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Article:	Geopolitical Implications of the Indian Ocean and Maritime Security Challenges for Pakistan
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Abstract:

Geopolitics and geographical identity of a state holds great significance in today's arena of International Politics. The geographical sphere is a source of global puissance in regional policy making. From the last few decades, the world has witnessed major variations in regional power dynamics from Atlantic to Pacific and from Europe to Asia. Oceans and seas are an imperative driver of dynamic change and clutches prosperity enigmas from eras. The Indian Ocean, in contemporary world, is a major maritime transit lounge. Global economy relies on this giant oceanic connector as it is an emerging economic gravity center in world's trade and economic affairs. Hegemonic influence on the littoral states of Indian Ocean is the dire need of Asian economic giants as well as the US and European rivals. Pakistan's geographic location and its embryonic Gwadar port holds great strategic significance in regional economy, prosperity, security and stability. Notwithstanding, there are certain maritime challenges for Pakistan. The aim of this paper is to identify maritime challenges to Pakistan in terms of CPEC and to highlight possible remedial measures in changing regional geopolitical power dynamics. It can be concluded with a thorough study that Pakistan requires adequate measures to cope up with existing and futuristic challenges in the maritime domain.

Key words: Geopolitics, South Asia, Indian Ocean, Strategic Challenges, Maritime Security, Pakistan

Introduction

Geopolitics, is a study of physical and anthropological influences of a state on regional politics and International affairs (Devetak et al 2017). In the context of IR (International Relations), geopolitics is a technique to evaluate overseas policy of a particular state in light of geographical variables. These variables cover topography, demography, area studies, climate studies, natural resources, applied and pragmatic sciences (Evans & Newnham 1998). The core emphasise of geopolitics is political power interlinked with topographic location. Geographic elements (i.e area, population, and climate etc) and fundamental interests of global actors are other associated topics of geopolitics which form world's geopolitical system (Toncea 2006). According to Gogwilt (2000), the term geopolitics at present is being used to define a wide spectrum of notions, in a general its used as “a synonym for international political relations”, but more precisely to indicate a worldwide structure of such relations. Mahan (1890) said that national supremacy is inextricably linked with sea power and its use in war and peace and emphasized on the tactical locations (such as canals, rivers, chokepoints and coaling stations) as well as assessable fighting power in an armada, are helpful to control over the sea. He further elaborated that following six elements have potential to increase sea power and geographical importance of a state:

1. Valuable topographical position.
2. Functional coastlines, auspicious climate and natural resources.
3. Longitude and Latitude of territory.
4. Inhabitants, sufficient to defend its geographical boundaries.
5. The social order with a capacity for the sea and commercial enterprise.
6. Administration with the inspiration and proclivity to control the sea.

However, while discussing about geopolitics and geographical importance, it will not be expedient to ignore 'Heartland' and 'Rimland' theories. The 'Heartland' theory is a geopolitical concept which analyzes the political and economic success of the world's regions by geography (Sloan 1999, 15-38). The concept of Heartland was theorized by a British scholar, Halford John Mackinder in 1904 (Kruszewski 1953, 388). Mackinder (1904) said that the core of global influence lies in the Heartland, the region consisted of Eurasia and Africa (comprise of 2/3 of total world's land area, abundant natural resources and densely populated), naturally fortified from all around by geographical barriers. He predicted, "Whoever rules East Europe, will rule Heartland, whoever rules the Heartland, will rule the World Island, and whoever rules the World Island, will rule the world" (Mackinder 1904). The theory remained focused in international power politics in the 20th century. However, Spykman thought that the Rimland (a strip of coastal belt that encircles Eurasia) is more imperious than the central Asian zone (the area identified as Heartland) for the control of the Eurasian continent and emphasized that "who controls the Rimland rules Eurasia, who rules Eurasia controls the destinies of the world" (Spykman 1969, 170-177). Geopolitics prior, post and during Cold war era seriously remained under influence of these two theories. However, after collapse of Soviet Union in 1991, geopolitics changed its dimensions, dramatically.

In the globalized world, geography is imperative in terms of economic, ecological, and transnational security and converts it into burning debated issue, that make geopolitics a dynamic source of international politics (Chapman 2011). In general, the study of interaction between geography, transnational politics and interstate relations, has apparently passed its zenith and now critiques are evolving in the society about new geopolitical dimensions. In today's digital age, multilateral institutions, technological developments and upsurge of non-state actors

decisively considered in global affairs. Cyber warfare and surveillance are new persuasive elements that can produce complex political conflicts and multinational crises. Al-Rodhan (2012) has extended classical and traditional geopolitical contemplations to include “societal, health and the environment” and elevates geopolitics into space which is known as meta-geopolitics. The supremacy of geographical boundary has been outdated by the hard and soft power tools that can be utilized by a state to obtain and preserve power and sovereignty. Political and social mobilization, digital media and diplomacy are new tools of geopolitical influence (Al-Rodhan 2012).

Research Methodology:

The paper is aligned with the concept to investigate maritime security challenges for Pakistan in the changing power dynamics of South Asia. This argument based, international strategic policy research employs a qualitative research methodology (Creswell 2009, 3-21). Fresh insights are presented through a combination of analytical efforts that are primarily reflexive in nature (O'Reilly 2009, 13-17), whereas findings are a source from both primary and secondary data. Primary sources include content from speeches and arguments of serving / former naval officers and diplomatic personnel, taken from newspapers and official websites of respective organizations. They help focus on Pakistan's growing importance in the seas in context of Port of Gwadar, the OBOR and the need to strengthen maritime security governance in the Northern Indian Ocean Region. Secondary sources include selected bibliography and journal papers to support theoretical knowledge and contemporary prospective. In seeking to produce robust, defensible and implementable policy outcomes, and in keeping with the imperatives of strategic analytical approaches, no single theoretical line of enquiry is entirely adequate. The convergent outcomes of multi-disciplinary approaches provide a loose analytical

framework that enables synthesis. Several intellectual ‘prisms’ (lenses or perspectives) are employed, primarily risk and vulnerability theory in concert with maritime strategy and security theories. Aspects of international relations, international law, strategy, and traditional and non-traditional security theories are also applied to contemporary Indian Ocean maritime security policy considerations.

3. Analysis & Discussion:

Geopolitics of Indian Ocean:

Throughout the history, oceans and sea remained major drivers of change and stimulates interstate relations. As being the cheapest and appropriate source of transportation, man is using marine resources from centuries. Aquatic zones of the planet not only provide modes of transportation but contains abundant natural resources for well-being of human life. The Indian Ocean is stretches within an area of 68 million square kilometers, surrounded by three continents, several Islands and spills out into the Southern Ocean (Tomczak & Godfrey 2013). Evolving economic growth in Asia is highly contributed by globalized economy and trade carried out through Indian Ocean.

Regardless of its geographical prominence and massive rising population, the Indian Ocean was neglected in worlds geopolitics prior 20th century. However, in today’s world, the area holds a vital geostrategic significance due to abundant hydrocarbon resources of the Persian Gulf, reliance of worlds cargo shipment on its sea lines of communications (SLOCs), and narrow straits. Turbulent and unstable socio-political situation in some littoral states has also fascinated world attention towards the Indian Ocean. Rise of Chinese, Indian and Russian military and economic capacity is another factor of its regional importance in the geopolitical system of the world. In 2011, a total of 142 political conflicts were recorded in the IOR, representing more

than a third of 388 conflicts worldwide, including 12 of the world's 20 wars, as well as an additional eight limited wars (Halpern et al 2008).

The significance of Indian Ocean Region as a geopolitical focal zone is already recognized worldwide. Notion of Indian Ocean (IO) as a nonviolent, maritime thoroughfare and as a cohesive interregional arena of commercial and social interaction and exchange is identical. There is an evolving consensus that "Asia Pacific concerns will play an important role in reshaping the transnational framework that it has done for centuries" (Till and Bratton 2012). The IOR "has swiftly give the impression as the geographic connector of giant economic and security topics that have worldwide consequences" (Garofano and Dew 2013). The Indian Ocean has not been looked into more than as a transit passage for world's trade in recent past by major powers, however, growing interest and dependency of world actors on its sea lines of communications (SLOCS), increased its potential and significance. This situation has made the IO difficult to deal with as an articulated area, from a geopolitical perspective. The IOR is bounded by diverse social, cultural, economic and political states. There are 51 littoral and hinterland states of the Indian Ocean (28 rim states, plus 10 Persian Gulf and Red Sea coastal states, and 13 landlocked states) are distinguished for their diversity and lack of equality (Brewster et al 2013). Some states are wealthier enough (i.e Persian Gulf states and Australia) whereas some are poorest (i.e Bangladesh, Myanmar and East Taimor). According to Gupta (2010), total number of inhabitants in this region are more than 2.65 billion (approx 39 per cent of entire world population) and the SLOCs of Indian Ocean are the busiest shipping lines as two third of the world crude oil, more than half of the ampoule trade and one third of bulk cargo.

Maritime Security; an International Agenda:

The term maritime security cannot be elucidated without familiarization with the concept of security, under the literature of international relations. This will develop an understanding how issues of security should be perceived when considered from a maritime prospective. The security dilemma fabricates when a nation state seeks out measures to maximize its security via policies of peace through strength (Mack 1991). Buzan (1991) has observed that intimidations to a territorial entity may not only be military, but also economical, societal, political and ecological. The concept of maritime security has been evolved since 2000s, when a dire threat to the port facilities and maritime domain has been posed by non-state actors. Maritime strategies to counter expected security threat and vulnerabilities at sea has been formulated by several states and international organizations.

Maritime security has progressively been conferred a broader understanding and superior firmness, as states have pursued to retort to varied threats in and from the oceans. A new collaborative approach among world navies has been emerged, since the UN Security Council highlighted the agenda of piracy near Somali coastline and Gulf of Aden. Klein (2011) says that transnational felonious activities, particularly drugs and human trafficking, continues to tax law implementation efforts and has recently provoked greater consideration of communal patrolling authority in sovereign maritime areas. The overwhelming consequences of unlawful fishing and marine contamination have led states to regard their ecological and economic security as vulnerable and they have responded accordingly. Although these developments have been analyzed for their reliability with international law rules and policies in vogue, what has been missing in these scrutinization is a “reflection on how these developments in their totality operate

vis-à-vis the existing legal paradigm and whether that paradigm is still appropriate to meet current security imperatives” (Klein 2011).

There is no universally accepted, international definition of maritime security (Rahman; 2009). According to Bueger (2015), maritime security is one of the latest buzz words of international relations. From last few decades, oceanic ascendancy and international security have been included in maritime security policies of major world powers. After the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the US policy makers redefined maritime security as associated it with maritime terrorism (Bueger 2015). Maritime security, like other tactical terms, attracts attention towards new security challenges. It can be referred to the threats directly posed to maritime domain. They refer to threats such as maritime inter-state disputes, maritime terrorism, piracy, trafficking of narcotics, people and illicit goods, arms proliferation, illegal fishing, environmental crimes, or maritime accidents and disasters ((Bueger 2015). According to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, while identifying common maritime security threats, there is no agreed definition of maritime security (UN General Assembly 2008). The acknowledged threats to maritime security are, first, piracy and armed robbery against merchant and humanitarian assistance vessels, second, acts of terrorism relating to offshore installation, shipping and other maritime interests to hamper economic flow of trade, third, illegal trading of WMDs and conventional arms, forth, illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs, fifth, smuggling of persons by sea in an inhuman environment onboard, sixth, , illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUU fishing) and finally damage to marine environment, intentionally and unlawfully (UN General Assembly 2008).

Changing Regional Power Dynamics in South Asia:

Power politics in Asia especially in South Asia is at its peak from few decades as it was never before. Old friends and foes are no more rivals, but enhancing bilateral relations with each other. Evolving relationship between Afghanistan and India, China and Pakistan, India and United States, India and Iran, Russia and Pakistan are forming new power dynamics in the region. Major world powers always remained player in the regional politics of South Asian countries, especially developing nations (i.e Afghanistan, India, Iran and Pakistan). During the Cold War era, the US and the USSR have implemented counter balancing measures against each other to cater hegemony in the region. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the United States became the sole superpower in the world politics. However, from last decade, the world is changing in to multipolarity, as China, Russia and the United States are again trying to maintain their foothold in the regional politics of South Asia. Presently, China, India and Pakistan have shaped a strategic triangle (Kapur; 2010). Emerging heightened political, economic, military and social relationship between China and Pakistan has compelled United States to strengthen ties with India or the same is vice versa. Russian and Eurasian states interest in the multipurpose, multidimensional China-Pakistan economic corridor (CPEC) is another alarming stunt for US policy makers.

Presently, India and Pakistan, both are nuclear states and are traditional opponents since their inception. Both countries fought three major wars and many border clashes within last 70 years. There are several conflicting issues between two states (i.e Kashmir dispute, border demarcation, water problem, Siachen glacier etc). Major powers mediated several times between India and Pakistan on above cited issues but constant and reluctant attitude of India failed these attempts all the times. Strategic partnership between India and United States after civil nuclear

deal, China and Pakistan have also boosted their 60 years old strategic relationship. These evolving trends created new power dynamics and strategic quadrangle of US-India and China-Pakistan which stretching towards two extremes, US and India are on one end, whereas China and Pakistan are on the other (Markey et al 2011). Moreover, after Indian struggle to enhance its nuclear capabilities within the region, Pakistan remained with the only nuclear option to equalize strategic and geopolitical Indian threats (Paul 2005). A vibrant indicator of change in Pakistan and China strategic ties is signing a Treaty of Friendship in 2005 for cooperation, collaboration and good relations, which has initiated high level strategic dialogue (Zeb 2012). The CPEC agreement in 2015, is also a dramatic move in bilateral relations of both states. According to Jahangir (2013, 50-58), in the contemporary situation, the fragile and distinctive balance-of-power is rising in South Asia within which the United States ought to play its very important role as a balancer in post U.S withdrawal from Afghanistan and can have to be compelled to treat equally with India and Pakistan.

CPEC an Evolving Game Changer:

The CPEC, a regional connectivity network, hypothetically holds ample economic, cultural and academic implications for China and Pakistan. The geographical linkage between Gwadar and Kashgar through CPEC will enhance cooperation, trade, business, cultural harmony and economic development in the entire region of South Asia. The Central Asian Republics including Afghanistan, India and Iran will also be the beneficiaries of this marvellous rail, road and air transportation network subject to their willingness. In this context, Gwadar port of Pakistan and Indian Ocean retains viable prominence in success of this worthy venture. Maritime trade corridors of the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean will provide new shipping alternatives to China through Gwadar. Thus, safety and security surveillance of Gwadar port and

its futuristic shipment activities is a challenging dare for both China and Pakistan. Recent developments in defense cooperation between China and Pakistan are a step to preserve and promote regional maritime safety, security and stability in the Indian Ocean Region.

Presently, Pakistan is operating two international deep-sea ports, Karachi port and Port Qasim. The rising dependency of Pakistan on sea-borne trade and shipping industry, it was considered essential to extend cargo handling service on both ports. However, it is pertinent to mention that there are certain limitations to extend Karachi port facilities, especially due to its location within the Karachi city, which is on rapid growth. Port Qasim has an option to be extended as vast physical area and space is available there, however, being at 40 kms from open sea, it is not considered economical for cargoes having destination elsewhere other than Karachi. Resultantly, need of third deep sea port was arised which had been established in Gwadar. The first phase of the Gwadar port was inaugurated in 2007 by President Pervez Musharraf at a total cost of \$248 million (Walsh 2013). Second phase of development is under process and progressing rapidly.

The diplomatic and bilateral relations between China and Pakistan commenced in 1950s and improved with the passage of time. Presently, China and Pakistan are all-weather tested friends. Both the states are enjoying steadfast and consistent support on various key issues related to their national interests. CPEC is a journey towards economic regionalization in the globalized world and the corridor is a hope of better future with peace, development and growth of economy (Ministry of Planning, Development & Reform 'P' block Pak-Secretariat, Islamabad, Pakistan., n.d.). It is a major pathway for China's Silk and Belt Road program and might even solve the endemic energy crisis that Pakistan faces (Bhattacharjee 2015). It was conceived back in the 1990s, and the first approach to Pakistan from China about connecting China's western

provinces to the Arabian Sea came in 1999 (Hussain 2017). Gwadar deep sea port holds great significance in this \$46 billion project (Gwadar Port Authority 2019).

Maritime Challenges for Pakistan:

The global challenges and threats to maritime sector (i.e piracy, sea-based terrorism, narcotic and human trafficking, proliferation of unauthorized arms and weapons, illegal fishing and climate degradation) are common and also applicable to Pakistan maritime trade zones. Pakistan has been blessed with a maritime zone of approx 30% to its total land area which is enriched with quite abounded natural resources. In March, 2015, United Nations Commission on the Limits of Continental Shelf has accepted the claim of Pakistan over 50,000 square kilometers as extension, to its continental shelf in Indian Ocean which increased existing 240,000 square kilometers upto a range of 290,000 square kilometers with rights over seabed and subsoil resources (Ghauri 2016). It is an unpleasant fact that Pakistan didn't exploited its sea resources to their optimum level. Pakistan marine industry can be divided into four main areas i.e Services, Marine Fisheries, Manufacturing and Energy Sector.

Certain threats to maritime trade zones of Pakistan at national level are to be categorized into traditional and non-traditional. The traditional threats posed to Pakistan are mainly from India's grand strategy towards the Indian Ocean. A persistent likelihood of war always exists between India and Pakistan in the maritime domain due to unsettled disputes of Sir Creek or Mumbai like staged terrorist attacks. Close proximity of Indian Air Force and Indian Naval bases pose a direct threat to vital maritime infrastructure of Pakistan, especially South Eastern SLOCs. India is constantly developing its maritime arsenal and desires to achieve blue water navy status to become a regional military giant in the Indian Ocean. Rapid inclusion of nuclear submarine, frigates, destroyers and aircraft carrier in Indian Navy establishes critical situation to

its neighbors and especially for Pakistan. Fragile law and order situation in Afghanistan, US-Indian interference in its politics and military is another growing threat to the sovereignty and security of Pakistan. The United States strategy to launch India as a regional power in the Indian Ocean to counter Chinese and Russian strategy of regional hegemony poses direct threat to maritime domain of Pakistan. It is now impartially manifest that in the prevalent geo-strategic environment, United States will continue India's political backing as well as military support. Pakistan needs to intensely invest in its sea based second strike capabilities and necessarily counter US-Indian military influence in the Indian Ocean Region by conducting joint maritime exercises with friendly navies.

Non-Traditional security threats to Pakistan and its maritime setup are asymmetric challenges of piracy, terrorism, narco-arms and human trafficking, ecological degradation, and other unauthorized activities that complicates security matrix additionally. Somali Piracy in the Gulf of Aden and East coast of Africa hampers marine traffic towards the territorial waters of Pakistan, results in loss of valuable monetary benefits. A formidable threat to shipping vessels and maritime infrastructure emanates from sea-based terrorism. The notorious Hash Highway (drug route for narco-trade) which links North Arabian Sea to Europe and North America remains busy as our western neighbor Afghanistan produces of 9% of worlds total opium production. Human smuggling is also a lucrative business across the globe, and popular in the region due to prevalent poverty.

The future operationalization of CPEC will enhance the spectrum of threat perception for Pakistan. Therefore, Pakistan is extremely conscious about future maritime challenges in the Indian Ocean Region (IRO). Pakistan Maritime Forces are continuously upgrading their surface, sub-surface and underwater arsenal. Gady (2016), said that China has already consented in April

2016 to provide 08 x submarines to Pakistan by 2028, valued US\$4 to \$5 billion and is expected to extend a long-term loan at a low interest rate. The first four submarines are expected to be delivered by the end of 2023, however, remaining 04 x submarines will be constructed at Pakistan as announced by Managing Director Rear Admiral Syed Hassan Nasir Shah HI(M) (Karachi Shipyard and Engineering Works Ltd [KS&EW Ltd] 2016). He further highlighted that this project will elevate KS&EW among the elite club of few shipyards of the world where construction of both submarines and ships are undertaken ("Karachi shipyard & engineering works limited," n.d.). Moreover, Pakistan Ex-Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Zakaullah, in his farewell address said that 'new vessels are being inducted while contracts have been signed to acquire frigates from China, in order to strengthen the Pakistani Navy' (Gao 2017). He further added that Pakistan Navy is under process to purchase two planes from Holland, ATR planes from Germany and Sea King helicopters from Britain (Siddiqui 2017). Pakistan Navy has already acquired 02 x ships from China, equipped with state-of-the-art weapons and sensors to protect Gwadar port and will also be utilized to protect the sea lanes in the Arabian Sea (The Economic Times 2017).

4. Conclusion:

The Indian Ocean region is a key medium for sea-based transportation. All sea traffic, either it is for commercial purpose or for human assistance is transiting thorough its waters. These shipping lines facilitates the transport of energy resources and other freights and industrial goods to the world. The existence of extra-regional states, interstate relationship and the predominant, unresolved boundary issues are aspects that have driven maritime strategic outlook in the IOR. The countless issues between littorals of Indian Ocean made the region competitive instead of comparatively peaceful. The formulations of peaceful settlement of disputes between

thee littorals are the only option to preserve peace in the region. Finally, Pakistan needs to build more inclusive relationship with maritime security communities. The IOR is an extremely important and highly utilized ocean space that a vast majority of the world relies on it, there is inadequate cooperation between the littoral states as well as its users; the extra regional states. In this backdrop, collaboration via various mechanisms would enable Pakistan to ensure security of its maritime domain.

South Asia and its adjacent littoral waters are susceptible in terms of maritime security. The region covers an extensive oceanic area which is heavily trafficked with marine vessels. Therefore, all vulnerabilities highlighted above in maritime security domain are existed here. It can be concluded with the above discussion that Pakistan requires adequate measures to cope up with existing and futuristic challenges.

5. Recommendations:

1. Formulation and upgradation of local networks of LEAs to enhance cooperation and information sharing in maritime domain. This act will also highlight real time picture of security threats and concerns to the maritime domain of Pakistan.
2. Participation in Maritime Security Partnerships (MSPs) of extra regional powers is a source of escalation of professional experience and competence of maritime security forces. Efforts to safeguard own area of interest while participating in a multinational maritime partnership is the dire need of the day.
3. Formation of a Track-II political forum to discuss and resolve interstate maritime disputes is considered essential. Presently there are two forums IO-ARC and IONS are there, but these are not diplomatic forums to discuss conflicting issues. This effort can be further elevated to Track-I level diplomatic partnerships, too.

4. Establishment of an academic platform, where eminent scholars of all littoral states can share their views and expertise in order to provide mutually acceptable solution of interstate disputes and counter security measures.
5. New models of maritime security cooperation in line with cold war military partnerships (i.e North Atlantic Treaty Organization) are required in the Northern Indian Ocean. The Idea may be prevailed in forthcoming competition of regional and extra regional powers in the IOR.
6. National level legislation related to marine and ocean policies, rules, and regulations be regularly conducted to counter adaptive challenges of maritime security in the contemporary scenario.
7. Confidence building measures (CBMs) to share maximum information related to maritime security between the states engaged in multilateral security operations is to be revisited and implemented.
8. Adoption of best management practices (BMPs), ISPS codes and acquisition of new marine technologies will be a source of retaliation against evolving maritime security threats. The same measures may be adopted by Gwadar Port Authority in order to take maximum benefit from CPEC.

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