

Analyzing Pakistan's Geostrategic Location Since America's Led War On Terror

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Abstract:

Whenever a country knows how to use its geography to the better of its political and strategic interests, geostrategic and geopolitical studies are termed. As the gateway to Central Asia and an effective path for World Powers ' entry to ground-locked Afghanistan, Pakistan's geography suffered from the ' New Great Game' side effects and the ' International War against terrorism. Today, however, things are in transition. The northern border with China where in the wake of CPEC there the western border with Afghanistan is seeking TAPI Gas Pipeline is ready to bring in billions of dollars of financing. Likewise, the south-western border with Iran will be adaptable for the Pak-Iran Gas Pipeline sooner or later. This paper is an attempt to highlight the significance of Pakistan's geography. Secondary sources are used for the said work.

Key Words: Pakistan, Geography, significance, region.

Introduction:

Geo indicates 'Earth' strategy basically states planning, techniques and policy and meaning means emphasis. Geo strategic suggests the significance of a country or area as a result of its geographic area. (Nachum, 2008). The term was first used by Frederick L. Schuman in his 1942 article ' Let Us Learn Our Geopolitics. Country's geographical characteristics take it both, many chances to take advantage of and some dangers to avoid. (Schuman, 1942). Pakistan took advantage of its geographical chances but could flee the dangers that it framed. Pakistan's geography, where numerous material advantages tried to bring to the state, it's foolish exploitation also welcomed the area's chaos.

Geographical Description of Pakistan:

Pakistan is situated in South East Asia. 24.35 North and latitude 37.05 North and longitude 61 East to 78 East. The size is 796096 sq. km, extending from north to south about 1600 km, and from east to west about 885 km. (Khan, 1991) In 1947, having a peculiar geography, Pakistan comprised of two separate sections; West Pakistan, in the Basin of the Indus River and East Pakistan (later became Bangladesh in December 1971) situated more than 1000 miles (1600

kilometers) away in the Ganges River. The state expresses with India its Eastern Border named Radcliffe Line. It has boundary with China on its Northern side. The western line 'Durand Line' is a border with Afghanistan, and 'Gold Smith Line' bordering Iran. The South of the state has been confined by the Arab Sea.

Total area of Pakistan is 7,96096 square kilometers, (Khan, 1991) Pakistan has emerged as one of the most important geographical patches of Asia. Pakistan is bordering Afghanistan in the West, whose one-kilometer narrow Wakhan Strip held the disbanded USSR away from Pakistani boundaries. It has the People's Republic of China toward the North. Geography has also situated Pakistan at the mouth of the strategic Persian Gulf in which 65 percent of the world's oil is transported.

Western countries, such as the Americas, are geographically taken to Pakistan because of their keen incentive to keep the Arab Sea open for shipments of Persian Gulf Oil which render up an important portion of their energy production. The oil-rich core of the Persian Gulf region-Iran is located in northwest Pakistan. The northwest expansion of the strategically significant Indian Ocean washes the coastal shores of Pakistan in the South, the Arabian Sea. Khunjerab Pass connects Pakistan and China. (Balar et.al, 2017) At Koh-i-Tuhtan, Pakistan neighboring Iran. Wakhan's narrow strip divides Central Asia from Pakistan. To the east, the 1650 km long Punjab Rajasthan boundaries. The border between Pakistan and Afghanistan is 2250 km (Durand Line). The coastal belt is 700 km long.

Political Significance:

American objectives in the areas to counter Rising China, nuclear Iran, terrorist Afghanistan, and to take advantage of the Indian market. Security and business are two of the area's major US desires whereas Pakistan plays a front-line position against violence. (Alam, 2004) Today the area's political situation is tinged with pre-emption strategy and US invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan, Iran's nuclear weapons program, India's strategic musculature (new strategic agreement with the US) to obtain hegemony and counter China's rise that has earned all the qualities to transform unipolar worlds into bipolar worlds. Pakistan is engaged directly or indirectly in all these problems, in particular after Al.Qaida operations. The US think tanks have consistently admitted that war on terror can never be waged without Pakistan's support. Pakistan has battled hard and ongoing military campaign in Waziristan also targets the alleged Taliban in the border region. Major threats to Pakistan: Conflicts between Baluchistan and Waziristan pose risks to any financial initiative such as the IPI gas pipeline. India, US, Iran adverse position in this ridden region of dispute. Kashmir is flashpoint, speeding up the South Asian atomic race. Unstable countries have contributed to weakening the dominant position in Pakistan.

Geostrategic importance:

As Pakistan appeared as a free and independent state on the world map in August 1947, because of its highly vulnerable security and fragile economy, it has a little chance to survive. Despite multiple conflicts and enormous instability, moreover, it has been able to sustain and make progress due to many reasons, the most significant of that is then maybe its strategic geographic location and its specific doctrine. Pakistan is in an area of major political, financial, and strategic position. (Khan, 2010)

For the last 20 years it has been the center of major powers' operations. It has seen the contribution of three main powers, Britain, Russia, and the United States. Its importance was further improved during the Cold War when it becomes an ally of US policy of Soviet Union containment and now the post-Cold War era has seen its importance especially after the events of 9/11. Pakistan's geographical location makes it a junction of the three major parts of the world. South Asia, Central Asia, and West Asia. Thus, Pakistan is situated in one of the globe's most delicate areas, where major global rivalries, Therefore, protecting their safety are a primary objective of Pakistan's foreign policy even under normal conditions. It has become the prime concern in troubling times of today. Pakistan's geostrategic stance is such that it has confronted a sequence of difficult situations since its existence. The issues in the area have increased in recent years in a way that has focused the attention of the world on Pakistan.

- ◇ Nearness of great powers: Pakistan resides at the intersection of major powers. One world power lies in its neighbors, Russia, and the other emerging power China. Any partnership between global powers is strengthening its importance. After 9/11 Pakistan made use of this element.
- ◇ Gateway to Central Asia:- Central Asia-Central Asia is at the forefront of new Great Games. Western quest for resources-Central Asian oil and energy wealth. After the fall of the U.S.S.R., a modern quest began, as reflected by oil politics. Pakistan lies very near to the oil-rich Middle East countries. The belt began in Iran and spread over to Saudi Arabia. And Pakistan will affect oil shipments. Iran is striving to export its surplus gas and oil to eastern countries, with pipeline projects in Qatar, Pakistan and Turkmenistan highlighting the situation. Pakistan is situated in the center of energy rich states Iran and Afghanistan in the energy poor globe: both abound in resources whereas India and China are lacking. China finds its way to the Indian Ocean and the Arab Sea via Karakoram highways; Pakistan is connected with the Persian Gulf Islamic countries via the Arab Sea. They are all rich in oil. Pakistan's major seaports are at Karachi Bin Qasim and Gwadar.
- ◇ Bridge between South Asia and South West Asia; Iran and Afghanistan excel in resources whereas India and China lack. China seeks path from Karakorum to the Indian Ocean and the Arab Sea. China is designing its southern regions with its quickest economic growth rate of 9 percent, as its own port is 4500 km from Sinkiang, but Gwadar is 2500 km away. Pakistan offers CARs the shortest 2600 km route in comparison with Iran (4500 km) or Turkey (5000 km). Ground-locked Afghanistan now discovers its methods through Pakistan at the Reconstruction phase. With its deeper waters, Gwadar port draws trading ships from China, CARs and South East Asian states. Iran is trying to export its excess gas and oil to states in the east. Pipeline projects in Qatar Pakistan and Turkmenistan illustrate the role. When IPI succeeds, Pakistan would get 400 million dollars yearly. (Bhattacharjee, 2015) Mountain ranges: The Himalayas, the northern Hindu Kush are abundant in providing water and natural resources.
- ◇ Only a Muslim country with nuclear capacity has significantly risen Pakistan's tactical place in the world since it acquired nuclear capacities, making it the only Muslim country with nuclear arms. Pakistan is a poor country facing numerous problems and

extreme scarcity of electricity, but even then, its atomic power has increased its significance in the global community considerably. A historical may have correctly stated, "In nearly 80 years since the fall of the Ottoman Empire, if any research described incident occurred throughout the Islamic world, it was in May 1998 that Pakistan carried out its nuclear bombs. Pakistan is the only Muslim state with a nuclear capacity that has a strong influence on the area's political, socio-economic activities and the preservation of the power structure. Reducing Indian Hegemony In the Arab and Indian Seas: India has a mutual interest in subjugating Pakistan with the US and NATO as they view Pakistan's nuclear arms as a threat to Indian national safety, NATO activities in Afghanistan, and Israel. Since 1998, Pakistan has had nuclear capability. Pakistan has called its atomic bomb "Islamic Bomb" which has made it politically at the center of attention in the globe. The United States, NATO, Israel, and India want to counteract such a tactical and factional danger from Pakistan's emergence.

- ◇ Natural Resources: Natural Resources are assumed to be the most vital component that can be of assistance to any state. And because of their natural resources, Pakistan is a populated country. Pakistan has fifth-largest gold mine in the globe, second-largest salt mine and sixth coal mine in the globe. Pakistan has three of the world's largest mountains. Those mountain ranges serve to secure from winds from Siberia. The giant glaciers provide river water. Its large market makes it unavoidable center for our neighbors to export the goods.
- ◇ Importance as a Transit Economy: In the altering structure of worldwide design, maritime politics is becoming more complicated, with more emphasis on business and economic success. Pakistan has the capacity to grow transit economy because of its strategic position, ground-locked Afghanistan is now finding its way through Pakistan in the rebuilding stage. China is developing southern provinces with its quickest economic growth rate of 9 percent because its own part is 4500 km from Sinkiang, but Gwadar is 2500 km away.

In addition, Pakistan provides the shortest path of 2600 km for Central Asian areas compared to Iran 4500 km or 5000 km for Turkey. Gwadar port is warm water and deep port in Pakistan. It is located at the entrance of Persian Gulf, Hormuz Strait and possesses 2/3 world oil resources. Historically, Pakistan bought it from the Omani Sultanate in 1958 at a cost of 3 million US dollars. Small port was built during its building phase from 1988-1992. General Musharraf opened the Port in 2007. From 2007-2012, the port of Gwadar remained under Port Singapore Authority (PSA) but was handed over to China Overseas Port Holding Company (COPHC) in 2013 because of its bad performance.

The building work has been completed at a rapid pace since. Gwadar port with its deep waters draws Chinese, CAR and South East Asian trade ships, as well as coastal belt nations. China discovers route thru Karakorum Highway to the Indian Ocean and the Arab Sea. For Pakistan the port has great strategic and economic significance. It is Pakistan's third biggest deep seaport after ports Karachi and Qasim. It is situated at the crossroads of global shipping routes to sea and oil trade. Gwadar will serve as Pakistan's center of global trade.

The port of Gwadar will link three areas, that is, Central Asia, Middle East & South Asia. It would open up new employment options and help Baluchistan grow. Pakistan could discover CARs potential for minerals, hydrocarbons, oil and gas. The port draws international investment, as well as tourism. It would provide foreign exchange reserves, free trade zones, and special economic zones (SEZs) that would assist in Baluchistan and Pakistan's economic development.

It would help improve Pakistan's trade and business especially in the province of Baluchistan, so provincial complaints will be resolved. Gwadar will help Pakistan supervise the Communications Sea Lines (SLOCs) coming from the Persian Gulf and the Hormuz Strait. Gwadar will be able to monitor the maritime oil lanes and trade links between areas like South Asia, Africa, Central Asia, the Gulf and the Middle East. It will provide Pakistan with a strategic advantage vis-à-vis India, since the port is far from Indian reach as compared to other two ports in Pakistan. Gwadar will enhance employment options for Pakistanis and assist with economic growth thru transit trade fees and foreign reserves. Gwadar will step up Pakistan's collaboration with other oil and energy states. Tourism, tourism, restaurant industry and government revenue will improve which will boost the world's economy.

Gwadar provides tax-free investment and trade, thus attracting significant numbers of international investors to open up new financial and development programs. Asia has several landlocked countries as the biggest area and its access to the sea via its own land route is very expensive. Such states look for the shortest possible routes for global purposes. China is an instance of which its eastern seaports are thousand kilometers away from the western part. Gwadar Port is the closest hot-water port to the energy-rich Central Asian States Bought from Oman in 1958; Gwadar was built into a hot-water seaport now run under a 43-year lease by a Chinese company called 'China Overseas Port Holding Firm.' The port is the center of an Economic Corridor between China and Pakistan. Being the closest deep-sea port to the landlocked Central Asian Republics, Gwadar is another example of the strategic significance of Pakistan.

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor

The Pakistan Economic Corridor profits from its strategic location and China takes care of that. About 80% of China's exchange and energy imports travel via the pirate-swarmed Malacca Strait and the Indian Ocean, both guarded by the U.S. and Indian Navies. Such potential choke points at Malacca Strait are a security problem for China, especially with respect to oil as 40% of Chinese general consumption passes thru the Malacca Strait. As a consequence, supply ships would need to navigate an additional 500 miles to avoid the Malacca Strait, probably the fastest route from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific, any confrontation could obstruct China's energy production. China is conscious of this risk and is finding a shorter and better solution for Pakistan.

China currently imports 80% of its oil through such a narrow stretch of sea that passes through Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore. The CPEC would not only be an alternative to the Malacca Strait but would also provide a point of entry for China to the Persian Gulf. Many states are strategically concerned that China is increasing its geopolitical influence and probably its armed presence in the region. For instance, many Indian intellectuals suspect that the Gwadar port will represent as a Chinese Naval facility, and it will only cost about \$46bn.

The Pakistan-China Economic Corridor will pass from Khunjerab Pass down Karakorum Highway into Pakistan in the mountain ranges. Outnumber cargo trucks must pass over Pakistan's boundary with China at an altitude of more than 15,000 feet. (Bhattacharjee, 2015) The initial outlines of this corridor, where the highway curves past mountains, glaciers, and rocky valleys, are already clear.

Further roads will be established from central Pakistan to offer access to Baluchistan's Gwadar Port. The donkey-trails from the original Silk Route are visible, where traders journeyed before the 15th century for over 600 years. China is spending millions of dollars improving the Karakorum mountain road which is one of the most hazardous roads in the world. Chinese engineers are digging thru the mountains to build dozens of miles of tunnels to make it safer, several of them celebrating with the phrase "Pak-China Friendship Tunnel." They contribute bridges, guardrails, and concrete overhangs away from traffic lanes to funnel landslides and flash floods. Attabad Lake, for instance, is formed as a result of a 2010 landslide that blocked the Hunza River and triggered flooding of the Karakorum Highway and surrounding towns. Recently, China has constructed four large tunnels on the south end of the 13-mile lake to reopen the highway, which also helps local villagers locked by water.

The '\$46 billion' China-Pakistan Economic Corridor ' system shown as a ' Game-Changer' is more than a road network linking the Chinese city of Kashgar with the Gulf States through Pakistan's Gwadar. CPEC is a full package of Pakistan's energy projects and trade opportunities. It is the most cherished fruit of the geographical significance Pakistan has ever had in the state. Nonetheless, certain credit also goes to Pakistan's foreign policy makers who have always taken the Sino-Pak shared interests into considerations. China will benefit from the nearest port of Gwadar via the Pakistan-China Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Kashgar is 4500 km away whereas Gwadar is 2800 km from Shanghai Port. (Conrad, 2017) The port would provide China with links to Afghanistan, and CARs. India can block the Strait of Malacca, but Gwadar would provide an alternative sea route. Gwadar can act as an alternative path to the routes to the Indian Ocean or South China Sea. India is currently using all of the techniques to counter Gwadar port development. It is invested heavily in Iranian port Chahbahar, with a US\$ 85 million investment.

After lifting financial sanctions against Iran, India is keener to operate on Chahbahar as it perceives the port of Gwadar as part of the Pearl Strings strategy directed at encircling India. India wants China's impact in the area to be reduced. India is trying to slash Gwadar's economic value. For example, it has built roads from Afghanistan to link with Chahbahar, the Zaranj-Delaram highway. It clearly shows that India would make every effort to impede the construction of Pakistan's silk route. It's already created serious safety issues regarding CPEC construction. Nevertheless, Pakistan needs to address these difficulties effectively and accelerate its work on Gwadar Port which is crucial to Pakistan's economic development, regional connectivity, and maritime growth. China's connection to the Middle East: Pakistan is China's only obvious and simplest connection to the Middle East. Pakistan plays a key role in the creation of this connection by making Gwadar a fully operational port with Chinese help. In addition to unblocking the development potential for the hinterland, Gwadar will demonstrate instrumental in supporting trans-shipment of containerized cargo effectively.

Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India Pipeline (TAPI)

The Asian Development Bank-funded TAPI project is the name of a gas pipeline planned to deliver natural gas from the Caspian Sea to the four countries referred to above. Due to its geographic proximity to this Central Asian nation, Pakistan is looking to make money from the initiative. It also reflects India's dependence on Pakistan for accessing the natural resources of the Central Asian republics. (Cutler, (2011) Development of the project began in December 2015 and will be available by 2019.

Iran-Pakistan Gas Pipeline:

The project, also recognized as the 'Peace Pipeline,' is another fruit of geographical significance for Pakistan. The pipeline project was officially launched in 2013 but due to many problems, it is far from being functional. The US anti-Iranian position especially motivated Pakistan to abandon the project. (Munir, 2013) Nonetheless, after the United States-Iran Nuclear agreement things have changed and Iran is no longer under massive restrictions. At the very same period, Pakistan has never completely given up on the project. Good omens for the future of this programmed are obvious.

Shared Marine Border with Oman

In 2000, the common maritime border with Oman Pakistan and Oman resolved their maritime under a contract, conforming to International Sea Law. (Grantham, 1988) This networking of a maritime border with Oman's fraternal state can perceive the geological significance of Pakistan in terms of access to Oman's underwater energy resources. You can also use the sea route to reach the Persian Gulf and its coastal nations.

Significant connection in Muslim countries' chain

Geographically, Pakistan sits at the middle of the Asian and African Islamic states. It is related to these countries ' comprehensive land and sea routes, thereby promoting the unification of the Muslim World not only in its political context, but also in its geographic centrality needs. It was the biggest Islamic country before the termination of East Pakistan and was undoubtedly in the vanguard of the Islamic Unity movement. Still later it operates vigorously for Muslims ' common friendship and cohesion. When we look at the Islamic countries map, Pakistan will occupy a central place. China spreads to North Africa, to the west of Iran. It can thus actively participate in Muslim world-economic development operations, resource transport and, above all, fight extremism.

War on Terrorism:

The universe is confronted with a large terror issue. Pakistan is a trade route and a society at the forefront of terrorism. In overall, Afghanistan, that is now the emphasis of globe attention, is considered as the breeding ground for all global terrorism. Now the U.S. and NATO soldiers fighting in Afghanistan are well conscious that they relied heavily on Pakistan to win the Afghanistan war. (Jackson, 2018) Afghanistan also has other neighbors like Iran, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan, but Pakistan is the best way to supply NATO supplies to Afghanistan's armies. The US thinktank has consistently acknowledged that war against

terrorism can never be waged without Pakistan's support. Pakistan has fought hard and there is also a continuing operation in Waziristan attacking the alleged Taliban in the bordering area.

Conclusion:

There is no doubt that Pakistan has a great importance in the world. But it is the fact that Pakistan is a developing country and has many issues like energy crises, terrorism etc. the famous American Scholar Stephen Cohen while demonstrating on the thought pattern of most of the people of Pakistan, point out that the policymakers are prone to thinking that someone will always come to Pakistan rescue because of its location. This kind of thinking must be shed away, and it has to learn to rely on its own resources which proliferate in Pakistan. While history has been unkind to Pakistan, its geography has been its greatest benefit. It has resources rich area in the northwest, people rich in the North East.

Post 9/11 role of Pakistan in war against terrorism led it to actively play its part in the internal, regional, and global matters. To fight the menace of terrorism Pakistan has taken concrete steps internally as well as externally. Taking the side of United States was the best option available to Musharaf government, any other option could have produced serious consequences leading Pakistan to be declared a terrorist state, which would have further damaged and alienated Pakistan in the community of nations, for its efforts, Pakistan is being appreciated by the international community and nowadays Pakistan is being portrayed as a responsible and moderate state.

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