

RESURGENCE OF RUSSIA IN THE WORLD POLITICS OPTIONS FOR PAKISTAN

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Abstract

According to the analysts of foreign policy the Pak-Russia relations have not been built upon strong pillars of understanding. The history of their bilateral relations is a tale of recurrent misperceptions and misunderstandings. Both the nations have potential core for convergence of interests on various bilateral, regional and international issues but potential for cooperation has never been availed. The changing political dynamics of/for both the states has now provided another chance to revisit bilateral relations. Among others, Pakistan and Russia can work together in the fields of energy, trade and security. By working together in these three sectors both the states not only can enhance their strategic ties but can also contribute towards the peace, stability and prosperity of the whole region.

Key words: *Pakistan, Russia, Prosperity, Energy, Trade, Security.*

I cannot forecast to you the actions of Russia. It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma. But there may be a key, and that key is Russian national interest. (Winston Churchill)

Introduction

Ever since the Soviet flag lowered from Kremlin, the Russians are in search of their new role in the world politics. The academia and policymaking machinery of the country have been indicating various inclinations suggesting future place of Russia in the comity of nations. Amongst others, three main policy orientations have developed among the

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political elites, who argue as to how best Russia can define its role in the changing international politics and ensure revival of its lost glory.¹

- *Fundamentalist Nationalists*: These are of the strongest view that nothing less than their legacy of nationalism should form the basis of their image in the world.
- *Liberal Westernists*: Contrarily, they believe that the new role of Russia in world politics lies in leaving behind the old bequest of anti-West approach in its policies and advocate the initiation of a renewed relationship of peace and cooperation with the world in general and the West in particular.
- *Pragmatic Nationalists*: They however, campaign for the most balanced approach which aims at promoting peace and cooperation while safeguarding the fundamental principles of their nationalism.

There is a clear range of interests, forces and actors at work in determination of foreign policy options for Russia. However the predictable outcome of their struggles is extremely difficult due to relatively low level of institutionalism in the Russian political system.² Based upon the above given three trends, the Russian policy makers – mostly the Pragmatic Nationalists – have chalked out certain foreign policy doctrines and concepts since 1993.

These include Foreign Policy Concept – originally presented in April 1993 and revised in January 2000, Military Doctrine – first articulated in November 1993 and later revisited in April 2000, and National Security Blueprint – conceived in December 1997 and further deliberated in 2000. These foregoing concepts provide a road-map by which one can chalk out evolution of Russian thinking about the world and Russia's future place in it. They are, however, still miles away from their real strategic goal of resurgence in international arena.

It is important to note that after its inception in 1947, Pakistan due to various reasons – security being the most pronounced one – preferred to join the U.S. camp. This strategic miscalculation on part of Pakistani leadership had everlasting implications on its both domestic and international environment. Apart from other disadvantages, Pakistan also couldn't establish amiable relations to one superpower of the time, the former Soviet Union. The history did provide a number of chances to both the nations in revisiting their policies towards each other and making a

¹ Volha Charnysh, "Russia and Ukrainian Denuclearization: Foreign Policy under Boris Yelsin," *Department of Government of Smith College, Northampton* (April 3, 2008), 32, http://charnysh.net/Documents/Charnysh_Volha_HonorsProject.pdf (accessed November 10, 2012)

² Amin Saikal and William Maley (Eds), *Russia in Search of its Future* (Cambridge: University Press, 1995), p. 117.

new beginning in their bilateral ties. They, despite having numerous potentials in collaborating in various fields failed to make any break through. The account of Pak-Russia Relations is a story of misperceptions and lost opportunities.³

The legacy of Pakistan's inclination toward the West especially the U.S. has witnessed a number of ups and downs. Despite assisting the U.S. in achieving its strategic objectives in the region, Pakistan could never muster its confidence. Trust deficit remained the most prominent element in Pak-US relations. Resultantly, Pakistan has never met its security, economical as well as other goals for which it preferred a distant ally than maintaining a balanced approach between the two superpowers.

The time now demands the policymakers in Pakistan to think and analyze the prevailing international environment; and to compare it with Pakistan's security, economical and social needs in finding new alternatives. The paper is an effort in the same direction. The neo-liberalism theory, presented by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, forms the baseline for this research. Similarly, the scholarly works of Rosecrance and Mitrany, the leading neo-liberalists who believe in cooperation among states, also serve as guidance in finding the way forward in the bilateral relations between the two countries. The focus is on analyzing the foreign policy objectives of Russia in the post-Cold War era and evaluating their various doctrines, aiming at finding their new role in the global politics. This is also to examine the history of Pak-Russia Relations so as to explore new opportunities and sectors of cooperation between the two states. An attempt is made to prove that by working together in the field of energy, trade and security, Pakistan and Russia can contribute meaningfully toward regional and global peace and harmony as well social well being of their people.

Conceptual Appraisal of Russian Foreign Policy

Historic Trends

Although after the collapse of Soviet Union, its flag at Kremlin was replaced with tri-colour Russian flag, but its leadership still claims to be the legal and legitimate successor of Soviet Union. It is for the same reason that they take inspiration from their historic legacy in formulation of their foreign policy. Two trends can be prominently traced in the foreign policy of ancient Russia i.e. ideology and expansion: "*... there are the cold warriors who detect in Soviet foreign policy a combination of ideological expansionism and traditional Russian imperialism in a relentless quest for world domination.*"⁴

³ Nazir Hussain, "Pak-Russia Relations: Lost Opportunities and Future Options," *Journal of Political Studies*, (Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad), 19:1, pp. 79-89.

⁴ F.S Northedge (Ed), *The Foreign Policies of the Powers* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1968), 69.

Both of these elements can easily be identified in the foreign policy of the former USSR and present Russia.

The analysis of former USSR from 1922 to 1991 reveals that the basic character of Soviet foreign policy (Marxism-Leninism) was based upon Vladimir Lenin's "Decree on Peace" of 1917. It encompasses both proletarian internationalism and peaceful coexistence where the former refers to the common cause of the working classes of all the countries in their struggle to overthrow bourgeoisie governments and establishment of communist regimes; and the later relates to the establishment of peaceful relations with capitalist states. It is, however, pertinent to note that the element of proletarian internationalism diminished gradually and virtually faded away from Soviet foreign policy but the component Marxism-Lenin ideology always remained a dominating factor in its foreign policy.

Even in 1986, when the general foreign policy goals were formulized, the emphasis remained on ensuring favourable conducive external environment to building communism in Soviet Union. As regards to the Soviet expansionist trends, it is obvious from the traces of Soviet history that it carried a natural instinct for geographical expansion. The basic difference between China and Russia – if compared for being communist states – is that the former is defensive in nature and possess a history of confinement to periphery (construction of great wall of China speaks of that), whereas the later has an account of progressive expansion of its boundaries.

Beginning to expand in 1533 the Soviet border stretched to Pacific Ocean in 1689. In 1858, Russia took advantage of the defeated Chinese in the Second Opium War and forcing the Treaty of Aigun upon China, Russia annexed some 300,000 to 400,000 square miles of Chinese land to the Russian Empire.⁵ By the end of 19th century the Soviet imprints were found touching the Afghan borders. It was, in fact, Soviet quest for warm water which compelled her to commit the strategic blunder of invading Afghanistan.

⁵ "Russian Expansion into Asia crowds Japan," *The Christian Solution*, at http://www.google.com.pk/imgres?um=1&hl=en&sa=N&biw=1241&bih=584&tbm=isch&tbnid=U_V2aces38k8-M:&imgrefurl=http://www.thechristiansolution.com/doc2010/310_JapanMilitarism.html&docid=cRx7Rc5M8Rg0DM&imgurl=http://www.thechristiansolution.com/img/RussianExpansion.gif&w=563&h=368&ei=IZ-qUMu9MpD6sgaYroHwAw&zoom=1&iact=hc&vpx=769&vpy=279&dur=184&hovh=181&hovw=279&tx=107&ty=113&sig=101581499927652053452&page=1&tbnh=133&tbnw=204&start=0&ndsp=18&ved=1t:429,r:16,s:0,i:114 (accessed November 18, 2012)

Post Cold War Policy Parameters

The study of the Russians' thinking mechanism in the post-Cold war era identifies three major trend groups in their society defining various courses of action in Russian foreign policy. The Liberal Westernists see no external military threat to Russia and favour disarmament efforts.⁶ Fundamental Nationalists, however, pose totally opposite vision. They believe in the legacy of their lost national pride and Marxism-Leninism ideology, and strongly disregard Russia's integration in the world economy. They propose means to create a greater Russia, envisioning a rebirth of Soviet Union.⁷ Pragmatic Nationalists, however, follow a balance approach and suggest bridging gap between the East and the West while securing Russia's interests and identity. All the post Cold War doctrines (mentioned above) and concepts define Russia's new role in the changing global relations with the aim to regain its status in the post Cold War era.

Russian Strategic Objectives and Place in the World Politics

The evaluation of Russians' thinking process and available studies conducted after the fall of the Soviet Union revolve around three significant aspects related to Russia's foreign policy goals. These include their national identity, economy and security. The enduring goals pursued by Russia throughout in its foreign policy have placed primary emphasis on ensuring national security, promoting the economic well-being of the country and enhancing national prestige.⁸ Ever since Vladimir Putin assumed power, Russia set three Foreign Policy Strategic Objectives:

- To strengthen and control the Russian state and politics.
 - To create economic growth and structure the Russian economy.
 - To establish Russia as a power and player in international affair.⁹
- The close study of these objectives reveals that they are not only closely interlinked but also have trickling effect on each other.

Russia's Foreign Policy towards South Asia

Russia's policy toward South Asia has always revolved around three factors:

⁶ Ibid. Volha Charnysh, p.32

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Robert H. Donaldson and Joseph L. Noguee, *The Foreign Policy of Russia: Changing Systems, Enduring Interests* (New York: M.E Sharpe, 2009),4.

⁹ Celeste A. Wallander, 'Russia's Foreign Policy Objectives and Opportunities', Russia and Eurasia Program, Centre for Strategic and International Studies (November 15, 2001) at http://avalon.law.yale.edu/sept11/wallander_001.asp (accessed November18, 2012)

- Its quest for warm water port.
- The China factor.
- Countering the US interests in the region.

Russia, like Afghanistan, has to deal with its land-locked geography. Therefore, its quest for warm water ports is not new and has been the major cause of its numerous military conflicts with Turkey. The Crimean War and the Russian-Japanese conflict in 1903 were to get control of the Black sea and the Bosphorus - Dardanelles passage into the Mediterranean Sea. It was its historic pursuit and the “century old quest for warm water port” that forced former USSR to invade Afghanistan.¹⁰

There are no warm water ports in Afghanistan, but they were in control of the Khyber Pass (an ancient trade route to China) on the East, and one step closer to Iran and Turkey on the West and Pakistan on the South, all with warm water ports. It would be rather misjudgment on part of any researcher to believe that Russia’s hunt for warm water has died down with its withdrawal from Afghanistan. Today’s Russia needs it even badly for linking its world largest gas reserves to international market.

In pursuit of its long-term objectives in the region, Russian foreign policy has always been India centric. The depth of Soviet-Indian strategic partnership can be judged from Indo-Soviet Treaty of 1971 and Soviet support to India in the Indo-Pak War-1971. The changing dynamics of today’s geopolitical scenario have, however, brought Pakistan and Russia closer to each other. This partnership will be more meaningful in post-2014 scenario when the U.S. led NATO forces will leave Afghanistan. Acceptance of this reality has provided another opportunity to the leadership of both countries to rewrite the chapter of Pak-Russia bilateral ties.

Reappraisal of Pak-Russia Relations

The Legacy

Pak-Russia relations, viewing from a realist perspective, have not been built upon strong pillars of understanding and mutual concerns, which are most essential for establishing enduring bilateral ties. The history of Pak-Russia relation is a tale of misperceptions and lost opportunities. Pak-Russia relations have often been under-rated, despite strong potentials, mainly due to misperceived notion and mindset.¹¹ The roots of misunderstandings and misperceptions can be traced back in 1947 when Pakistan at the time of its inception decided to join the U.S.

¹⁰ A. Z. Hilali, *US-Pakistan Relationship: Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan* (Hants: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2005), 50.

¹¹ *Ibid.* Nazir Hussain, p. 79.

block ignoring the next-door superpower, the USSR. One can make a number of arguments in favour or against the decision of then-Pakistani elite but analyzing it from hindsight one can draw a conclusion that the decision was not based upon rationality. Under Max Weber model of rationality, Pakistan's decision making authorities at the time of its creation did not carry out correct "cost-benefit" analysis and, hence, their decision of preferring the U.S. over USSR could not be termed as a rational choice.

Ever since, there has been no warmth in relations between both the nations. Critically analyzing strategic interests of both the states, one can make out that there is no bilateral issue between them rather certain commonality of interests related to regional and world political paradigm.

The history also provided certain opportunities to both the nations to revisit their bilateral relations and take a fresh start but apart from few high level visits and undertaking few projects of bilateral-regional level, both failed to en-cash the moments. Apart from initial miscalculation in 1947, there came at least two significant moments when Pakistan could have achieved political and economical milestone not only in terms of its bilateral relations with the Soviet Union but with rest of the world community as well. First, after the 1965 war, Pakistan, during Tashkent Conference, failed to avail the chance of resolving the Kashmir issue. At Tashkent, situation was somewhat in Pakistan's favour, as India was at a weaker wicket, China was in full support of Pakistan, the U.S. was also interested in resolving the Kashmir issue, and the Soviet Union while chairing the conference would have delighted in taking the credit of resolving the long pending Kashmir issue. This would have also laid the foundation for renewed Pak-USSR relations.

Unfortunately, Pakistani leadership did not play its cards well. Later, in 1974, Prime Minister Zulifqar Ali Bhutto visited Moscow and as a result USSR established Steel Mill in Pakistan worth billion dollars. That was the second occasion when Pakistan could have mustered immense economic gains but the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan totally changed the scenario and Pakistan as the U.S. front fought a long proxy war with Soviet Union in Afghanistan. Even after the Cold War there was no breakthrough in Pak-Russia relations due to Pakistan support to Taliban regime in Afghanistan. However, since the 9/11 episode the ice has started melting down but there is still no enough cordiality in their ties.

The Question of Perception

According to Boulding, the elements like friendliness, hostility strength and weakness constitute the building blocks of image of the other.¹² The history of Pak-Russia relations is an interesting case study of

¹² Emanuele Castano, Simona Sacchi and Peter Heys Gries, "The Perception of Others in International Relations: Evidence of the Polarizing Effect of Entitativity," *Political*

political psychology. The most tragic part of Pak-Russia relations is the lack of rationality. Both the nations have evaluated each other behavior through the prism of other states' interests / concerns. Besides, one major reason of Pakistan's joining the American camp in 1947 was its security concern. Since India had already forged good bilateral ties with former Soviet Union, Pakistan in order to maintain balance of power moved closer to western security system. Due to the strong Indian factor in our foreign policy decision making, Pakistan always considered Russia as friend of India and obvious adversary of Pakistan. The rationality factor was again found missing when Pakistan joined western security system – Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) and South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO), and became frontline state against war against communism. This shows that the decision making elite of Pakistan has been less “objective” and more “subjective” in making foreign policy towards former Soviet Union i.e. internalizing communist Russia as an “expansionist” state primarily as portrayed by the west.¹³

The prevailing international and regional environment and Pakistan's own political dynamics have, however, brought both nations at a converging point of their mutual relations. It is, hence, imperative to identify possible challenges which both the nations have to overcome in achieving their common objectives towards regional balance of power.

Challenges in Pak-Russia Relations

The most positive point in the mutual politics of both the state is that they have no direct bilateral issue. There are, however, certain external factors which have been effecting adversely both the nations. These challenges, their implications and possible measures/course of actions to offset these upshots are discussed in the succeeding paragraphs.

The US Factor in Pakistan's Foreign Policy

The U.S. role in the foreign policy of Pakistan is significantly pronounced. The joining of the U.S. camp at the time of independence and subsequently signing the West's security system (SEATO and CENTO), has never allowed Pakistan's elite to formulate some independent policy towards Russia. It is also a fact that Pakistan has always been seen as a proxy in fighting the U.S. interests in the region. Pakistan's role in Afghan war (1979-1989) is the most appropriate example of the same. Not only this, Pakistan's territory has also been used to meet the U.S. interests – quite some of them were detrimental to Russia's security concerns. In 1959, Pakistan signed an accord with the U.S. to counter communist

Psychology, (2003) 24:3, p.450, http://www.newschool.edu/uploadedFiles/Faculty/NSSR/Castano_PerceptionOfOther.pdf (accessed November 18, 2012)

13 Ibid. Nazir Hussain, p.81.

intimidation on its western border.¹⁴ In 1962, the Soviets captured a U.S. spy plane on its territory. The pilot revealed that the plane had taken off from the Badaber Airbase, Peshawar in Pakistan. The Pak-Soviet relations deteriorated to its worst.¹⁵

Intriguingly, while communist USSR has been at secondary list for amiable relations in Pakistan's foreign policy, the communist China has been historically the best friend of Pakistan. The most significant argument for this is that Pakistan always viewed China through its own prism and been quite successful in maintaining a balance in its relations with China and rest of the world. By following the same policy, Pakistan can also lay the foundation for its relations with Russia.

The Indian Factor

As discussed above, India is a pre-dominant factor in Russia's foreign policy towards South Asia, especially Pakistan. As India was able to enjoy cordial relations with both the superpowers, Pakistan's political leadership failed to do so. However, this Indian-centralism in Pak-Russia relations has a positive aspect too. It can be argued that Pakistan had no bad intentions towards the former Soviet Union (present Russia).¹⁶ Moreover, in the post cold war and 9/11 scenario, there has been significant change in the thinking process of leaders on both the sides. Pakistan due to its geostrategic location and its role in international arena is a significant country and cannot be ignored by great powers. Hence, the Indian factor in the foreign policy of Russia towards Pakistan is no more conspicuous.

Afghanistan and Post-2014 Scenario

The period of Afghan War (1979-1989) was worst in the history of both nations which ultimately ended in dismemberment of the superpower. Even after the war, there was no much warmth in their relations due to Taliban factor in Pakistan foreign policy. However, in the post-9/11 epoch, Pak-Russian relations have shown some improvement. As the U.S. led NATO forces are planned to leave Afghanistan in 2014, the role of both Pakistan and Russia will be even meaningful in Afghan security in particular and the whole region in general.

Encouraging Developments

After of the Cold War and in the recent past there have been some positive indicators of melting ice in Pak-Russia bilateral ties.

The careful analysis of these events helps us in concluding that

¹⁴ Major General Yashwant Deva, "Deeping Fissures in Indo-US Relations," *Indian Defence Review*, (Jan 1994), 9 : I, p.25.

¹⁵ Ibid. Nazir Hussain, p.82.

¹⁶ Ibid: 81.

both the states are serious in reshaping their foreign policy objectives toward each other. Some glimpses of these are discussed in the succeeding paragraphs.

Bilateral Visits

In April, 1999, Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif visited Moscow, the first visit by a Pakistani Prime Minister to Moscow since that of late Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's visit in 1976. Later in February 2003, President Pervez Musharraf's visited Russia, the first by a Pakistani President in 33 years. Both these visits helped in breaking the ice.

Similarly, in April 2007, Russian Premier Mekhail Fredkov reciprocated and became the first Russian leader visiting Islamabad in almost four decades. Later, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on exploring prospects in collaborating in oil sector was also signed during Pakistan Petroleum Minister to Russia in November, 2007.

Pakistan in Shanghai Cooperation Organization

In 2005, Pakistan succeeded in getting an Observer's status in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) because Russia had opted not to veto Islamabad's presence. Pakistan also reciprocated the gesture by helping Russia to attain an Observer's status at the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC).

Putin-Gillani Meeting – 2010

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin conveyed his warm feelings to his Pakistani counterpart Yousaf Raza Gilani when the two met on November 25, 2010 on the sidelines of SCO summit in Dushanbe. Later on November 8, 2011 Prime Ministers of both the nations again met at the SCO summit in St Petersburg. Prime Minister Putin was quoted as saying:

*"Pakistan today is not only an important trade and economic partner of Russia, but also the most important Russian partner in South Asia and in the Islamic world."*¹⁷

The paper further commented:

*"This Russian shift in South Asia policy where India had always been Moscow's main partner is reflection of apprehensions over New Delhi-Washington relationship turning into a military-political alliance to block Russia and China's interests in the region."*¹⁸

¹⁷ "Pakistan is Russia's 'most important' partner in South Asia: Putin," *First Post*, (Online), November 14, 2011, <http://www.firstpost.com/world/pak-is-russias-most-important-partner-in-south-asia-putin-125596.html> (accessed November 13,2012).

¹⁸ Ibid.

Army Chiefs Visits

The Chief of Army Staff, General Ashfaq Pervez Kayani, visited Russia thrice in the past four years i.e. 2009, 2012 and 2013. Reciprocating the nod, the Russian Army chief visited twice in last two years: Colonel General Alexander Postnikov, Commander-in-Chief of Russian Ground Forces in May 2011;¹⁹ and Russian Army Chief Vladimir Chirkin in August 2013.²⁰ The visits focused on enhancing ties between the armies of the two countries, and matters pertaining to regional security and common interests so as to lay the foundation for a bilateral strategic relationship between both the countries.

Quadripartite Summit August-2010

A four nation summit of Russia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Tajikistan was held at Sochi in August 2010.²¹ Sochi summit was considered as a turning point in rewriting the history of relations between two nations. The summit also gave the green signal for an inaugural meeting of the Russian-Pakistani Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade and Economic and Scientific-Technological Cooperation in Islamabad.

Arms Sales and Supply

The only Russian taboo in its relation with Pakistan is related to the sale of weapons. But that too remains an academic argument as its defence technologies have always trickled to Pakistan forces through a third country. In 1990, Ukraine supplied its main battle tank (T-80) to Pakistan which is built on Russian technology. In 2009, Russia also lifted its objections pertaining to supply of Chinese JF-17 fighter planes (powered by Russian RD-93 engines) to Pakistan. Previously, Russia had sold over forty MI-17 transport helicopters to Pakistan. Pakistan is also likely to purchase MI-35 attack helicopters to fight terrorism.

The above developments show that both Islamabad and Moscow have come miles forward during the last decade or so to embrace each other and shun differences.

Important Conclusions

The case-study of Pak-Russia relations leads us to some vital conclusions essential for formulating our long term foreign policy objectives. Some of the conclusions from Pakistan's perspective include the following:-

¹⁹ "Russian Army Chief calls on Gen Kayani, *Nation* (Islamabad), May 25, 2011.

²⁰ "Russian army chief calls on Kayani, *Nation* (Islamabad), August 6, 2013.

²¹ Smita Purushottam, "The Sochi Summit: Fresh Moves on the Grand Eurasian Chessboard," *Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis (IDSA) Issue Brief*, (August 27, 2010), http://www.idsa.in/system/files/IB_Sochi_Summit.pdf (accessed November 15, 2012)

- Ever since the collapse of former Soviet Union, the leadership of Russia considering itself the legitimate successor of the great superpower is committed in defining its role and effecting resurgence of its power in international politics.
- Amongst various trend-groups, Pragmatic Nationalists' views are considered most favoured which illustrate adopting a balanced approach of enhancing Russian interests while keeping their ideological identity and national interests intact.
- Since 1993, different concepts / doctrines spelling out Russian foreign policy objectives, military strategies and national security blueprints, have been formulated. Evaluation of these concepts and doctrines reveals that Russia, though yet not fully capable, does have a definite will of its resurgence in the international arena.
- The history of Pak-Russia relations indicates that both the nations have not built their relations upon strong pillars of a realist perception. Both the countries perceived each other's behaviour through the prism of externally built perceptions and not the internal political dynamics and bilateral ties.
- Pakistan and Russia despite having no bilateral issues possess numerous potentials of collaborations. They, however, could not en-cash a number of opportunities of rewriting their history of relations.
- Although the Russian foreign policy in South Asia has been Indian centric, but the recent international developments especially the post-9/11 scenario has projected Pakistan as a key regional and international player.
- The recent high level visits and summits between the two countries and the policy statements indicate that there is an apparent shift in Russia's South Asia policy towards Pakistan where India had always been Moscow's main partner.
- Pakistan and Russia – having convergence on their bilateral, regional and international interests, do possess potentials to collaborate in various fields. Working together in the fields of energy, trade and security, Pakistan and Russia can ensure regional and global peace, harmony and social wellbeing.

Options and Recommendations

The neo-liberalism theory presented by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye says that in international politics there are multiple channels which connect states. Similarly, the scholars like Rosecrance and Mitrany, the leading neo-liberalists, also believe in cooperation among states arguing that mutual benefits arising out of cooperation are possible because states are not always preoccupied with relative gains. They further deliberate that international relations is not a zero sum game as

many states feel secure enough to maximize their own gains regardless of what accrues to others.²²

Energy

There could be no two opinions that we require energy both for economic growth and industrialization. Abundant and inexpensive energy serves as bloodline of the modern civilization and is considered as the most important demand of today. In order to meet its domestic requirement Pakistan imports a huge quantity of oil mostly from Gulf countries. Pakistan's gas reserves are also depleting at a faster pace – making its energy situation even worse. Fortunately, Pakistan is blessed with two energy corridors which link Russia, Central Asian Republics (CARs) and Iran with international market. All these states / republics are rich in hydrocarbon resources and are considered as world future focus of attention. Russia is holding world largest gas reserves whereas Iran is second in the row.

Pakistan in order to meet its energy demand and to provide an access to these reserves to world market has initiated two pipeline projects in the region; Iran-Pakistan-India (now only Iran-Pakistan called IP) and Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) Gas Pipeline Projects. Both the projects being technically feasible and economically viable have been subjected to great powers political interests. The project of IP being most viable, both technically and financially, has bleak chances of materialization in near future due to Iranian nuclear standoff. Prospect of TAPI on the other hand enjoys backing of the U.S. and Russia both. Russia on the other hand has also shown interest in financing the project.²³ The materialization of this mega project shall not only help Pakistan in meeting its energy shortfall but shall also provide access to Russia and CARs to the west. Moreover, Pakistan has also sought Russia's assistance in coal mining and generation of coal power plants. Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf during his meeting with Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov on October 3, 2012, said that Pakistan seeks to increase economic relations and benefit from the expertise of Russian Federation, especially in the energy sector where Russia has experience in coal mining and generation of coal power plants.²⁴

Pakistan and Russia have great potentials in energy sector and they can boost economies of both the countries by cooperation in this

²² Scott Burchill (et al.), *Theories of International Relations, Third Edition* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 65.

²³ Zafar Bhutta, "Contracts for IP and TAPI projects to be given to Russia," *Zone Asia-Pak*, (June 28, 2012), http://www.zoneasia-pk.com/ZoneAsia-Pk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8468:contracts-for-ip-and-tapi-projects-to-be-given-to-russia&catid=47:powermanagement&Itemid=70 (accessed November 16, 2012)

²⁴ "Pak-Russi relations should be further strengthened: Ashraf," *Dawn* (Islamabad), October 4, 2012.

particular area.

Trade

The second area in which the future of both the countries lies is their cooperation in trade. Pakistan and Russia despite having legacy of cool relations have discreetly been engaged in enhancing their bilateral ties in several fields including trade. It is also a fact that the bilateral volume of trade between Russia and Pakistan has surged from a paltry \$92 million in 2003 to over \$700 million in 2011.²⁵ It is expected that the cooperation in trade sector shall further improve in the years to come which would help in further promoting ties between both the countries.

Security

Academically it is believed that Russian sale of arms to Pakistan is inviolable. Whereas, there is already presence of both Russian equipment and technology in Pakistan defence forces in the shape of MI-17 helicopters and T-80 series of Ukrainian battle tanks. They are now looking for a diversified and expanded relationship in this regard. The recent visits of both the army chiefs to each other countries are being rated very high in writing new chapter in question of defence cooperation.

The role of both the nations would be even more varied in post-2014 scenario when the U.S. and NATO troops would leave Afghanistan. It is recommended that Russia and Pakistan should establish greater ties especially in the field of counterterrorism.

Pro-activism

Over the past ten years Pakistan and Russia have covered a long distance in trying to come closer to each other. It is recommended this pro-active approach in their bilateral bondage should be further exploited and regular high level visits be facilitated. There has been a delay in President Putin's visit to Pakistan which has raised concerns in various quarters. It is recommended that all prior homework should be completed evaluating all possible policy alternatives before any such visit. Postponement of visit of such stature is by no means in the national interest.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

Pakistan and Russia can even built stronger ties utilizing the platform of SCO. In 2005, Pakistan was granted observer status in SCO and in return Pakistan then reciprocated the gesture by helping the Russians

²⁵ "A brief recap of the troubled Pak-Russia relationship", *News International* (Rawalpindi), October 4, 2012.

get an Observer's status at OIC.²⁶ It is suggested that these forums should be exploited in building strong pillars of their association.

Conclusion

Pakistan and Russia are not only two important countries of the region but also have great role in international politics. At the time of creation of Pakistan, the decision making mechanism of the country failed to carry out correct cost-benefit analysis and took an irrational decision of ignoring the former Soviet Union. There was, however, requirement of maintaining equally good relations with both the superpowers as India did so very successfully.

The basis of bilateral relationship is always on the principles of trusts and corrects perception. This element too remained missing in Pak-Russia relations. The history of relations between them can truly be termed as a saga of misunderstandings and misperceptions as both the nations perceived each other through a third nation's perspective.

- Amongst all odds what both the states have experienced over the past half century, Pakistan and Russia have now realized each other's importance. The developments of the last ten years suggest that both of them have bridged some gaps in their relationship. Viewing various aspects of global and internal dynamics one can conclude that if both the countries work together in the fields of energy, trade and security, they can ensure peace, stability and prosperity of their nations.

26 Ibid.

