TRANSITION FROM UNIPOLAR TO A MULTIPOLAR WORLD: IMPLICATIONS FOR PAKISTAN’S FOREIGN POLICY

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Abstract

Since the Cold War ended the world has become unipolar and the United States is delighting in a hegemonic position. As the 21st century progresses the framework of international system is again moving from unipolar to a multipolar structure. Colossal economic accomplishments of a few nations like China, Brazil and India have prompted the most preservationist advocates of this civil argument of a change from unipolarity to multipolarity. As indicated by numerous researchers it appears that we are living in the realm of transition. Extension of G8 to G22, the discourse of expansion in United Nation Security Council, perceived decrease in United States influence, BRIC nations rise and the ascent of new powers all point in one course. Worth noticing is the realist Kenneth Waltz who declared at the end the Cold War that United States would not have the capacity to appreciate the products of unipolarity for long. Underestimating this it appears glaringly evident that theories explaining transition are significant for the time period we live in. This Paper is an attempt to discuss the foreign policy of Pakistan in this changing scenario.

Key Words: unipolar, accomplishment, preservationism, insecurity, circumstances

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Introduction

In the order of the day, a powerful state is the one which exceeds expectations in size of populace, geography, region in which situated, financial capacity, resource endowment, political dependability and military capacity. These qualities are referred to as power capacities which guarantee a great power because of its financial, military, social and political impact on worldwide scale. The extent of great power in international framework can be decided by power abilities and thus polarities of the worldwide framework are likewise controlled by power capacities of states.

In the future multipolar world, it may be assumed that global system is not going to rest with a couple of significant nations but rather with numerous nations with varying capabilities. Every state having its particular noticeable qualities will have decisive say in the limited arena of affairs pertaining to its region. Other than the US, Japan China, EU and India are capable of economic potency owing to their technical advancements, growing economy and wide base of population. Iran, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, countries from the African Union and Brazil would have impact because of their considerable energy assets. Russia would have both preferences. A few nations would have some regional significance because of their geostrategic location like Pakistan, Central Asia, Ukraine and Turkey as these nations are situated on the energy routes through which energy resources will be on the course to some parts of the world. Other than the worldwide associations like UNO, World Bank, IMF territorial associations like SAARC, EU, SCO, ASEAN, AU and NGO's including environmental, social and humanitarian would be on the rundown of power focuses.
Unipolarism in Decline

Numerous IR neorealists consider unipolarity as a wellspring of potential insecurity and risk which in the end leads different actors to attempt to offset the dominating force (hegemon) utilizing either hard or soft power. A few researchers restrict themselves to only the precise hierarchy of the unipolar world guaranteeing peace and strength. The majority of them concur that in the long haul the dispersion of force and the increasing expenses will cause decay to the unipolarity which as a result will undermine the authority of the sole power of present times, i.e. the US, and in order to counterbalance, other forces will upgrade their abilities to rise.

US unipolarity could last thirty or forty years if USA had not shattered its economy in recent years, through some protracted wars. The U.S. is encountering a monetary emergency of historic size which could truly undermine its domination and in the long run could compel it to focus its endeavors on its internal issues as opposed to world politics. As a result of the monetary emergency the U.S. will decrease its universal engagement, and this will create a sort of new vacuum of force that will be refilled and engaged by other potent forces.

On regional premise, numerous states are surely prepared to supplant the U.S., others might aspire to the role of great power in the future. In succeeding decades China can financially and militarily overwhelm the U.S. India is among the ten quickest developing economies of the world since 1980 and it is anticipated that in the next decade its development rate would rise to the level of three major powers.

The inescapable and enduring financial ascent of India will furthermore be augmented by consistent development of its
populace. Expansions of populace and developing economy will likewise bolster and cultivate the ascent of Brazil, a nation which sooner rather than later will assume crucial part in the Latin American district. Additionally new circumstance could shape the eventual fate of power distribution and add to the rise of new great nations. Global warming for instance could permit a local player, like Russia to exploit the Siberian soil and gain new power abilities which may be used to challenge the U.S. hegemony in the area.

**Challenges in the Transition Period**

In the second decade of the 21st century world is encountering a critical phase of massive transition. On account of the realignment of the international order, this time of move is of specific significance because it tuned from a phase of quantitative development into a key one of subjective change. In the present time of transition, nations are attempting to modify their actions towards domestic change and about changes in legislative issues regarding local economy. There is a significant discord in interweaving of clashes within and without which is profoundly muddled, thus bringing about violent internal disputes. For example, in China, the remarkable broadening of social welfare in addition to the expanding transparency brought by a very well informed society is hosting extraordinary multi-pronged rivalry and a significant effect of general feeling on the government’s choice making. Such a period is brimming with vulnerability, flightiness and hardly conceivable outcomes. The opposition between the nations comes down to their internal capacities for getting control of those patterns which preserve their inner and outer strengths. These strengths guarantee their interior coordination and fast reactions.

Another real pattern related to the multi polarization of global monetary and political conditions is the eastward movement of the
world's economic and political gravity, shifting of focus from the two sides of the Atlantic to the Asia Pacific. In the 21st century it is a notable change which might likely turn into a foreword to another recorded cycle in social, monetary and political spheres of global patterns. The most vital passage for the world is Asia-Pacific and the ascent of Asia all in all has more notably essential than that of China alone.

The stability and general condition of regional security is a typical wish for all states to keep. Security concerns are generally raised and the role of participation and cooperation which are positive symptoms are ascending. Under such multifaceted situation of progress with an increase in pressure, transitional period tactic has remarkably influenced regional stability in particular and global security in general; security and peace are essential prerequisites for guaranteeing maintainable monetary advancement in the world. Setting up an overall and successful regional security structure is a brilliant alternative in spite of the fact that it is unachievable in short term.

**Foreign Policy Strategies of Emerging Powers in a Multipolar World**

The rise of certain nations beyond the west is crucial to how the international system is being reshaped in the first quarter of the 21st century. The rise of these states is tendering some uneven characters in the international framework and at a time of globalization which has mirrored the great impact of traditional strong states and commercial actors. The scenario of a multipolar world with an agreeable face is based on their interests emerging out of evolving systemic relationship among states. While they may differ on particular issues, but this picture shows the need by both old and
new powers to cooperate under emergency conditions, exceptionally different from pictures of rising force in the past. Customarily the image of rising forces has not been a multilateral one, Prussia under Bismarck and Kaiser Wilhelm executed as a classic realist force blending parity of force with unilateral activities. The objective was to realize national interests and resources through securing territory.

The power of this emerging challenge was intensified by a psychological feeling of the developing states of being untouchables in the multilateral framework. The main change was in the manner – solidarity was formed and unification of stances was achieved, augmenting the sage utilization of power of numbers. Endeavors to arrange around these distinctions met with some unexpected reality and rehashed disappointment. Classic case of this difficulty was the Cencun gathering of the mid 1980s which was an innovative endeavor to break out of the North-South standoff enlivened by the Brandt Commission report under the initiative of Mexico, Canada and Austria.\textsuperscript{8}

In institutional terms key multilateral forums are opening up in a more equitable fashion. As highlighted by the main response of the G20 to the financial crisis of the previous decade, there is some considerable recognition at the heart of the system that the G8 or any other small exclusive clubs is not a legitimate or effective means of problem solving. Moreover, as Daniel Flemes points out, the nature of innovation within rising powers has been induced through sophisticated occasions of negotiation and by the establishment of new intergovernmental foreign policy networks.\textsuperscript{9}

In comparison, India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) engage in a common approach to influence global security issues on the basis of the IBSA dialogue forum’s Defence Working Group\textsuperscript{10}. IBSA’s present
security agenda signals that the alliance’s best prospects of having some meaningful impact on global security affairs are related to cooperative intuitional strategies, particularly within UN system. From the perspective of the regional dimensions there is a very clear divide between strong tendency of Brazil and South Africa to act as regional stabilizers and brokers, and on the other hand India’s Hobbesian perspective keeps it inevitably committed to sub-regional hegemony and regional deterrence, thus making it very difficult for IBSA to derive a common perspective from their regional experiences.

In spite of this, some opportunities for security cooperation associated with their respective regional context exist, namely those associated with the armaments industry and maritime security. Two facets have special relevance from a realist perspective. Alexandr Burilkov and Torsten Geise examine maritime strategies of the rising powers through empirical evidence from the cases of Russia and China. Secondly, Mahanian concepts on the importance of the command of the sea persistently argues that naval power is an effective tool of statecraft in peace and war. Russian and Chinese strategies are formed through the interplay of threat perception, domestic factors and strategic culture.¹¹

The trend is not following a precise linear transition from a US-centered equilibrium to a multipolar one underwritten by a set of alternative actors. While the global system will be shaped by what this more diverse cluster of core countries want and do on the basis of their varying political cultures and competing ideas of domestic and global order. So it will be modified by how others respond to these emerging states and who they decide to interact with in order to attain their own goals and objectives in specific policy domains.
The United States and Changing World Order

The current US administration has tried to turn the overreach policies of USA in world affairs which were hallmark of the Bush years. However, the two major political parties are in complete agreement that US must continue pre-eminence in international affairs. This means that US will not cede to China a role in global politics that may give it an opportunity to emerge as an economic super power. Though the Obama administration has been criticized for too soft a stance in world affairs, the change in its approach is one of nuance in strategy and tactics, not of objectives. It appears that there is reduced appetite for direct intervention by USA in any of the trouble spots of the world. Within the political leadership in US, there is strong bipartisan consensus that the country must remain a global leader/ world dominant power. This belief in its pre-eminence also comes with the moral underpinnings that US must lead the world to freedom and democracy. Its third expression is the determination to contain China.

The US is deeply concerned about China’s global emergence and will do all to prevent it taking on a major role. Most members of the Republican Party and the ‘right of center’ Democrats criticize the present US administration for being too soft in this regard. The present administration is equally wary and unwilling to allow China its due role in world affairs. It, however, does not wish to present an outright image of wanting to contain China. The US position on China is unlikely to change with a new administration in Oval Office after US presidential elections of 2016. China has responded to this circumscribing of its role through many out-reaching measures. Launching of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank is one. The US tried to resist its launch, but was unable to do so. Most US allies,
including UK and Australia, have signed up for the AIIB.\textsuperscript{12} This is evidence perhaps of a perceived decline in US power and that this is no longer a unipolar world. Yet there is no country to replace US’s military prowess.

The extent to which the US pursues containment of China is worrying. The ‘coalition of democracy’ or the ‘pivot to Asia’ are examples of US designs. On its part, China too departed from usual cautious approach and its declared policy of ‘peaceful rise’ to an unambiguous position on the South China Sea. For now though, it does not seem that the situation would come to a head-on collision anytime soon. Yet this contest could bring to fore a serious and dangerous situation. US will not directly engage on the ground with its troops. There is much resistance at home for another war. (Ukraine is an example where, apparently unwittingly, it has been dragged into a replay of the cold war). This does not mean that the US is ineffectual. What we have is a \textit{hegemon} with reduced power and an unwillingness to give up its leadership role. On the other hand, there is no other country with the ability to replace it though they often attempt to challenge its authority. China’s occasional departure from caution and US unwillingness to yield creates a situation that is fraught with danger.\textsuperscript{13}

\textbf{Implications for Pakistan’s Foreign Policy}

The concept of foreign policy dates back to the perception of state’s mutual interaction since the Treaty of Westphalia (1648). States since then are required to interact mutually for peace. This notion of state system persists even until today, though with the democratic assertion that state’s sovereignty denotes people’s sovereignty exercised by the government in the pursuance of national interests. Hence foreign policy-making became imperative
because of super power’s strategic self-interests and the emergence of new sovereign states after the WWII. States started nurturing relations with each other on the bases of their national interests. With gradual passage of time, this has become a dominant concept with various views.

In contemporary environment, isolation has been replaced with regional interdependence due to the process of globalization, technological advancement and economic and trade relations. States therefore, have to maintain interaction for mutual gain and benefit. Foreign policy is supposed to be aligned entirely with the state interests. For that to happen, a state must have the capacity to formulate policies and have the fundamental orientation towards valid policymaking. This orientation comes from effective institutions and a leadership that cares for the welfare of the people. Deeper processes are at issue here. Policymaking depends on the views and values of the society and the leadership. It depends also, on whether policies that have a modern perspective find resonance in the norms of the people.

Pakistan is a developing state, but has a strong society (in a pre-modern way with beliefs and values bound by traditions), a society which lacks in social discipline. Policies that are good for the state are unfortunately not implemented because the people and the leadership resist these. This coincides with Gunnar Myrdal’s hypothesis that (parts of) developing countries’ societies have education, but do not have the discipline or ability to implement state policies\textsuperscript{14}. Civil servants, largely, are trained in modern methods and ideas of state policy. But it is hard to translate these potentials. Societies that are unable to make the transition from a pre-modern to modern thinking encounter a whole range of
difficulties. Policies and practices of more modern societies do not find acceptance among them. Europe too passed through such a transition. A period of religious dominance was followed by the renaissance, the reformation, and the age of enlightenment.

In essence, Islam is more in tune with the needs of modernity. This is evident from Islam’s political history. In early Islam, dialogue took place between the school of tradition and the school of reason. Such dialectic was not just tolerated, rather it was encouraged. Once Islamic leaders closed the door to independent discussion, the space for reason circumscribed. Soon, innovation became a sin. Fear of reason and innovation heightened after two traumas challenged Islam’s youthful success. The Mongol invasion was Islam’s first setback and a jolt into the ‘realpolitik’ of conquest and contest for power. Other great powers had faced similar challenges before Islam did. Colonization was the second setback. It reminded the Islamic region that it had fallen behind in the race to modernity. Threatened by colonialism, Islam questioned all that was associated with it. This included scientific knowledge, Western institution, and military power. The reaction that followed still exists in many countries. It is especially visible in Pakistan.

Pakistan’s political leadership is a product of this society, and of necessity, must stay in touch with it. It is sensitive to their views. This social and economic structure is rooted in time. There is a small elite, mostly found among civil servants that accepts and promotes modern concepts. These ideas have very little acceptance among the wider middle classes. Several identities compete, which weakens the state and its ability to protect its interests. We can take a stock of Pakistan’s relations with its neighbours. While talking about relations with India, for example, Pakistan’s stance and
position on Kashmir is mainly emotional in nature. Pakistan could gain a more effective position had it highlighted instances of human rights abuses by Indian forces in Indian held Kashmir. Kashmir has turned into a human rights tragedy. Human rights violation is of great concern in Pakistan and world over. Our Foreign Office remained stuck with making it a case for right of self-determination, which unfortunately has met with sense of repetition and resignation. To have an effective state and to find respect and acceptance in the world requires a change in mindset. The modern mind must prevail over limits placed by tradition; Pakistan has not yet rationalized and harmonized the idea of being a Muslim, a Pakistani, and modern at the same time.\textsuperscript{15}

\textbf{Options for Pakistan:}

- **The Afghan conflict:** Afghan conflict has harmed Pakistan greatly. It is important to understand the extent of the damage and that it continues to do so. Pakistan must nurture and sustain over a long period this nascent improvement in relations with Afghanistan and its new government. It could do so, by facilitating trade movement through both Karachi port and the Torkhum border. We must view this moment as an opportunity to place the relationship in a new direction. It is important to stay on course in a determined way.

- **Pakistan and India:** Pakistan must refrain from its usual impulsive and predictable response towards India. It must have a logical answer to India’s frenzied and forceful activity in the region of Kashmir and LOC and should be responded to with aggressive statements via Pakistani government.
Pakistan’s response must align with Pakistan’s long-term interests.

- **Pakistan and China:** Recent developments in economic cooperation, sets relations with China in the right direction. Balancing the current close political and military links, Pakistan must view China as a source of capital and as an economic partner. To benefit fully, Pakistan must develop internal capacity to work as China’s capable and worthy economic partner.

- **Pakistan and US:** Pakistan must build a cumulative and positive relationship with US. It is important to develop convergence of views on some international issues. Pakistan must improve its broad base relations with both countries and not side too much with one or the other. Its own regional and economic interests must dominate. Pakistan faces an environmental challenge, debilitating water scarcity, and social harmony deficit. We are one of the few countries in the world that cannot even administer preventive polio drops to our children. These challenges require a reorientation of the state system. Pakistan has a weak economy and a society that is behind times. As with other areas, our diplomatic space is circumscribed by a lack of development and the quality of governance.\(^{16}\)

**Finding and Conclusion**

It is very difficult to understand the role of emerging states, which are influencing the range and change of the international system. The broad outlines of what is taking place about this phenomenon are becoming more apparent, as change is taking place under stressful internal dynamic conditions and not from
external elements. There is a group of candidates which can be termed as rising powers and this process of change has dramatic bursts but is of longer duration than might have been expected. A core segment of these changes is taking place under conditions of evolving institutionalization. But the gulf in the perceptions on the concepts of cooperation and tension is quite wide.

In the changing world order the most important are surely national interest and values, and these at times can lead to highly complex and irritated bargaining positions which should be dealt with by increased coordination at states level. Jointed communities and the old values are dissolving. The western camp suffers from the renationalization of Europe as well as from the political polarization of the USA. Rising countries are not less divided due to different ideas of world system, thus will continuously compete and interact at the same time with each other. It is likely that the management of global interdependence will work through assembling different groupings for different purposes on a contemporary basis, an approach for which major powers may already have delivered the design.

It is unclear what will be the situation in this emerging process. Having included the surrounded institutional option there are signs that the emerging states are becoming more suspicious of involvement in the new concert diplomacy because of the compulsions placed on them.

The rise of new player has resulted in a fundamentally contested direction of the world system and the meaning of the essential concepts must be renegotiated. We have to see what new approaches rising countries will bring to the table in the course of
normative struggle under the conditions of the new establishing system.

End Notes

7 ibid
The IBSA Dialog Forum unites three expansive pluralistic, multicultural and multiracial social orders from three mainlands as an absolutely South-South gathering of similar nations, focused on comprehensive reasonable improvement, in quest for the prosperity for their people groups and those of the creating scene. IBSA was formalized and dispatched through the reception of the "Brasilia Declaration" on 6 June 2003. Its creation perceived the need of a procedure of exchange among creating countries and nations of the South to counter their minimization. The standards, standards and qualities supporting the IBSA Dialog Forum are participatory popular government, regard for human rights, the Rule of Law and the reinforcing of multilateralism.


ibid

