



## Pak-Russia relations from Strait Jacket to Pragmatism

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**Abstract:** Pakistan and Russia remained pedestrians of the zigzag path in the field of international relations. Due to some unavoidable reasons both of the states failed to establish cordial relations but it doesn't mean that they always remained on the cross road. Despite of contrast ideologies there are mega projects and big achievements in the history of their relations. Pakistan when join security alliances with west under its security dilemma, detracted the natal relations further deteriorated by U-2 incident. During the Ayub and Bhutto's era some positive steps were taken towards the destiny but not sustained. Afghan Jihad and Taliban regime drag the two to polar distance. This was the ancient of 9/11 ring them back to the lost track of convergence. Tragic event of 9/11 is responsible for breaking and forming of alliances among regional and global level. Pak-Russia relations are moving forward after the said event on the track of convergence of interests.<sup>3</sup>The main focus of the study is on the evolving nature of the relations from estrangement to institutional engagement.

**Keywords:** Pragmatism, Pak-Russia relations, cordial relations

### I. INTRODUCTION:

The Pak-Russian relation is a story of diversions and conversions of interests. Already the devastated relations during the "cold war" were further heightened by the "Afghan Jihad". The proxies in Afghanistan led, sometimes, the relation to the lowest ebb but the story goes on. "No permanent friends or foes" are a common practice in international relations, the rolling coaster relations of both countries tracked with gradual rapprochement during the "war against terror", caused institutionalized engagements between the two. Russia's quest for playing the role of major stakeholders in the region and Pakistan's desire to find alternatives are the catalysts for normalization in relations.

Fact in point is that Russia's great economic potential in the region is a significant addition to its worth. Sound relations between the two would enhance the process of normalization in Pakistan's economic realm. With the emergence of a new horizon in world politics after 9/11, both of the states are interested in moving further from estrangement to organized institutional engagement. The withdrawal of US-led coalition forces from Afghanistan in 2014, realized the fact to both of them that their economic and strategic interests are naturally converged.

During a roundtable conference at Centre for Pakistan and Gulf Studies (CPGS), the former Ambassador of Pakistan Mr. Khalid Khattak argues that the former Soviet Union doesn't initiate formal invitation of the visit to Pakistan, as she forwarded a note of congratulations to the PM of Pakistan, though there was a discussion between the permanent representatives of USSR and Pakistan in New York on August 14, 1948.

Pak-Russia relation is a story of wasted opportunities and mutual misunderstands due to the kaleidoscopic policies of the two in the geopolitical realities of the 'Cold War'. The post 9/11 scenario is painted with new opportunities, to get the maximum of these, both of the states rationally move forward for their economic and strategic interests in the emerging regional and international realities, particularly the Afghan dilemma. Islamic State of Khorasan (ISK) in Afghanistan, steering to both, converge their interests in the post 2014 period.<sup>2</sup> The special circumstances compel them both to collaborate in the field of economics in Central Asia.<sup>3</sup> Russia's FDI would lessen Pakistan's dependency on the West, especially on the US and mired military sales.<sup>4</sup> Another addition to the rapprochement is Putin's vision of injecting its influence to immediate and distant regions (Hussain and Ali, 2020).

Peace and stability in Afghanistan and development in Central Asia are common between them. Pakistan needs Russian investment to support its paralyzed economy, in American absence while Russia needs Pakistan's support to establish its long-lasting influences in Central Asian Republics and Afghanistan. No doubts there are sizeable hindrance to smooth relations between the two but still, there are prospects of good strategic partnership. The conversion of unipolar of the world to multipolar and the engineering of new regional settings compel Pakistan to reshape its policy paradigm.

The re-emergence of Russia as a key player in global affairs and its revisionist policy towards contemporary affairs opens new dimensions for Pakistan like states. These days Russia regains its global and regional significance with acceptability. Revisiting its policy toward South Asia and its gigantic geo-strategic importance in the region induced Pakistan to washout the memories of the "Cold War" and look forward to cooperation and mutual trust-based relationship with Russia. New settings in South Asia and India are also responsible for this new nexus.

MI-35 helicopters to Pakistan injected new spirit to old dying relations between the two. The changing security environment of the region drag new opportunities in improving relations between the two but the success of the story is depending on the approach of the two states. The changing geo-strategic and economic realities in the region under China's "BRI", CPEC and SCO put compulsion on both states to initiate new alignments in order to get maximum benefits.

Conversion of the national interests of the states bring them on the same page, Pakistan needs an alternative and Russia's desire to increase influence in the region will provide a smooth road for fast driving car of friendship. Pakistan requires diversifying its policy to build Russian trust while Russian needs to pull Pakistan from a devastating economic situation with the transfer of new technology. Cooperation in defence, counterterrorism, economic and socio-cultural domains are the catalyst for ever-improving relation between the two.

Russia is eagerly reasserting its role in near abroad and beyond, while Pakistan is wondering for new alternatives after US withdrawal from the region. Geopolitical and strategic compulsion consequently improve their relations. Both have the same objective to bring peace and stability in Afghanistan and have the objective of economic collaboration in Central Asia. To Pakistan Russia is indispensable for reviving its economy while to Russia Pakistan is an alternative for its trade and investment as India's shift to Europe and America.

Russia as a previous superpower, decisive power of the region, permanent member of UNSC, and giant member of SCO are the factors, that Pakistan is forging durable ties with Russia. Pakistan could gain maximum in all fields while connecting CARs and Russia to Gwadar port and the initiation of a new silk road would tremendously contribute to economic revival for Pakistan. Sino-Russian cooperation for regional development and keeping global hegemon power out of the region and Pakistan's close relations with China, facilitate Pakistan in seeking Russian assistance in economic and energy development. Russia is intended to size its trade from \$ 600 million to \$ 1 billion.

The former Soviet Union remained a world behind the iron curtains for academic oblivion. So, those academicians live in an environment of half-known facts, marring their capacity of becoming objective on academic analysis on Russia. Apparently, the perception, if, not objective the decision made, wouldn't be rational. The elite of Pakistan, responsible for decision making, failed to ascertain an objective view regarding Russia. They perceive the 'Soviet Republic' as an evil empire under the lens of western knowledge and even the Russian federation was treated with the same perception, led Pakistan to the front-line state against communism and most trusted ally of America by the end of the Suez Canal crisis in 1956.

BRI based economic integration (inter-regional economics) and Eurasian Economic Community are some other determinants of the reshaping relations. Apart from these positives there are some threats like extremism and India and US displeasure over the growing relation of Pakistan and Russia. Russia changed its ideological posture in changing the mood of unipolar world's politics, its priorities changed from geo-politics to geo-economics.

With the demise of the Soviet Union, Russia might be passing through a period of political and economic eclipse, but the major factors contributing to its power base, comprising its vast territorial expanse, excellent technology, skilled labour, and rich natural resources remained intact (*Dawn*, 2019). Even in the unipolar world, Russia remained a visible power. They didn't share a border but shares concerns about regional de-stability. despite Pakistan's involvement in Western alliances but nations-initiated trade

relations and Pakistan got MFN status. Its position as the gateway to Central, South Asia, and the Middle east, enhanced its significance to Russia ([https://carnegieendowment.org/files/russia\\_and\\_pakistan2014.pdf](https://carnegieendowment.org/files/russia_and_pakistan2014.pdf)). socio-cultural and ideological differences caused gorge between the tow and the pro-capitalist elite of Pakistan failed to develop the soviet materialist taste ("Catalogue." 2020).

Until April 13, 1948, Pakistan and Russia didn't establish diplomatic relations when Pakistan's foreign minister Zafarullah Khan in New York proposed to Andrei Gromyko Deputy foreign minister of the Soviet Union that their courtiers have to exchange ambassadors. The proposal took seventeen months to materialize when Pakistan finalized the name of the first ambassador and he presented his diplomatic credential in Moscow at the end of 1949. On the other hand, the Russian ambassador took charge in Karachi on March 22, 1950.5 Mr. Liaqat Ali Khan repeatedly showed his keen interest in agriculture-based technology of USSR.

## II. PAK-RUSSIAN RELATIONS AFTER 9/11:

Russian Pakistan relations became cloudy when Pakistan was supporting Taliban in Afghanistan against Northern Alliance, the favourite child of Russia (Stanford: Stanford University, 2016). The situation was changed with the US led war on terror in 2001 when both of them join the same camp. President Musharraf's meeting with Putin on the evo of Multizonal security summit at Almaty on June 4, 2002 was the first institutional drive towards relations (<http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/27120>), led to the establishment of joint working group to counter terrorism and for strategic stability. Another step, added to the CBMs was the criticism of America's operation in Abbottabad and NATO's strike at Salala where 24 Pakistani soldiers died. Consequently, the reshaped foreign policy guidelines envisaged reaching out to Russia (Yousaf, 2006). A landmark achievement was the celebration of 65 years of diplomatic relations and launching of all-inclusive collaboration (Azad, 2016).

The incident of 9/11 changed the entire picture of worlds politics and is having the long-lasting effects of the South Asia, particularly on Pakistan. Pakistan changed its policy towards Taliban when they refused to cooperate with international community regarding Al-Qaida, helped Pakistan to mend its ties with Moscow. Russia not only appreciated the role of Pakistan in war against terror but also extended its help to counter terrorism.<sup>14</sup> Russia needs Pakistan for its relations with Muslim countries. Furthermore, she was succeeded when attended the 10th summit conference of OIC at Malaysia (P, A 2001).

Russia's policy for South Asia, changed by the changing regional politics she extended her relations with South Asia. Good relations with Russia is beyond the political paradigm for Pakistan. For Pakistan Russia as oil and gas producer source of technology transfer for oil and gas exploration and could help, transporting from Central Asia. Musharraf's visit to Moscow in Feb, 2003 was significant for both the states as Pakistan got boost in its relations with not only to Russia but the worlds as well while Russia strengthen its ties with Muslim world. US presence in Central Asia under the war on terror is of immense concern for Russia, therefore she, in order to counter, want presence in South of this critical region.

The event of 9/11 compels countries to form regional groupings. Russia urged peaceful settlement of all issue between India and Pakistan for a peaceful South Asia (<http://www.abc.net.au/ra/asiapac/programs/s779608.htm>). the leading countries of SCO, China and Russia want to convert it into a full-pledged security body of the region and extend it to Iran and India. Concurrently Russia established permanent military bases in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to boost its influences in Central Asia (*The Hindu*, 16 June2003).

In this new political paradigm three major powers Russia, US and China is sharing concerns about the spread of terrorism and extremism from Afghanistan. To China and Russia South Asia is place where they can blossom their global posture. Russia want to extend its trade to Iran, Pakistan and India (Aron, nd). To Pakistan's analysts Russia is 'one of the most urgent consideration'.<sup>50</sup> Russia and Pakistan are part of the same camp fighting the war against terror. Alexander Yakovenko, spokesman of Russia's foreign ministry, appreciated Islamabad's active role in war against terror in Afghanistan on March 18, 2002.<sup>5</sup> the statement was issued during the visit of Anisuddin Ahmed of foreign ministry of Pakistan, he was confident that the discussion opens new chapter of fruitful cooperation in bilateral relations (*TheNews*,19March2002). Russia's deputy foreign minister, Anatoly Safonov, during his visit to Islamabad along with his team in May 2002 conducted talks regarding cooperation in anti-terrorism, extremism and drug trafficking (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 29 May 2002).

First meeting of working group on counter terrorism and other new challenges to global security was conducted on 2-3 Dec 2002 in Moscow. Both sides agreed on enriching relations under the changing regional scenario. Basic focus of the meeting was anti-terrorist operation in Afghanistan. And articulated their complete support for regular implementation of Bonn agreement. They agreed for next meeting to be held in Islamabad in 2003 (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 6 December 2002).

Pakistan and Russia's main concern is the weak central government and strong hold of warlords, they are interested in stable Afghanistan to contain Islamic radicalism and extremism and cooperation in energy sector. Although they have differences over national government in Afghanistan, Pakistan support Pashtun elements while Russia support Northern Alliance but still, they are comfortable in working group.

Pakistan has deep concerns over the growing Indian influences and even she claimed that the Northern Alliance handed over Pakistani prisoners of war to India, while Russia is happy with India's presence in Afghanistan. Pakistan condemn terrorism in all its form and officially condemn the Chechen militant's action of hostage about 700 Russian in Moscow's theatre in October 2002. Moving further Pakistan didn't support the resolution moved in UNHRC in April same year for the first time. Many of Pakistani analysts criticised Pakistan's action and even Afzal Mehmood declared that "It was a shocking decision enabling Russia to escape censure for its dirty war in Chechnya" (Mehmood, 2002).

President Putin attempted to imitate dialogue between India and Pakistan during the conference on interaction and confidence building measure in Asia at Almaty in June 2002, refused by India while appreciated by Pakistan. Russia responded to the victory of Islamic forces in 2002 elections in a very careful manner and declared the process as positive move towards development of constitutional norms (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 15 November 2002). Moscow is stated, that wants to harvest sound relations with Pakistan and confident enough regarding efforts of its leadership to make it stable and predictable state. Both states want to have constant consultation and for the purpose first meeting of consultative group for strategic stability was called in Moscow on January 16, 2003. Both sides commissions were composed of high ranked officials, decided to strengthen their coordination on mutual interests on all forum particularly in UN, regarding the issue in Korean peninsula, Persian Gulf and Middle East (Srivastava, 1999).

Pakistan's efforts to eradicate terrorism and extremism was acknowledged by the special envoy of Putin who came to Pakistan in September 1999 (Khan Jalalzai, nd). during the visit of Musharraf in 2003 three agreements was signed to boost diplomatic and cultural relations and to make visa and immigration easy. during his visit to Pakistan in 2007, the prime minster of Russian Mikhail Fradkov stressed speeding up economic relation (Hussain, nd). General Parveez Kayani's visit to Russia in 2009 and PM Gilani's meeting with Putin in 2010 at Dushanbe clean up the road for Putin to Islamabad (Hyder, 2012). Both states initiated talks in 2011 to conclude free trade agreement and for strengthening trade and economic relations, currency swap agreements (Wikipedia, 2020).

Spoke person of Russia's foreign ministry declared on the eve of Musharraf's visit on 4-6 Feb 2003, that Russia is eagerly want to have cordial relation with Pakistan and to coordinate for elimination of remaining disagreements (*Interfax*, 2003). further he noted that Pakistan is an important priority in Russia's foreign policy due to its position in CIS and Muslim world (*Itar-Tass*, 2003). on 5<sup>th</sup> of Feb Musharraf met with Putin and Putin phrase Pakistan's role in WoT (*Itar-Tass*, 2003). sources said that Pakistan was interested in Russian Arms but she didn't accept nor reject the demand but stressed more trust building. At the end a joint communique declared that, institutional cooperation is required to intensify relations in all fields including economic and energy and to eradicate hindrance the issue would be resolve and the intergovernmental commission has to start its activities.

Pakistan's satellite Al-bar 2's launching from Russia's vehicle was cited as positive development in relations. Both of them are determined to expedite the space cooperation and expressed their satisfaction on the MoU signed in 2002 between Gazprom and Pakistan's ministry of petroleum and gas in November 2002 (Russia-Pakistan Joint Statement, 5 February 2003). Both of the states accumulate their interests regarding a stable and peaceful Afghanistan integrated with international community of states, having good neighbourly relations with all adjacent countries. They emphasize the role of UN in peace bring process in Afghanistan. Russia urged the adaptation of declaration of 22<sup>nd</sup> Dec 2002 on friendly relation with all neighbours including Pakistan.

Both Pakistan and Russia have common approach regarding the drugs and its trafficking to other states, they urged the patronage of United Nations Drugs Control Program (UNDCP). Pakistan appreciated the Russia's voluntary donation of \$ 500,000 to the UNDCP and offer its availability for any action in this regard. Both sides endorsed the improving democratic foundation in Central Asia (Russia-Pakistan Joint Statement, 5 February 2003).

When Russia and Pakistan merged their interests, world recognized the achievements in Afghanistan, of the U.S led coalition was because of the active role and support of Pakistan. KhursheedMahmoodKasuri the then foreign minister of Pakistan visited Russia in 2004 while the prime minister Shaukat Aziz attended the meeting SCO in October 2005. Shaukat Aziz met with his Russian counterpart Mikhail Fradkov and discussed bilateral relations.

Russia's observer status in OIC and Pakistan's in SCO are reciprocal. Musharraf pay his thanks on Russia's support on obtaining observer status in SCO, to Putin in his meeting during SCO at Shanghai on June 2006 same was responded by Putin regarding IOC (Jalalzai, 2004). Musharraf was of the opinion that both country cant expend their relations but the approach must not be Indo centric and bilaterally they can convert the diplomatic understanding into good economic relations (Jalalzai, 2004). Pakistan is in search of market for its export goods while needs Russian expertise in energy sector. As good-well gesture Russia agreed to pay the \$ 108 million to Pakistani exporters due to USSR before its liquidation.

Bilateral trade increased with the passing years, reached to \$ 320 million in 2004-5 from \$ 134 in 2003-4 while \$ 100 million in 2002. According to reports on textile Pakistan has the potential to increase its textile exports to Russia up to \$ 500 million if she discourages the reexport of textile item of other countries (Ashier, 2012). during his visit to Islamabad Aleksei Miller chairman of Gazprom in Oct 2005, with PM and President of Pakistan, signed MoUs for coordination in oil and gas sector, to provide assistance in oil and gas exploration, development of underground storage system, conversion of vehicles to CNG and research. It also expressed its interests in purchasing OGDS and PPL (Ashier, 2012).

In April 2006, Russian consortium of oil and gas visited Islamabad and expressed its interest in IPI and TAPI, upgrading oil fields and oil exploration. Russia promised drilling, equipment, pipeline construction machinery and provision of professionals to Pakistan (Shrivastava, 2011). Viktor Rashnikov, Chairman of board of directors of Magnitogorsk iron and steel works expressed his willingness to invest \$ 2 billion in five years to upgrade Pakistan steel Mill, if materialised about four to six billion dollars would come to Pakistan ([http://www.coldwar.org/articles/90s/fall\\_of\\_the\\_soviet\\_union.asp](http://www.coldwar.org/articles/90s/fall_of_the_soviet_union.asp)). No doubt the economic relations would be translated into political understanding.

Pakistan and Russian have same perspective regarding situation in middle East, Iranian nuclear issue and have common objective of peace in Afghanistan and Central Asia. To move forward both states need to shed the baggage of past to exploit opportunities of bilateral beneficial relations. Concrete efforts are required to remove the images of misperception and distrust.

In the words of Stephen Blank from the institute of strategic studies. "Pakistan and Russia has covertly developed geopolitical and strategic relations behind the scenes of the world politics since Russia has concluded that in the wake of withdrawal of NATO led ISAF and US forces by 2014, Pakistan will be a crucial player in Afghanistan and hence speeded up advancement of relations with this country" (Blank, 2012).

To strengthen the bilateral relation Russian President Putin scheduled his visit to Pakistan in Oct 2012 but didn't materialized yet, media reported the cancellation due to IPI pipe line project or due to India pressure but Russia explain that it's because of technical issues (Chauhan, nd). An Indian analyst Sandeep Dikshit in his article stated that Premier of India Manmohan Sing relates his scheduled meeting with President Putin in November 2012 with cancellation of his visit to Pakistan, during a meeting with Russia's Premier Dmitry Rogzin in July 2012 (Dikshit, 2012).

In order to neutralize the rumours in media General AshfaqKiani visited Russai on his scheduled date in October 2012 and met with top military and political personnel (Nation, 2012) and Russia's Premier visited Pakistan in October 2012. Sergey Viktorovich responded the question regarding cancellation of Putin visit that it was serious rescheduling issue nothing else, he supported Pakistan's stance on drone attacks. He further stated that violation of territorial integrity and sovereignty is unacceptable (Nation, 2012).

Some Indian scholars endorsed the fact that Russia due to Pakistan's neighbouring location to Afghanistan considered as pivot in the region (Dawn, 2012). Several reasons are responsible for improvement in Pak-Russia relations like changing political Scenario after cold war, America's withdrawal from Afghanistan and Indo-US growing relations (Mahapatra, nd). These are the factors contributed to the hope stabilizing Pak-Russia relations (<http://www.eurasianet.org/node/66040>). As all major players Wants peace in the Afghanistan,64 therefore Pakistan's cooperation with Russia is essential. Such strong points support Pakistan's strong relations with Russia in post 2014 Afghanistan (<http://www.indiawrites.org/diplomacy/indias-role-afghanistan-speaking-voices/>).

Pakistan tried her level best to address Russia's concerns regards Pakistan's ties with Taliban, therefore Lieutenant General Mahmud, chief of ISI visited Russian in September 2000. Same year advisor of Russian president Sergei Yastrzhembsky expressed Russia's hope about Pakistan's act as 'stabilizing influence' (Interfix, 2000). On his arrival in Moscow he said "the cat [Taliban] seems to be out of the bag but Islamabad is still holding it by its tail". Vladimir Lukin the deputy speaker of Russian parliament suggested that sooner or later Russia has to initiate dialogues with Taliban, officially or unofficially (Interfix, 2000). It is believed that Islamabad assist the establishment of these contacts and even communicate Russia's concerns to Taliban (Kommersant Daily, 2 October 2000). Pakistan expressed her consent to do but told that have little influence now. Interior minister of Pakistan proposed to host an anti-terrorism meeting, and was looking for Russia's mediation in Kashmir.

As leading Pakistani newspaper "Nation" wrote in its editorial "In the matters of help on Afghanistan by Pakistan and help by Russia to Pakistan on Kashmir, on the assumption that Pakistan has some influence in Afghanistan and Russia has some influence on India, the willingness to help made available by either country is good in principle. But whether anything is going to come out of it, would remain in doubt. Given that Afghans are fiercely independent and India has so far remained totally inflexible on Kashmir, whatever influence each is supposed to have is obviously circumscribed by the value Russia attaches to India and Pakistan to Afghanistan" Russia was declared as 'one of the most urgent consideration' by Pakistan's analysts.

The year 2014 is the year of fruitful cooperation between Russia and Pakistan; in the month of June Russia lift arm embargoes on Pakistan and navies of both countries start join exercise to combat drugs smuggling in North Arabian sea in October. November this year defence minister of Russia, Sergei Shoigu came to Pakistan and concluded a wide range of agreement of military cooperation.

First consultation on the issues of the region between the ministries of foreign affairs conducted in December 2016. Another round of such exercises was conducted in October 2017 of both Navies to enhance coordination. Both countries upgraded consultation and established joint military consultative committee (JMCC) under the deputy minister of defence to consult on military cooperation. An MoU regarding Naval cooperation was concluded in August this year. During the first meeting of JMCC agreement was signed, enabling Pakistani military officers for training in Russia's military training institute. In April 2018 Pakistan's minister of defence told to the media in Russia that Pakistan in intended to purchase T-90 tanks and air defence system from Russia. Further he said that an agreement to purchase SU-35 aircraft will probably conclude in next few years (Sputnik, April 6, 2018).

MoU was signed between Gazprom and OGDC in July 2017, to cooperate in oil and gas exploration, while in October same year an agreement between the two governments was concluded to supply LNG. Consultation was initiated as well to establish a 600 MW gas-fired power plant in Pakistan with Russia's investment. India is still a dominant factor in Pakistan Russia relation weakening with a slow pace, as can be extracted from the statement of Russia's ambassador in India in 2018, 'Relations of Russia with India , the most important strategic relations, couldn't be equalized with its relations with Pakistan limited to the purpose of anti-terrorism'(The Economic Times, July 12, 2018). Russia though clarify the provision of MI-35 helicopters, as tool to combat terrorism but Pakistan leveraged this rapprochement as anti-India strategy.

Pakistan-Russia rapprochement is part of the greater interest in South Asia. Both has their own strategy but their relations may be translated into an instrument of economic growth and security in Central and South Asia. Pakistan is enjoying the role of leading regional player not because of its largess as India, nor because of its natural resources as Iran but it is its strategic location, provide an edge in Russia's policy. Pakistan's foreign minister Shah MahmoodQurashi visited Moscow to meet with his counterpart on September, 9, 2020 (Geo news, 2020).

### III. MILITARY COOPERATION:

Russia and Pakistan have no history of military relations except of a deal of 1969 of Maverick helicopters (Shah, 2001). After 9/11 tremendous cooperation occurred in military relations. Col. Gen. Aleksandr Postnikov the then Chief visited Pakistan in 2011, (Pakistan Today, August 5, 2013) followed by Tariq Rafique Butt Pakistan's Air Chief Marshal in August 2012 (press release, April 15, 2013), and Gen. Ashfaq Kyani chief of the army staff of Pakistan in October 2012 (Dawn, September 29, 2012). These visits laid the foundation of future military coordination, particularly when Postnikov initiated the idea of developing military cooperation via joint military exercise and exchange of trainers and trainees and weapons trade (Dawn, September 17, 2011), that cause military projects in these three directions. In April 2013, chief of Russian air force, Viktor Bondarev visited Pakistan for dialogues on military deals. In 2014 the defence minister of Russian Sergei Shoigu came to Islamabad and concluded agreement of defence cooperation (Syed, 2014). Therefore, Russia lifted arm sanctions from Pakistan and inked agreement to sale MI-35 Hind -E gunship helicopters on August 29, 2017. While Pakistan wanted to have 20 more helicopters of the same kind (Diplomat, August 29, 2017).

Moscow announced limited military equipment supply to Pakistan after the visit of Kosygin Russia's Premier in 1968. Compared to India's military supply of \$ 600-700 million Pakistan's supply of \$ 5-10 million is too low even from Afghanistan's \$ 260 million and Iran's \$ 100 million.

Joint military drills were conducted in 2014, 2015 (Dawn, April 1, 2017), 2016 and 2017. 'Aman' a multinational Naval exercise of 35 countries was held at Karachi in 2017. Russia's largest anti-submarine warship 'Severmorsk' participated as well (Pakistan Today, February 12, 2017). In September same year both countries participated in joint military exercise in the mountainous training range of Nizhny Arkhyz in Karachay-Cherkessia (Alam, 2017). They agree to conclude joint military commission in early 2018 (Ali, 2018). Same year in August both of the countries signed security training agreement during the first meeting of JMCC (Gul, 2018), open doors of Russia's military institutes for training of Pakistani troops.

In October 2014 first and in December 2015 second counter narcotics exercise between Russia and Pakistan was held. In 2015 Pakistan participated in international war games at Russia (Dawn, October 22, 2018). Third Durzhaba military exercise held at Cherat in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in August 2018 (Dawn, October 22, 2018).

'Druzhbha' (Russian word means friendship) joint military exercise between Pakistan and Russia held from September 24-October 10, 2016 in KP Pakistan, while second was held in 2017 at Russia. India wanted to postpone the drill but Pakistan's active role in war against terror and changing political scenario attract Russia towards Pakistan. There was three mutual military teamwork between Russia and Pakistan. Pakistan eagerly wanted to purchase Russia's air defence system, T-90 tanks and SU-35 Jets (K, 2016). Russia is still reluctant to conclude any such deal of military hardware that may be use for other than anti-terrorism (S, 2018).

The mutual defence ties are assumed to be translated into broader cooperation in future. Pavel Didkovsky the first secretary of Russia's Embassy in Pakistan expresses the Russian intentions of support for criterion-based application for NSG of those who not yet signed Non-Proliferation Treaty NPT (Express Tribune, December 15, 2017), that validates Pakistan's application for membership of NSG. Hence, it is yet to be incorporated in Russia's foreign policy's priorities.

Pakistan, a Muslim country with large population and having potential influence in Muslim world, while Moscow is having reasonable Muslim population, sees bilateral relation beneficial. Further Pakistan is a good option to materialise its desire of road access to Indian ocean (Malik, 2011). Pakistan after the America's operation against Usama assumed the end of US hegemony and wanted to adjust in G-Zero world (Rafiq, 2015).

Since the incident of 9/11 Pakistan conducted about 251 major and 735 small scale military operation to counter terrorism, Russia wanted to have good relations with Pakistan to learn from its experience (K, 2016).

There are some stockholders in Russia who believed that Russia may sell MIG-35 fighter to Pakistan (Periscope, April 28, 2011). they believe that India may not have issue with the deal, as US is selling weapons to both India and Pakistan. Both countries are trying to enhance mutual trust, and locating the grave of the soviet soldiers in Pakistan and searching the missing Russian troops are the steps in this

regard. Warrior Internationalist Committee, a non-profitable organization of Russia is conducting the said work (Obozrenie, February 13, 2004).

#### IV. COUNTER TERRORISM:

In a seminar Dedov, ambassador of Russia said that Russia is victim of the same terrorism as well and facing the same challenges to internal security, therefore anti-terrorism coordination is meaningful for both the states. He expressed further that Russia would practically support Pakistan. Pakistan and Russia shared concern about IS-K in Afghanistan (A, 2018). Both states consider unstable Afghanistan as threat to regional security. Therefore, both of them give hands in hand for peace process in Afghanistan and foreign minister of Pakistan Shah Mehmood Qurashi and Russia's ambassador meet and promise to cooperate for Afghan peace process (S, 2019).

In the field of counter terrorism, a wide scope of cooperation is available for Russia and Islamabad, to counter the evolving threats of violent radical trends. For this purpose, both of the states establish joint working group on counter terrorism for regional security (Dawn, 2011). Responding to the terrorist attack on Police training college in Quetta, Putin offered support to Pakistan to counter terrorism and even to provide advanced military hardware (Nation, October 26, 2016).

In order to strengthen military ties, two weeks long military exercise was conducted in Nowshera district of KP from October 22 to November 4, 2018 (Economic Times, November 5, 2018).

#### V. CONCLUSION:

Always in Pakistan, there has been feelings that bilateral relations with Russia were in Pakistan's interests. Conversely, the rapid changes of priorities of establishment, the policy towards Russia remained fluctuating. This approach damaged the country with heavy cost. Pakistan simultaneously learnt the worth of friendly ties with Washington and Moscow. Improvement in relation with Russia is associated with its ties with Afghanistan and Central Asia. Pakistan remained unsuccessful in strengthening its ties with Central Asia, when having unfriendly relations with Russia, as Russia is still a major player in Central Asia's politics (Spotlight, 2004).

Though the frequency of meeting at high level has increased but improvement in tie at working level is awaited yet. Both are intended to enhance bilateral relations, but Pakistan is more eager in relative terms. There is a compact reason for growth in ties in the coming times. The changing geostrategic paradigm of the region is a reason for Russia to initiate relations with medium and large size powers of the region.

There are solid reasons for Russia to improve its relations with Pakistan as she is a front-line state against terrorism and she is interested in Russian weapons and wants to enhance its economic interactions. Pakistan needs Russia for its technological and energy needs and good relations with Russia is a prerequisite for cordial relation with Central Asia.

Russia and Pakistan after the decades of negation of each other's importance, realized it for regional balance. As Russia isn't ready to leave India therefore Pakistan has to learn the same lesson and to formulate its policy in such a manner to have good alliances with all major players of the world. This mind set of Pakistan will bring regional peace stability. To China, the friendly relations of Russia and Pakistan will be a positive development (K, 2016). Defence cooperation is a great deal but for a long-term sustainable relationship cooperation in all fields is required (B, 2019). In a multi-national military exercise "peace mission" in Russia both India and Pakistan took part in 2018. Moscow has the muscles to mediate in the Indo-Pakistan issues for a peaceful region. Russia in presence of bilateral bond in Pakistan and China, is having momentum to enrich its influences in the region (The Economic Times, 2018).

Both Pakistan and Russia have liaison of partnerships in energy and defence sectors provide prospects to disregard their past (A, 2016). Therefore, they may translate their relations to cooperation for regional integration. Despite of the past, when Pakistan joined US camp, it now has the opportunity of access to Russia as a prospective diplomatic association. Russia in 2011 explicitly endorsed Pakistan's bid to join SCO (Siddiqi, 2017). Both Pakistan and India got full membership of SCO in 17th head of the state council summit in 2017 in Astana (Rana, 2017). Russia supports SCO to eliminate terrorism and extremism through collective regional approach.



Though India and Pakistan has tens relation but the legal experts of India took part in a tree days meeting of legal expert group of SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure in Pakistan in May 2018 (Radio Pakistan, May 25, 2018). such opportunity could be exploited for regional balance and peaceful co-existence (Kessler, 2017). The unexpected rise of ISIS in Afghanistan has compel Russia to shake hand with Taliban and Islamabad. The most desired objective of peace and stability in Afghanistan forced expend Russia Pakistan diplomatic coordination.

Moscow in potential enough to link the EurAsEC and BRI. Russia would be able to perform a decisive role in south Asia, after joining CPEC. It will enable Pakistan to expedite Russian flow of investment in various fields (Saddam, 2017), depending on Pakistan's approach to bring more benefits with Russia, providing access to warm waters of Arabian Sea (Tariq, 2017). Both of the states developed trust on the front of counter terrorism and is now sharing practice intelligence and expertise. Pakistan has to attract Russia via its SEZs under CPEC, in this respect Pakistan mission to Moscow may recommend commercial counsellor to deal with exhibitions, trade delegations and organizations. further, Pakistan may establish rail links between Gwadar port and Moscow through Central Asia. Opening of respective banks branches in Russia and Pakistan will be a propellant in enhancing business to business connection.

Evolving relations between Russia and Pakistan will be advantageous for both countries on multilateral and bilateral level. For Russia it would be token to strengthen its position in SCO. Like Dushanbe four, having two SCO members, Russia and Tajikistan while two observer, Pakistan and Afghanistan, enable Russia to develop its position in SCO via initiating an internal club to negotiate topics of common interest. Relation between Russia and Pakistan will be difficult to improve, until Russian investors confidently do their business in Pakistan. Therefore, Pakistan has to address concerns of Russia regarding security of their citizens.

It is convincing that both states are determined for better relations notwithstanding of the hindrance however manageable. Pakistan has to discuss the matter of defining role both countries may play for long-lasting peace in Afghanistan. It has to provide incentives to Russia for investment. Pakistan has to ensure Russia that she desire for log-term trading partner, military hardware supplier and strategic partnership. And the most important Pakistan has to ensure that its relation with Russia isn't against any other country.

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