest defense partner. This was for a short period of time as again in 2015 Russia got its previous status but Russia again lost its position when to India's shock, Russia signed a defense pact with Pakistan. This was the first time when Russian defense minister visited Pakistan in past 45 years. The agreement signed between Russia and Pakistan was for the cultural, history, education, social exchange and for information sharing, cooperation in the field of defense, cooperation to counter terrorism, against nuclear proliferation, sharing experience in peacekeeping operations etc. More importantly Pakistan and Russia made a defense deal after which Russia sold Pakistan its combat helicopter Mi-35, four of which were received by Pakistan in August 2017 in exchange of \$153 billion while twenty are still remaining to be sent. Moreover, a deal is being negotiated between both nations for the SU-35 and SU-37 fighter jets (Hussain, 2018). Russia's lift of weapon embargo on Pakistan marked the revival of relations between both states in 2014. It was the way towards new journey of diplomacy and making new allies.

Beside this, Russia has also named first ever joint military exercise between Russia and Pakistan by Druzhba which means friendship in Russian language after the emergence of military to military relations among both states. Russia also took part in Pakistan's naval exercise held in Arabian Sea in 2017. The relations however, didn't halt on the military to military relations only but are also speeding commercial ties. Islamabad and Moscow signed a deal on build \$2 billion gas pipeline on October 16, 2015. This pipeline's length is 1000 km which will cover the area from Karachi to Lahore and is expected to be completed till 2018. This deal was signed when Russia's commercial minister visited Pakistan in last 3 decades.

Pakistan and Russia on other hand are also involved in connecting the states through companies working in the state. OGDCL and Russia's Gazprom International are working together and have signed a memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Moscow and the reason of signed MoU was to research together and to take joint ventures in near future. This will help for further development in Pakistan (Hussain, 2018).

Russia however has also supported Pakistan for the permanent membership for Shanghai

Cooperation Organization (SCO). Russian envoy to Pakistan, Alexy Dedove expressed that Russia supports Pakistan's permanent membership in Shanghai Cooperation Organization (Report, 2015). He said that the role of Pakistan cannot be sidelined in eliminating terrorism from the whole region and he also expressed that by giving Pakistan a permanent status in SCO, it can perform more actively for the peaceful cause of organization.

Beside this Russia and Pakistan relations are evidently boosting since 2013. Russia was only willing to make defense ties but now both, Russia and Pakistan are making trade and commerce relations with each other. Russia once again showed its interests in Pakistan's energy reserves and is also engaged in talk's regards conversion of Muzaffargarh power project from oil and gas to coal-fired station. Russia has also expressed of remaking Pakistan's steel mills in Karachi. Second Pakistan is also interested in having trade relations with Pakistan as through CPEC Russian's goods can get an easy market while could be transported on low cost from one place to another. While Russian Minister Sergei Lavrov in trilateral meeting with Indian and Chinese ministers expressed that India should also join CPEC to get most out of it for its economy. By saying this, Russian government has favored Pakistan for CPEC which India since the very inception of program was denouncing it (Ibid).

Most importantly Russia has also supported Pakistan for its membership in Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG). Pavel Didkovsky, first ever Russian secretary in Pakistan expressed that there should be a criteria for states to join NSG who are not the members of Non Proliferation treaty (NPT). He said this in a seminar on 'disarmament, non-proliferation and strategic stability.' He further expressed that Russia and China both are working together to make a way for countries to join NSG who are not the members of NPT which could be acceptable to all. He also expressed that Russia has never became an impediment in the way of Pakistan's application to join NSG instead Russia value the sacrifices and efforts of Pakistan in rooting out terrorism from south Asia and to bring peace in the region (Farwa, 2017).

US pivot to Asia and its alliance with India, Japan and Australia was formalized basically in 2011. This quad alliance aimed at stopping growing influence of China in the region as well as to

contain it from forming ties with the states of the region. As above mentioned are the threats to China for its survival, there are also threats to Pakistan for its own survival. Thus both, China and Pakistan have aligned together to deter the threat coming from external powers. The most important thing about Pak China friendship is adopting China Pak Economic Corridor (CPEC). CPEC is a mega project signed between China and Pakistan which will connect Gwadar port of Pakistan's Balochistan province to Arabian Sea and land routes will connect China from its Xinjiang province through North East Pakistan. CPEC however, will prove to be good for both states as China will not have to pass its good from Strait of Malacca or via Singapore but from a friendly country Pakistan. Gas pipeline under the umbrella of CPEC from Gwadar to Nawabshah and will enable Iranian Gas.

Besides CPEC, Pakistan and China are cooperating other businesses too for example China is investing in different industries of Pakistan. However the most important of it is military ties and China's support for Pakistan in these contemporary geostrategic circumstances. China and Pakistan are strengthening the military ties; this can also be in reaction of Washington's military ties with New Delhi. China moreover have also confirmed that Pakistan's military capabilities are equally comparable to that of India, conventional and non-conventional both. Thus basically, these ties will strengthen Pakistan economically because of China's investment in different commercial sectors of Pakistan. It will also make a direct nexus of Pakistan China in reaction to Indo-American partnership.

Nevertheless, Pak China diplomatic ties will also prove productive for the security of both nations. Washington and Wall Street through their forum of National Endowment for Democracy is spending millions of dollars every year to destabilize certain areas of the countries around the world. Washington has invested in destabilizing China's Xinjiang province by leveraging from the socio-economic situation of the Province. Washington's ultimate goal was to upset the circumstances in province which can result into agitation and terrorism. Moreover, Washington also supports some of the key agendas advanced by Baloch separatists (Samad, 2015).

China has also supported Pakistan on International forums. US has supported the Indian bid to become the member of Nuclear

Supplier Group while paid no such heed to Pakistan's bid for becoming a member of NSG. China on the other hand supported Pakistan's bid for the membership in NSG. China's argument was based on India's membership in NSG and argued that if India can become the part of NSG then why can't Pakistan (China to Support Pakistan case for NSG membership, n.d.)? China and Pakistan also named each other as "All weather friends."

Though Pakistan and China have proven to be 'all weather friends' in the hostile geopolitical setting of the region, yet Pakistan has to build its own economy and military enough powerful to remove the tag of dependency in International world. Countries which are economically and military independent are prestigious in such an interest based global setting. As mentioned before, there are no permanent foes and friends in the system, states have to develop themselves to self-rely. Pakistan however, also needs to stop changing sides and develop its economy and military to face any challenge that may come in the future.

Moreover if Pakistan wants to avoid situation like in which relations fluctuate as that in case of Pakistan and US; Pakistan first needs to be fully independent on its own resources and skills. The countries which are financially assisted or are dependent on other states are hardly respected by the International community and the prestige of the nation is always compromised.

On other hand Pakistan needs to materialize cordial relations with its neighbor as a well-known proverb suggests that 'One can change its enemy but not a neighbor.' Pakistan needs to establish smooth and friendly relations with Countries in neighbor. In this case Pakistan has to abandon its few policy and provocative to the neighbors as well as bring them to the table of negotiations. Pakistan, however, due to pressures of US and middle Eastern countries have long ignored formulating better relations with Iran. These pressures need to be tackled in a way that Pak-Iran relations are not disturbed. Iran is after all the first country to recognize Pakistan as a separate and independent state. Pakistan can give bigger role to Iran in CPEC project and can materialize the old incomplete projects which were halted due to the Western pressures. Pakistan and Iran has also agreed to enhance ties on security and political cooperation in start of the New Year (2018).

## Conclusion

The present geostrategic environment of the world has bought new changes and totally transformed the world it was a decade before. The divergences of interests and survival issues have through years resulted in divorce, marriages and remarriage of states with each other. With the fragmentary war in Afghanistan and new challenges for America in the region and hurdles to maintain its hegemonic character in the world, it came up with different policies which could better serve the interest of USA not only in the region of South East Asia but also could serve its interests for the longer period of time as portrayed by the policy makers in USA. In the year 2011, USA could foresee that its interests were not being fully served by the current strategic order. Thus, Obama administration brought the strategy of 'pivot to Asia' for particularly the states of Asia pacific region.

As we have noticed that the world before the rise of China looked different where America was a sole Power and other states had little say in International affairs. While world after the rise of China seems quite different than what it was before. This change didn't went unnoticed by the major players of the world especially USA. However, this development on other hand was also not liked by the major players that ran the International affairs all on their own. Asia pivot thus was a policy to halt the rapid success of China economically as well as on the military grounds. Asia pivot thus is seen as a way to contain China by increasing proximity with the states of the region. USA has signed multiple multilateral deals with the states around China from which it can closely monitor the developments of the region as well as the China's motives. It is repeating its strategy of Cold War in which USA encircled USSR by forming military and economic ties with the states around.

As previously stated that pivot had some important elements around which the policy was considered by the Obama administration. These few elements included making of alliances to achieve the bigger interests of USA in the region. Making and revisiting relations with the emerging powers of the region was also one of the elements that were considered while making a policy. Economic diplomacy, as Asia pivot is now considered as the hub of economic transaction. Engaging with Military institutes, Respecting universally set norms and values and monitoring

whether it were followed by the governments in the region and increasing US military presence in the region was the core product of Asia pivot policy.

America has taken into account, each and every state that comes in the region. It has signed multiple deals with Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, South Korea, India, Australia, etc. These deals varied from economy to culture and to defense. But USA has specifically chose India as a partner to check the activities of China. America has signed many defense pacts with Japan and India and the closeness of these states in economy and defense areas have raised alarm for China. China itself is a trading economy and cannot bear any enmity with the states whose routes its use for trading its goods. America has also started strengthening the states like Japan, South Korea and Vietnam which have dispute with China on South China Sea and it also support the stance of these states over China on the sea.

Japan is one of the biggest ally of US in Asia pacific region and also the oldest ally after the tensions between both states were over post world war II. Japan is gradually decreasing its military budgets and expenditures though China is expanding it. Because as per the mutual cooperation and security treaty that was signed between US and Japan, US is bound to protect Japan from outside equation. US have also supported Japan against China in 2013 when Chinese vessels entered Japan's maritime space. Thus Japan has welcomed US initiative of Asia pivot and also encouraged the initiative of Trans-pacific Partnership. Moreover, Japan and USA have signed various military and economic deals before as well after the arrival of Asia pivot policy.

Meanwhile, US has not only strengthened relations with Japan but have focused on establishing relations with India as well. USA and India have signed various military deals while India purchased military goods from USA. Nevertheless both states have also made a strategic forum known as US-India strategic Partnership Forum (UISPF) launched on August 1st 2017 for enhancing business and strategic Partnership among two states (US-India Strategic Partnership Forum Launched to Further Enhance Relationship Between Two Countries, 2017). USISP is made to enhance strategic relations between both states and to make them one of the most powerful strategic partnerships

of the world. Through this bilateral organization, the business and trade between both countries will increase. USA and India are also looking forwards to work together in Afghanistan. As stated earlier that this partnership is less to do with US and India and more to do with China and Pakistan.

On one hand America and India are together on one page to keep check on China's developments and its relations with other states in the region. They are working together to stop China's military and economic supremacy in the region. On other hand, with America's closer ties with India have impacts on Pakistan's stability and security. India's bigger role in Afghanistan and Indo-US partnership were alarming for Pakistan and these changes didn't go unnoticed by the policy makers in Islamabad. To ignore any security challenges coming in future, Pakistan has totally aligned itself with China. While China also needed Pakistan in a situation where two powers, one universal and other regional have shaken hand against its military and economic supremacy in the region. Thus the geostrategic setting of the region totally changed after the arrival of Asia pivot policy by USA. Although Pakistan didn't directly fall in Asia pacific region but its impacts on Pakistan are clearly visible.

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