

# US ROLE IN THE SECURITIZATION OF SOUTH ASIA WITH REFERENCE TO PAK-INDIA SECURITY DILEMMA POST 9/11

Subtitle as needed (*paper subtitle*)

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**Abstract**— This paper traces the role of U.S in the securitization of South Asia with reference to Pakistan-India security dilemma post 9/11. It argues that the U.S temptation and perplexity to make region safe and secure from threats particularly nuclearization and terrorism are often securitized by United States of America for its own political and strategic interests which subsequently create and intensify Pakistan-India security dilemma. 9/11 offered an opportunity for USA to set unparallel equations of relationship between India and Pakistan through Bush doctrine of unilateralism where former has been treated as strategic partner and later dubbed as strategic liability. This paper identifies existing gaps in the scholarly work with regard to the study. Moreover it explores contradictions in current strategy of USA and raises questions of serious nature regarding South Asian's conventional and non-conventional security threats under prevailing changing security trends and dynamics.

**Keywords**— *Securitization, Security dilemma, Unilateralist idealists, Strategic liability*

## I. Introduction

South Asia is one of the most significant region of the world geo politically and geo strategically. Historically region attracted foreign invaders in the past for its wealth and natural resources. Since the emergence of unipolar world after the disintegration of Soviet Union, region has remained the hot bed and centre of new great game and world politics. 9/11 once again provided an impetus for sole super power United States of America to play even more active role in the security of South Asia due to its drive against the war on terror. Regional security scenario in South Asia previously dominated by always tense Pakistan-India ties and resultant huge nuclear and conventional armed buildups. Post 9/11 events and developments helped the extra regional players to be more interested in South Asian affairs.

It has set new security parameters and dynamics. It was not the first time that extra regional player actively took part in shaping new security dynamics of the region. US campaign in Afghanistan after 9/11 to dismantle the terrorist sanctuaries and militant hideouts made the region most volatile and docile in terms of new security framework. The U.S led alliance revealed the regional security complex and India-Pakistan vulnerability to co-operate with each and other in the regional security context. It helped extra regional players and powers to penetrate the region for determining regional security as it happened during and after the cold war. Indo-Pak robust rivalry and their mutual trust deficit never allow both states to make regional security inter dependent. It helps USA to securitize even those issues which fall directly under the purview of regional security.

Alignment with USA by either side has always disturbed the balance of power while creating and intensifying security dilemma between India and Pakistan.

India and Pakistan being core states of South Asia determine the security of region. Acrimonious and fractured relations between both states ever since their birth from British colonial power always provided an ample opportunity for extra regional players particularly USA to penetrate in the region while making novel security measures. Due to the absence of an overarching authority at the regional and global levels, India and Pakistan have been immensely engaged in power politics. Internal and external security of both India and Pakistan are closely interlinked to each other. Berry Buzan various dimensions of security signify that Pakistan-India hostilities are not only due to their territorial disputes but also due to their mutual insecurity includes the economic, societal and environmental aspects. Pakistan and India are trying to maintain balance of power for the sake of internal and external security threats. Since 9/11, South Asian security has become a global issue and it is now widely known as "Globalization of South Asian security". It sets new security dynamics and options for India and Pakistan which has dragged the region again in the conventional security framework. The US presence in the region coupled with the US enhanced security role in South Asia has made the question of India and Pakistan's security an international issue. Hence, the complexity regional security can be understood tensed Pakistan-India relations ever since the partition of Sub continent generally and after 9/11 particularly.

Subcontinent's major security dilemma is rooted in the strategic dimension and in conventional arms competition that is continuously shifting in relative power capabilities. Pakistan-India relations are mostly based on action/reaction trajectories, for example May 1998 nuclear blasts. Existing security dilemma between India and Pakistan is stirred by the USA when it continues to supply conventional weapons to both India and Pakistan. US building strategic partnership with India and signing of civil nuclear deal in 2007 has further intensified the security dilemma because of Pakistan moves to counter the deal with an external balancer like China. US role in the securitization of South Asia is determined by the complexity of India Pakistan relations which causes security dilemma. Security of one state is largely risking the security of another state. Internal political structures of both India and Pakistan define the significance of either conventional security apparatus or non-conventional security mechanism. Pakistan has been emphasizing more on conventional security since its independence due to its paranoia regarding India being an existential threat to Pakistan's security.

## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

USA determines the securitization of South Asia which creates and intensifies the security dilemma between India and Pakistan after 9/11. US active involvement in the regional security against the war on terror helped her to securitize regional issues equating with global significance for its political and strategic interests in the back drop of its anti-terrorist campaign. Why fractured India Pakistan relations allow USA to securitize regional issues which subsequently shape security dilemma and set parameters for conventional security framework.

## III. METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this study will be conducted in two phases. One is involved in data collection which shall be collected either through primary sources and secondary sources. Second phase is related to data interpretation while employing the triangulation based upon primarily process tracing and congruence methods. Process tracing is a fundamental tool of qualitative analysis. It is applied in qualitative research in order to analyse historical data while using cause and effect.

Through congruence method, a researcher finds out similarities between cause and effect. The study “Role of USA in the securitization of South Asia: A case study security dilemma between India and Pakistan” shall be conducted through applying a method of process tracing and congruence. Since the study provides ample causal explanation and interpretation through taking securitization by USA as cause and an independent variable and security dilemma between India and Pakistan as an effect dependent variable. United States of America being a constructing actor shapes the threat which ultimately creates and intensify security dilemma between India and Pakistan. Existing security dilemma between the core states of South Asia helps USA to penetrate in the region where by a security threat is successfully securitized by an extra regional actor.

Triangulation method postulates both qualitative as well as quantitative. Qualitative methods along with historical analysis will provide necessary insights into the trajectory of Pakistan -India relations post 9/11 while employing process tracing and congruence methods. For this study, primary sources from Indian-Pakistani Foreign Affairs websites have been utilized. The thesis has been depended on the secondary sources. The research has adopted interpretative approach. The primary and secondary sources have been categorized as follows:

- Government and semi government publications: These organizations collect data on frequent basis, information shall be extracted, and these organizations provide easy access through the internet.
- Secondary sources include Institute of Policy and Research Islamabad (IPRI), Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) and South Asian Institute (SAT). Indian think tanks such as IDSA, US think tanks such as Brookings Institute, Post Graduate Naval College.

- Personal records, either historical or personal, shall provide information. These include biographies of Indian and Pakistan’s leaders.
- Articles published in newspapers, magazines, research articles and journals will be another source of data.

Books of different eminent writers and theorists in the field of international relations and reports published by the think tanks shall be consulted and utilized.

## IV. REGIONAL SECURITY COMPLEX: PAK-INDIA RELATIONS POST 9/11

From the very outset, this study will utilize Barry Buzan’s concept of regional security complex. He explains regional security complex in his famous book “*People, States and Fear*”. Pakistan and India constitute a peculiar security environment of their own making which is rooted in pre-partition history. Regional Security Complex, therefore, is better positioned to explain the role of USA in the securitization of South Asia and the security dilemma between India and Pakistan which shape and affect their relations since their birth as independent states. United states of America being a constructing actor securitizes the security of South Asia regarding referent actors like Pakistan and India due to inherent persistent security dilemma between them ever since their independence. Audiences from both sides approve the notion of securitization and U.S role in the security environment of South Asia. Due to nonexistence of security community at regional level both in amalgamated and pluralistic form, security dilemma persists and trust deficit between India and Pakistan will continue to wide and linger. Extra regional actors particularly USA penetrates in the region and successfully construct a security threat due to absence of co-operation between India and Pakistan in the security of South Asia.

Natural imbalance of material power between Pakistan and India and subsequent perception of insecurity of Pakistan has created conflictual complexities. It is a cause of conflict between Pakistan and India. Pakistan has been accused by India for acquiring disproportionate military power contrary to her legitimate needs. On its part, New Delhi has blamed Pakistan for bringing Cold War to the subcontinent by inviting external powers. Foreign policy of Pakistan and its behavior is motivated to seek power and security in a competitive and a volatile region. Changes in international politics and balance of power among the states have had a profound influence on Pakistan’s external policies. Changing global and regional dynamics are influencing the interstate relations particularly Pakistan-India relations.

Robustness of the rivalry between Pakistan and India, which is considered at the core of the South Asian Security Complex, is associated due to the historical legacies, which revolves around the central issue of Kashmir. There are also conflicting differences over the national identities ever since the partition of subcontinent. Despite new economic opportunities along with an urge for regional integration, still tension persists and deepens between India and Pakistan. The original definition of regional security is a

group of states whose primary security concerns link together adequately closely that their national securities cannot practically be considered apart from one another. In fact, there are three units, which define the regional approach:

Mutually exclusive regional security complexes, which consists of states with historical relations and patterns of amity and enmity that are durable. Global powers which are interlinked to the regional dynamics of Regional Security Complex through the mechanism of penetration and overlay either in the Regional Security Complex or in the insulator. Insulators, or buffer zones, occupied by one or more units where regional security dynamics stands back to back.

Regional security complex further explains that Pakistan has been confronted with internal crumbling and fragmentation, which tends to adopt relative defensive posture at regional and international levels while India poses internal stability that leads it to trail offensive and overriding position in relations with regional and extra-regional states. The idea of security complexes inject certain firm meaning into the regional level of analysis by identifying sturdy and relatively self-reliant, patterns of security relations produced by the local states themselves.

Security complexes are part of a larger scheme and it explains a multi-level, holistic approach to the analysis of security problems. Barry Buzan broadly explains security in five sectors and it is widely known as sectorial approach. Barry Buzan gives a comprehensive explanation about security in his well-known article 'New Patterns of Global Security in the Twenty-First Century.' Buzan explores a comprehensive approach regarding security in five sectors (political, military, economic, societal and environmental). Changes in the centre affect the periphery and core states determine the security of small and weak states. There are five sectors of security, which is an important concept to comprehend when studying Buzan.

According to Buzan that the five sectors are interlinked to each other, do not function in isolation. He examines that different sector of security work in relation to threats. The immediate and pressing among all these concerns are the military, which poses threats to various levels. Military security can influence entire apparatus of the state. Essential duty of the state is to protect its citizens from internal and external threats as well as an unfavorable outcome on the stratum of social and individual segments. Political security signifies unvarying concern for a state, yet it seems hard to relate it to the military threats. As state is a political entity, a threat poses to political entity with the purpose to destabilize the entity can be considered as equivalent with a military threat.

Buzan posits the economic security where economic sector interacts closely with other sectors. Buzan establishes close relationship between military security and economic security. It is pertinent to mention that military security is highly reliant on economic security because of budget restrictions and constraints. In addition to that, economic security determines the total security of a state. Stark comparison is made between developed and developing

societies based on economic development that consequently safeguards the societal security.

Societal security from political security cannot be dealt discretely. Societal threats are about identity. Feeble and fragmented states are not well prepared to deal with differences regarding culture and identity. It is evident from the fact that societal security is profoundly associated with military and political security. Prevalent conflicts in most of the societies are the consequence of societal insecurity. It is significant to consider this sector when studying security on a macro level. Environmental security is as important as other sectors of security. However, it is hard to define environmental security. Human struggle to cope natural threats such as earthquakes and hurricanes is a constant phenomenon. Natural Calamities are difficult to control but it can be managed in better way by developed countries as compared to developing countries. The more recent issues like global warming, ozone layer and pollution have impacts on human but it is more likely to impact bilateral relations of countries like Pakistan and India.

The evolution of Pakistan's foreign policy has been strongly impacted by its acrimonious relationship with India. Hasty partition of the subcontinent by the Britishers into two states of Pakistan and India ushered an era of decolonization in South Asia. Pakistan was predominantly a Muslim majority state and India, being a Hindu majority state set relations in different trajectories. Pakistan inherited major territorial conflicts with India and Pakistan's elite viewed India as a great adversary. Mutual distrust and animosity led both countries to fight three wars on the core issue of Kashmir. Pakistan's foreign policy decision makers gave their top priority to security in view of looming threat perceptions solely emanating from India. This led both India and Pakistan to consistently enhance their military preparedness and engage in arms race with each other. It created security dilemma, which virtually complicated the security environment of the region.

Inter-state rivalry between India and Pakistan shapes the security of South Asia, which is at the core of region. South Asian security has become a global issue after nuclear overture in 1998 by India and Pakistan. Nuclear dimension in Pakistan-India relations and confrontation has echoed international concern due to possible use of nuclear weapons in India-Pakistan's future war. It has terrible fallouts with the potential to wear down regional security as well as global security. President Bill declared Kashmir "The most dangerous place on the earth" during his official visit to South Asia in March 2000. He made his assessment not on the basis on security threats faced by civilians, but he was concerned that the Kashmir might become the source of a nuclear standoff between Pakistan and India that would have far-reaching repercussions.

Casualties connected with inter-state conflict are overshadowed by the downright level and spread of violence is the consequence of interstate conflicts. In the past, overt hostilities and interstate wars have alarmingly deteriorated the bilateral security of Pakistan and India as well as the entire South Asia. Around 20,000 combatants has been killed in three wars between India and Pakistan, however number of casualties in internal strife has surpassed these figures. This implies inter-state conflicts earn much of the world attention and international community pays scant

attention to internal conflicts. Nevertheless, the fact is that internal conflict may jeopardize the regional security and might have much more far-reaching effects on the region. Internal conflicts are related state-to-state relations and these predominantly influence bilateral relations of the states. It argues that many of the internal conflicts may easily be transformed into inter-state conflicts. However, the case can also be made that the three wars between Pakistan and India in 1948, 1965 and 1971 were waged due to unresolved internal conflicts within the region. Pakistan held that the wars of 1948 and 1965 were ignited and aggravated by internal developments, which took place inside Indian-controlled Kashmir. India rejected Pakistan's official position and alleged Pakistan for its blatant interference in the internal affairs of India. These positions are overturned in the case of 1971 war and Pakistan asserted that Indian intervention fuelled the crisis whereas India argued that conflict erupted due to complete internal breakdown in terms of political and economic instability in East Pakistan. It is pertinent to point out that all three cases of interstate warfare can be related to some of unsettled internal quarrels. Elites in Pakistan have viewed security in the context of territorial threats mainly from India. These threats are posed to Pakistan's territorial sovereignty, government in power as well as its ideology. For these, military security surpasses social and political dimensions. The elements of fear, threat along with patterns of enmity and amity can be felt between India and Pakistan. Constant threat felt mutually by India and Pakistan. It paves the way for the evolution of South Asian security complex centered on the rivalry between Pakistan and India.

Internal and external security has ever been remained a paramount priority in view of its relations with neighbors particularly India. External dimension of Pakistan's security pertains to its relations with India ever since its birth. The distrust and animosity developed with India right after independence reinforced the fear that India wanted to influence Pakistan due to existing imbalance of power between stronger India and vulnerable Pakistan. India, through its military superiority wanted to reduce Pakistan into a vassal state. From first to last, this sort of description, the South Asian Regional Security Complex appears to fit well into traditional state-centric, political-military security analysis: 'India-Pakistan story is still largely a narrative of securitization about military power, weapons and political status.

## **v. USA AND SOUTH ASIAN SECURITY DILEMMA AFTER 9/11**

South Asia is strategically a very important region. Currently it consists of eight countries and most of the South Asian countries share border with India except Afghanistan. At the same time, it is a volatile region that is driven by unending rivalry between India and Pakistan over a territorial dispute. Region has a peculiar history of foreign intervention, which engrossed the world power due to plenty of resources. British Empire and its subsequent fall after the Second World War led the US to exhibit pro-activeness towards South Asia due to its geo-strategic importance.. South Asia acts as a corridor that provides easy access to

Central Asia and West Asian states. It links the energy routes of rich Persian Gulf, Asia Pacific, and borders Russia and China. The international community showed strong interest in the region after Pakistan-India nuclear tests in 1998. Despite pressure by the West and the US, India and Pakistan successfully conducted overt nuclear tests. The involvement of extra regional players in the South Asian affairs was always centered on Pakistan-India tense relationship. The US during the Cold War used South Asia for containing communism and it left the region when the Cold War ended. It happened just after 9/11 when USA began to play an overt role in the security of South Asia, which led other extra regional players to demonstrate eagerness in South Asian affairs.

US exceptional association in the region after 9/ 11 attacks was all due to the war on terrorism. The US dubbed Taliban ruled Afghanistan as the ferment of global terrorism. The US embarked on an overt plan to dismantle the safe havens of Al Qaeda. South Asian states expressed deep desire to join the US led war against terror. Pakistan was declared as the front ally state against the war on terrorism while the US built strategic partnership with India. The still viewed Pakistan as an ally in the war on terror. Despite the US announcement to withdraw troops from Afghanistan in 2014, the US would continue to station its troops to assist Afghan National Army for peace in Afghanistan as well as for the pursuit of its geo-strategic interests.

Regional security of South Asia worsened and security dilemma intensified after 9/11 incidents largely due to overt US involvement in the region. The emergence of South Asia as the region of highest priority for the US ever since the end of the Cold War re-orientated the relations among the regional states. The US was confronted with Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan along with tense relations between nuclear states of India and Pakistan. More importantly, the US required multi-pronged strategy to counter new problems as well as to deal with contentious issues of the region. The US interest to balance Pakistan-India relations, management of nuclear standoff and broader regional stability coupled with the regional economic integration were the concerns of highest priorities. The US intervention in Afghanistan initially aimed to dismantle the Taliban and Al-Qaeda paying scant attention to engage Pakistan and India in a dialogue process on all outstanding issues. Pakistan a key ally in the war on terrorism created a stir in India which later opened a front at the diplomatic level to malign Pakistan for its clandestine role in the Kashmir insurgency across the borders inside Indian occupied Kashmir.

Subsequent events after 9/11 hampered the regional stability and security of South Asia. In the attack on Indian embassy in Kabul India pointed fingers at Pakistan's Intelligence Agency ISI for its covert action. Initially it created uproar in India but its intensity began to dissipate in due course of time. India's open threat to Pakistan to use Bush Doctrine of pre-emptive strike did not help a lot to restrain Pakistan from cross border infiltration. For India an opportunity came for possible Indian hot pursuit in Pakistan after the attack on the Indian parliament on Dec. 13, 2001. India deployed massive force on the border of Pakistan, which ultimately threatened the security of Pakistan and by at large put the regional security in acute jeopardy. Pakistan's threat to use nuclear weapons and missiles in retaliation of Indian

attack made the region witness the possibility of first nuclear confrontation between Pakistan and India. Pakistan's decision to pull out troops from the western border in order to bring them on the eastern border had dire consequences for war against terrorism in Afghanistan. It affected the US campaign to wipe out terrorist sanctuaries.

The US active diplomacy helped to defuse the tension between India and Pakistan after military standoff in 2002. The US, keeping in view the looming dangers of nuclear conflict in South Asia, forced Pakistan and India to initiate the process of dialogue while narrowing down the security dilemma due to nuclear conflict. The US presence in the region proved to a source of stability for diffusion of India-Pakistan tension while continuously steering its campaign to achieve its strategic goals. A war between India and Pakistan could have easily subverted its well-defined objectives. Composite dialogue in 2004 between the nuclear states of South Asia provided relatively peace, stability and security in South Asia. India, at the same time, continued to find an opportunity to manipulate the Bush Doctrine while portraying Pakistan as a state, which was sponsoring terrorism.

The US and NATO forces' operations dissipated the Taliban's intrigues, although they were unable to dismantle Al Qaeda and Taliban completely. However, the Taliban's resurgence and re-grouping in the tribal areas of Pakistan brought chronic consequences not only for Pakistan but also for the entire region. The US and NATO attacks on the Taliban's hide outs forced them to sneak in the bordering areas of Afghanistan. The US campaign against terror in Afghanistan did fuel the wave of terrorism while expanding into the tribal region of Pakistan. Thus, it has been shifting from Afghanistan to Pakistan although Pakistan is different to Afghanistan in terms of Pakistan's relatively greater military power, relative political stability and better economic profile.

Pakistan has been destabilized since the beginning of war on terrorism in Afghanistan, which has posed a major threat to the security of South Asia. Instability in Pakistan could easily invite India for a nuclear conflict. It is pertinent to mention that the US has been targeting the trunk instead of roots. The War on Terror has become a means to achieve an end; similarly, its efficacy is highly questionable. The US has played a dual game and declared Pakistan as an ally, but it has never denied India to play a dominant role in Afghanistan. Although the US is balancing its policy of preferring India to play a dominant role in Afghanistan but in certain ways it has been showing skepticism about Pakistan's role in Afghanistan.

Indo-US strategic deal was signed on June 28, 2005 during Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Washington. Indo-US defense and strategic partnership has far-reaching consequences for Pakistan particularly and for the region generally. After 9/11, the Bush regime altered its strategic policy towards South Asia and termed China as strategic competitor while India was called strategic partner. The US developed close strategic ties with India for its vital global role to contain China. In 2003, the US exported Israel's airborne early warning system which cost around US 1.2 billion\$ to India. The US and India entered into Defense Pact on June 28, 2005 for a period of 10 years. It lifted U.S

export sanctions on sensitive technology without India's signing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). The US has already extended to India the status of nuclear state through entering into a nuclear agreement with India. It is aimed exporting nuclear technology to India for civil purposes but it has been denied to Pakistan. US bid to support India in Nuclear Supplier Group whereas Pakistan has out rightly been neglected. Pakistan has built a similar partnership with China to counter the Indian moves. China has long before agreed to sell reactors to Pakistan. It has triggered a sense of competition and dilemma between Pakistan and India for nuclear stockpiles, which has been threatening regional security of South Asia. Pakistan and India have fought almost four wars on the issue of Kashmir. Likewise, Indian nuclear build up in the region would instigate Pakistan to follow suit. Under these circumstances, asymmetrical and disproportionate military buildup would do nothing except invite nuclear war in South Asia. Since nuclear weapons have so far averted the war, yet it has not subsided the danger of a nuclear holocaust in the future.

9/11 brought gigantic security challenges for South Asia. Participation in the war on terror by South Asian states had made them to confront internal security problems, which generally emanated from Afghanistan. The US expanded its war campaign beyond Afghanistan. It relentlessly affected the security of Pakistan. War against terrorism has greatly been shifted from Afghanistan to Pakistan. Security of Pakistan now very much determines the security of South Asia. Regional Security dynamics of South Asia determines the trajectories of Pak-India relations after 9/11. The US war on terrorism and in discriminatory nuclear wooing to India has spoiled the regional security of South Asia and increased the trust deficit and security dilemma between Pakistan and India particularly and South Asia generally.

## VI. CONCLUSION

South Asian security is pivotal for US strategic and economic interests. But at the same time prevailing regional insecurity is also the consequence of US skepticism and indifference to core regional problems. US policies have overtly eroded the notion of uniformity and parity vis-à-vis Pakistan-India relations while putting the regional security at stake. US have established conventional security relationship in the region providing both India and Pakistan divergent approaches and options to opt the one or the other way. It deliberately echoes the security dilemma due to volatile nature of regional security and robust India-Pakistan rivalry ever since their independence. Action reaction trajectory of Pak-India relations and looming conventional threats will continue to provide US an ample opportunity in the regional security of South Asia.

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