



US - INDO PACIFIC STRATEGY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON PAKISTAN

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Abstract

While containing the expansion of China in the area is the primary objective of the Indo-Pacific strategy, it does affect Pakistan's safety in certain ways. In this strategy, the US is supporting India to become a hegemon to full fill its interest. And India is the biggest threat to Pakistan. And it creates a zero-sum situation for Pakistan. This strategy is basically for China but it also has threats to the security of Pakistan. To what extent does Pakistan need an external ally to ensure the balance of power in south Asia? In this research work, I use the balance of power theory to analyse Pakistan's internal security system (IPS). As a direct consequence of this, Pakistan has adopted a strategy of internal and external balance in an effort to lessen the likelihood of an Indian invasion occurring. The modernization of its fleet and the acquisition of cutting-edge armament are its top internal goals. As part of its efforts to achieve internal and external balance, India has engaged in activities such as conducting naval drills in the Indian Ocean and signing a variety of military and maritime projects with China and Russia. These activities are examples of its efforts to strengthen security cooperation with these countries.

Key Words: US, Indo Pacific, Maritime Power, Security, Pakistan

Introduction

The United States has a policy called the "Indo-Pacific Strategy" that aims to counter China's rising influence in the area. The US recently released this strategy to show its interest in that region and allaying the fear of its allies in that region. So, President Biden signed an agreement with India to



full fill its interest in that region because India has the quite strongest position in that region. The US wants to focus on every activity of China in that region because China is the biggest threat to the US nowadays. But it also has implications for Pakistan. As India and Pakistan are enemies since the time of Independence, India is going to become a hegemon and going to be stronger day by day. As a result of the Indo-Pacific policy, the United States is consistently backing India and providing it with cutting-edge weaponry. Due to this India is becoming stronger and it's a threat to Pakistan.

If we talk about the Indo pacific strategy of the US, President Joe Biden said in his speech that *"We envy an Indo pacific strategy that is open, connected, prosperous resilient, and secure. And we are ready to work with each of you to achieve it". (Biden, Indo pacific strategy of the UNITED STATES, 2021)*

The United States explains that providing its partners in the Indo-Pacific with unrestricted access to a wide variety of possibilities is a top priority. The United States is attempting to make a point about connection by emphasising the need of supporting India's continued ascent and regional leadership.

The US hopes to imply that its success is tied to its Indo-Pacific strategy. The result is a more robust American economy. This Indo-Pacific strategy will assist the United States create new economic prospects that are up to their usual high standards of labour and production. It also advances the integrated deterrence of the US. (fact sheet, 2022)

But the main aim behind this strategy is to focus on the rise of China in that region. As China is making progress day by day and it's an alarming sign for the US to strengthen its economy. So in this regard, the US started an agreement with India in the Indo pacific region to have full control in that region. As India and China have conflict over Myanmar, so the US is getting advantage of this and started this agreement with India to fulfil its interests.

India is going to become stronger day by day. This is because the US is funding India for this project and giving advanced weapons to India. It makes progress for India and makes the position of India stronger and stronger day by day. As India is much stronger than Asian states, but now days going to become a hegemon. Additionally, defence armament, technology for aircraft carriers, and a great number of other items will be a part of the marine partnership between these two nations, which will present Pakistan with a significant threat. By adhering to this approach, major threats are being posed to Pakistan's national security as well as to the delicate power dynamic in the region.

It is a huge issue for Pakistan and it is a challenge to the stability of the nation. The realist worldview is predicated on the core notion that the international system is anarchic and is



continually engaged in a game with no winners and no losers. So in this Indo pacific strategy, Pakistan moves toward the Balance of power. As Pakistan's economy is weaker than India's, so Pakistan has to focus on internal as well as external balancing. In this case of inter-balancing, Pakistan is going to purchase the advanced weapons and it is also focusing on its navy to safeguard its interest or to safeguard itself in that Indo pacific region. In 2018, Pakistan has released its maritime doctrine for the very first time in history. The doctrine is known as the Maritime Doctrine of Pakistan. This idea places a high priority on the blue economy as well as maritime security as a method to preserve the freedom of the seas. This suggests that Pakistan seeks to maintain the status quo or maintain the power balance that already exists in the region. The power dynamic in the Indian Ocean is being kept in control by Pakistan, but at the same time the country is protecting its own national interests.

Pakistan is also focusing on external balancing. As Pakistan is quite weak internally, and even not stable economically, initiatives at internal balancing are not enough. Pakistan has to move towards external balancing to maintain the balance of power. In the case of external balancing, Pakistan is focusing on its relationship with China as well as Russia. In the case of China, Pakistan has strong bilateral relations with China. They are focusing on the recent project signed with China known as China Pakistan Economic Corridor. It focuses on the economy of both states. In addition, China and Pakistan also have some maritime contracts in which China ensures Pakistan's help in that particular region. Recently, they both signed the 054 Jiamgkaii projects with each other. In addition, both states started naval exercises to ensure their national interest.

Similarly, Pakistan's and Russia's relations were not good due to the communist and capitalist bloc conflict after the independence. But they are going to be better nowadays. Russia also has some interests in Pakistan related to CPEC to strengthen its economy. And Pakistan is going to maintain the balance of power to make alliances with Russia. Both of these states recently started a naval exercise known as Naval AMAN EXERCISE. In addition, Russia also delivered the Russian-made helicopter known as MI35M Hind-e-Attack helicopter to Pakistan. And their relations will get stronger in the future.

Now more than ever, Pakistan faces a serious challenge from India and must do its part to keep the power structure in check. So, internally Pakistan is quite weaker. And Pakistan will no longer rely on internal balancing. The delicate balance of power necessitates that Pakistan take steps in that direction, and so it is doing so. Pakistan's national interest and the international power balance are largely dependent on balancing efforts from outside the country.

A lot of material has been written on Indo pacific strategy but no one has paid any attention to the implications for Pakistan. No one has paid any attention to the security threat to Pakistan. So, this research paper is based on a study to fill this gap. This research paper uses the balance of power theory to explain further about this gap. Then we will discuss the strategy, internal balancing, and



eternal balancing. My research paper uses the methodology of qualitative content analysis. In the end, I conclude, to sum up, this and give findings and recommendations.

Research Question

The research questions on which my research is based are given

- 1: What are the implications for Pakistan under IPS?
- 2: What strategies has Pakistan adopted to counter the risk of Indian aggression?
- 3: To what extent does Pakistan need an external ally to ensure the balance of power in south Asia?

Theoretical framework

The theory of realism is a very powerful theory of international politics that best describes the relationship or conflicts between two states. I am applying a theory of realism to this research. According to realism, the international system is based on anarchy. In this anarchic system, sum game. States always try to play a *zero-sum game* whenever possible. A realist state should focus on its national interest either in terms of war or peace.

Neo-Realism

In this paradigm of realism, I am going to apply a lens of neo-realism. Neorealism is a structural theory of international relations that focuses on or is based on international relations. It focuses on the anarchic system. According to neo-realism, states should be offensive and defensive in terms of their national interest. Either a state moves toward power maximization or security maximization. In my research, I am going to apply a lens of defensive realism in which states cannot go to war for resolving their conflicts but resolving them peacefully by the balance of power. And the state should not go to war in some cases.

Methodology

Qualitative content analysis has been used for this research. This research is exploratory. The historical, descriptive, and exploratory approach has been used for this research. For the data collection, a secondary source has been used. One of the major sources of data are books, published articles, and newspapers. For the data analysis, theory testing approach QCA, direct content analysis has been used. Furthermore, within the direct content analysis, a manifest approach has been used

Balance of power



Most scholars agree that the balance of power theory is the most crucial framework for understanding the dynamics between states in international politics. To advance their own national interests, governments exert influence in the international system. The state as a unitary actor seeks its preservation and works best for its universal domination. Kenneth Waltz, a founder of neo-realism explains the term balance of power. (Waltz, 1979) According to him, as in the case of defensive realism, a state should focus on the balance of power. A state wants to become a hegemon by avoiding war and focusing on it by forming alliances with other powerful states. States try to use all the means available to them to achieve their goals. Those means can be achieved in two ways according to the balance of power theory. According to this balance of power, these are external balancing and internal balancing.

External balancing

In external balancing, a state moves to make alliances with other states. The state should focus on strengthening itself with the larger alliances to gain power and security and self-interest. After this power, the state becomes able to weaken its opposing states.

Internal Balancing

In internal balancing, states should focus on their economy. It moves toward economic stability and also by focusing to strengthen its military. A state should move to make clever strategies by focusing on the economy against its enemies.

According to Kenneth Waltz, the concept of balance of power is based on the anarchy in the international system. According to him. No state knows the interest of the other state towards itself but focused on itself to survive. So, for this surveillance, states should move toward power distribution. The balance of power is not quite an easy task. It is because no state wants to give its control to the hands of the other state. So in this case, if no state wants to give its control to the hands of the other states, they must have to increase their power for their survival. If a state doesn't need a balance of power, so it will automatically be removed from the international system. After this, there will be no higher authority to guarantee the security, sovereignty, and national interest of that state.

Indo pacific strategy and US involvement

U.S. President Barack Obama has enacted a plan called the "Indo-Pacific Strategy" to counter China's rising influence in the area. The United States is taking this action to preserve its dominance in the area. The United States is concerned that China will preserve the regional balance of power, which poses a serious danger to American interests. Between state methodology contest characterized by essential contention among free and oppressive world request vision is the



essential worry for US public safety. Specifically, the PRC under the initiative of the Chinese socialist faction looks to re-request the locale for its potential benefit by utilizing military modernization, impact tasks, and savage financial matters to pressure different countries. We won't acknowledge arrangements or activities that compromise or sabotage the standards based global request a request that helps all countries. We are focused on protecting and upgrading these common values. (Media note, 2019)

The United States and India have similar goals in the area. In this plan, the United States (US) lays out its vision for the whole Indian Ocean, whereas India (IN) specifies its focus on the area between the African and American coasts. (Rajgopalan , 2020)

Contrast this with the Indo-Pacific policy, which is designed to counter China's rise in the area. It might potentially have effects on Pakistan. Despite the fact that the relationship between Pakistan and India are never smooth and there is ongoing aggression from both borders so it becomes a threat to Pakistan.

Freedom of the mind or vision The Indo-Pacific is an area where all countries, no matter how big or little, may freely express their independence. (department of defense, 2019)

As we are already familiar that India is a threat to Pakistan. India may use its naval tactics or naval exercises to threaten Pakistan. Furthermore, it is common knowledge that India is superior than Pakistan in every way, including naval tactics. There is no way to predict the timing of an assault under an anarchic regime. Now we know that every nation's right to self-determination is tied to the behaviour of every other nation. (Waltz, 2001)

U.S. Department of Defense maritime security projects that seek to strengthen the capabilities of U.S. partners in the Indo-Pacific region have been approved for financing in India. (fact sheet, 2019)

India's anti-submarine warfare capabilities would be bolstered by a \$20 billion contract for 24 multifunctional MH 60R Seahawk maritime helicopters inked by the two nations in February 2020 during Trump's visit to India. (ET online, 2020)

Back in 2018, India's nuclear-powered submarines completed their first patrol. On the other side Pakistan still do not gave this kind of advancement in submarines. This un-balancing has caused Pakistan to be concerned about BOP. This un-balancing can lead to War as well.

In 2019, India launched nuclear submarines and wants to kick o Pakistan from the balance of power system because the overwhelming superiority of the Indian navy in all three dimensions



forced the Pakistan navy to remain deployed close to Makraan coast and not mentioned in the Indian Ocean (pubby, 2019)

So, Pakistan follows the balance of power strategy to counterbalance India's threat. Pakistan's security depends on China but it will not be enough for Pakistan to rely on China alone. Due to this purpose, Pakistan is going to develop diplomatic relations with other states to maintain the balance of power

Pakistan's Internal Balancing

The internal balancing of a country is the efforts and developments made to make the military stronger than its enemies or at least equalize it. It means that the state wants to protect itself from its enemies that are a threat to the state. Now we are going to link the Pakistan naval doctrine or Pakistan navy with indo pacific region or indo pacific strategy. Since, 2017, Pakistan is modernizing the navy, buying advanced weapons, and developing strategies related to maritime security. The primary area of interest for Pakistan is the North Arabian Sea in the Indian Ocean and the secondary area of its interest is the strategic interest of Pakistan in the western ocean.

The first ninety-five percent of the trade in Pakistan is through water which passes through the three sea lines of the ocean which are the Red sea, the Persian Gulf, and the Far East. China and Central-Asia goes through Pakistan as it is the only route. Pakistan's economic corridor has been a game changer for everyone so far. (ul hassan, 2020).

Pakistan is engaging civil societies and media to make the importance reach to masses and convert it into to the national discourse. The civil societies include intelligence, chamber of commerce, and maritime security. Now, the Pakistan's Government is focusing more on the maritime issues not being blindfolded in the past. Pakistan now consider the region as an arena to play for sake of national interest. (shah, 2021)

Pakistan has launched the 1st maritime doctrine in December 2018, preserving freedom of the sea's MDP which mainly focuses on maritime security and the blue economy. (2nd maritime security workshop, 2019)

Back in 2016, Turkey & Pakistan signed a pact to modernize and develop Pakistan's Agosta 90b marine (Shah & Li, 2019). Additionally, in 2018, they signed the contract of four frigates of transition of power. According to this, two converters will be built in Turkey and the other two will be built n Pakistan. These ships will ultimately be the advanced ships of Pakistan's navy and ultimately moves towards the significance of peace and balance of power.



To safeguard the navy from the threats of India, in 2018, Pakistan launched the Regional Maritime Security Patrols initiative'. According to this initiative, the main aim is to achieve a good position in the Arabian Sea and the wider Indian Ocean. This is a part of Pakistan's internal balancing. Due to this initiative, Pakistan has begun patrolling the Gulf of Oman, the southern Arabian Sea, and the Gulf of Aden. It means that Pakistan does not want to rely only on allies. Now, Pakistan is patrolling the Indian Ocean which is a clear response to the Indo pacific strategies of India and the US. And it is a clear example of the internal balancing of Pakistan.

Pakistan also signed agreements with China to secure its marital doctrine. For example, Pakistan signed an agreement with Beijing to build the 054p frigates for naval purposes. It also signed with Ankara to build Milgem class corvettes for its navy. The 054p is an advanced warship under construction in Shanghai. This will be one of the largest and most advanced technology in Pakistan's navy and it proved best for Pakistan's security. (LEI, 2019)

External Balancing

Relationship with Russia

Pakistan's relation with Russia is a form of external balancing as Pakistan strengthens its ties with Russia to create BOP. These consequences of Indo-pacific region push Pakistan towards Russia. So in this part, we will discuss the relationship between these two entities from the perspective related to the Indo pacific region. As we are already aware the US and India's Indo pacific strategy affects Pakistan's naval strategy a lot and it is a clear threat to Pakistan. So, for this purpose, Pakistan has signed military cooperation and strategic partnership with Russia. So, the two countries signed the naval cooperation and strengthened their ties in the Indian Ocean to maintain the balance of power and strengthen their navies. If we see at history, the relations between the two states were not good and friendly. After the partition, the relationship between both gets worse. It is because, at the time of the partition, there are two blocs. Pakistan had two choices either to join the communist bloc or a capitalist bloc. So, at that time, Pakistan has influenced by the British. The policymakers and the leaders of politics decided to join the capitalist bloc to prevent Pakistan from invasion of India. Due to this reason, the relations were not good between these two states.

Despite the fact that Pakistan has very good and healthy diplomatic relations with Soviet Union and due to that today's Russia plays a good role in bringing two countries Pakistan and India close. (Nawaz Khan, 2019)

After this, the relations got worse between these two states when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979. At that time Pakistan was supporting the Jihadist group and was against the Soviet troops. After this, the cold war era the relations between the two states got better when the prime minister of Pakistan visits Russia in 1999. It proved best for both states and relations got better.



In 2017, Russia delivered the Mi-35M Hind E helicopter to Pakistan to strengthen its navy or to deal with the Indian threats. After this, both states presented an exercise known as the AMAN exercise.

Additionally, Russia describes its interest in Eurasia. Pakistan is a very important entity for Russia in this regard. This is because of Pakistan's agreement with China which is China Pakistan Economic Corridor. The CPEC is also achieving all the goals of Russia and covers all the areas of Russia's interest. (putin, 2020)

In 2019, during a meeting between the commander in chief of the Russian navy and the commander in chief of Pakistan's navy, in Islamabad, the two chiefs had shown their interest to step up efforts to effectively confront the Tran's national challenges and threats in maritime (Pakistan Russia to beef up naval cooperations., 2018)

Relationship with China

The connection among china and Pakistan is likewise a type of everlasting adjusting. The connection between the two states isn't new. Pakistan looks to fortify its binds with china in the space of the naval force to keep up with the overall influence. After the autonomy of china in 1950, Pakistan perceived China and the relations gets more grounded later. After this, both of these states created strategic relations among them.

What's more, the developing pressures among India and Pakistan pushed Pakistan to draw nearer to China. At the point when there comes a danger from India, Pakistan generally gets support from China to keep up with the overall influence. Assuming we examine what is happening, China generally gives backing to Pakistan and gives security. During the gathering between Ayyub khan and the leader of China held, China guaranteed the security of Pakistan. The assertion is given below, *If India commits aggression against Pakistan's security, China would support Pakistan (Rakisits, 2012)*

There is no doubt about the relationship between these two states. But these relations got stronger after the implementation of the US-India strategy which is known as Indo pacific strategy. Although the US is not a threat to Pakistan India is the biggest threat to Pakistan. US support towards India is an alarming sign for Pakistan. If we talk about China, both countries are a threat to China. In 2017, Pakistan has signed a contract with China for the 054 Jiangkai 2 frigate, which is the most important frigate of the navy of China. It was the first time that China sold this advanced weapon to Pakistan. (Ali G. , 2019)

In 2019, China was the part of a multinational naval exercise which is led by Pakistan which is known as AMAN19. This exercise is not only important for the security challenges but also helps



navies of different levels to come together and secure a safe and sustainable maritime environment (Bozun, 2019)

On the other hand, this exercise is very crucial for the PLA navy to increase its understanding of the Arabian Sea. A senior researcher of PLA said that “*Serializing the drills and making them a routine will further Enhance the friendship between China and Pakistan*” (Rajgopalan, 2020)

This is the cooperation between the two states to maintain the balance of power and enhance their naval ties for security in the region and particularly in the Indo pacific region and to maintain balance power.

Conclusion

Although, the Indo pacific strategy formed for China to focus on China’s activity in this region. But according to my research, I found that this strategy also implies the security of Pakistan. Indo pacific strategy by US and India is to focus on the great powers' action in that region. In this strategy, the US is supporting India to become stronger and strengthening India’s relative capacity towards Pakistan which is already in power in that region. So, to balance the security threat from India, Pakistan has to maintain the balance of power. If we talk about internal balancing, Pakistan has launched the maritime doctrine for the first time to strengthen its security against the threat from India. Pakistan also purchased many advanced weapons from different states like Turkey, China, and Russia to strengthen its security or maintain the balance of power. If we talk about external balancing, the Indo pacific strategy of the US and India pushes Pakistan toward Russia or to make ties with Russia. Russia and Pakistan want to maintain the balance of power in that region. Russia supported Pakistan in many aspects. Russia has supplied an MI3M Hind-e-Attack helicopter to Pakistan. On the other hand, both of these states started naval exercises. Russia also has some other economic interests in Pakistan. China has also started maritime cooperation with Pakistan. As China is a great power and has threats from both states. This strategy is specifically built for China. China and Pakistan has a good relationship since the time of independence. Both countries have signed the contract of 054Jiangkai 2 frigates which plays a key role in maritime defence capability. Additionally, both of these states started joint exercises to be strong and to equalize the BOP.

Findings

- 1) This strategy has also implications for Pakistan.
 - 2) India is a big threat to Pakistan. If Pakistan cannot focus on this, India will soon threaten Pakistan to invade Pakistan
 - 3) As China and Pakistan are in bilateral relations, the US is making India stronger to threaten Pakistan
 - 4) The US gives this strategy just to focus on the rise of China in that region.
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- 5) China and India are in conflict with each other in Myanmar. So, India signed this strategy just to secure its national interest and make itself stronger against its enemies.
- 6) Pakistan is posing threat to India in this regard, thus it is trying to keep the BOP and trying to secure its national interest.

Recommendations

- 1) The budget of the Pakistan navy should be enhanced approximately near that of the air force.
- 2) Pakistan navy should utilize the generated profits from the sea to invest better in equipment.
- 3) The civilian leader should sit and devise the strategic policy for maritime.
- 4) Pakistan should move toward the external balancing
- 5) Pakistan is quite weak internally, so to fill this gap Pakistan should enhance its relationship with its allies.
- 6) Pakistan should strictly have to make new strategic policies regarding this threat and should strictly have to follow this.

Suggestions:

- 1) The only project that creates economic opportunity for Pakistan is CPEC which is continuously funded by China. As China is focusing on this project, Pakistan has to maintain or strengthen its relationship with China based on this project to keep the BOP.
- 2) By developing uninhabited island, Pakistan can make its maritime security better and it could help Pakistan build a strong economy.
- 3) As Russia has a lot of interests in Pakistan regarding CPEC, Pakistan has to strengthen its ties regarding this and has to get more benefits and support from Russia regarding maritime security to maintain the balance of power.



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