

## **US-Shaped World Order and Pakistan: Past, Present and Future**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research paper critically analyses Pakistan's crucial and costly relationship with the United States of America, during the three eras of bipolar, unipolar and emerging multi-polar world order. It also contemplates that a new and balanced relationship, anchored in shared bilateral economic, political and security interests built simultaneously with the status quo, emerging and resurgent great powers is more beneficial and less risky for Pakistan in future than band wagoning with a single great power or offering its total security commitment against any other great power. Total alignment with a great power not only earns the threat of other great powers but also makes Pakistan more vulnerable against economic coercion in an interdependent global economy. It also argues that Thucydides' Trap is not a manifest destiny and can be avoided with astute statecraft rather than provocative and dangerous risk taking strategic competition.

**Keywords:** World Order, Great Powers, International System, Thucydides' Trap, U.S., China, Russia, India, Pakistan, Coercion, Cooperation.

### **Introduction**

"America leads best when we draw upon our hopes rather than our fears" (US National Security Strategy, 2015). - Barack Obama

"Being friends with America was like living on the banks of a great river. Every four years it changes course and one is left either inundated or high and dry" (Marker, 2010). - Zia-ul-Haq

## **Introduction**

The world order, at any given time in human history represents the ability of one or a few states to influence the rest of the world's politics, culture, wealth and security. However, according to the realist school of thought, the permanently contested nature of power politics between states implies that this domination is neither permanent nor absolute. The Post-World War II world order witnessed the emergence of a bipolar world system which was characterized by ideological, political and strategic competition between a democratic, liberal and capitalist Western world, led by the United States and a communist and socialist bloc spearheaded by the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union challenged the United States through its communist political ideology, military might and promotion of nationalism within the developing world.

In contrast, the U.S. contested Soviet challenge by offering its allies a liberal way of life, significant economic assistance, technological access and sophisticated weaponry. The U.S. indirectly countered the pro-Soviet nationalism within the developing world by supporting religious militancy against the Soviet supported secular regimes within the Muslim world. This great power competition between Washington and Moscow during the bipolar world order led to an intense ideological conflict between the religious right and liberal & leftist movements, parties and elements within the Muslim world and destabilized many countries in Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Pakistan's national security was deeply influenced by this great power competition, which was simultaneously waged in several ideological, cultural, economic, political and military domains during the bipolar world order. The U.S. support for religiously motivated militancy against the Soviet Union and its secular and nationalist allies in Afghanistan through Pakistan has left deep scars within the diverse, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural Pakistani society, which was almost alien to extremism and terrorism before 1979.

During the bipolar world order, Moscow built large nuclear and conventional forces but could not match Washington's unparalleled influence over the capitalist economic system, the global process of creation and distribution of global wealth, international trade and large international financial institutions like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (World Bank, 2022). These capitalist institutions helped build the economies of several post-colonial states of the developing world including Pakistan. However, this lingering and deepening economic dependence over the Western dominated financial institutions was not without its diplomatic or political costs. Several newly independent states like Pakistan joined the western bloc because of military assistance and substantial economic and food aid which was critical in the formative stages of nation building and meeting both traditional and non-traditional security needs.

Since independence, Pakistan's relationship with the United States has been the most important, difficult and costly of all its foreign relations. It has enabled Pakistan to build its military capabilities, which was essential for its territorial

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integrity and physical survival. In addition, Pakistan's economy has traditionally remained heavily dependent upon Washington, and the US dominated international financial institutions, not only for frequent financial assistance but also because the U.S. offers Pakistan its largest and growing export market. This makes any foreign or defense policy choices, directly conflicting from Washington's own interests, very risky or costly for Pakistan. A series of U.S. sanctions, spread over four decades, aimed at dissuading Pakistan from pursuing its nuclear program, provides compelling evidence in this regard that Islamabad faced American economic coercion despite being a US ally, not to develop its nuclear deterrent.

The gradual erosion of the unipolar world order is now marked by growing Chinese wealth, influence and prestige, increasing Russian assertiveness and revival of Moscow's pride, eroding international institutions and emergence of new geopolitical blocs like Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and geoeconomics institutions like BRICS and Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). This environment of organized chaos marked by Chinese and Russian resistance to the waning U.S.-led world order offers limited opportunities and major challenges for developing countries including Pakistan.

This research paper critically analyses Pakistan's relationship with the United States during the three eras of bipolarity, uni-polarity and emerging multi-polarity and recommends a new and balanced relationship, anchored in shared economic, political and security interests with all great powers but not offering its total security commitment or band wagoning with any great power to avoid both coercion and wrath of great powers and build cooperative bilateral relations based on mutual interests.

### **The Bipolar World Order: Formative Phase of Pakistan**

The U.S. National Security Strategy, a premier policy document presented before the American legislature, identified the preservation of security, prosperity, values and international order as the core U.S. national interests (US National Security Strategy, 2015). Pakistan, a young and dynamic nation, throughout its seventy-five year long history has also aspired to protect and promote similar interests, but has been constrained by regional security compulsions and domestic challenges. Initially, Pakistan's political elite also saw western liberal society, democratic political system and capitalist economic system more compatible to its own world view, institutional culture and state model than the communist state model, which was based on a closed society that ran on barter trade and was closely controlled by a single party rule. That is why, despite overtures from other powers and resource constraints, Pakistan preferred to pursue the peaceful and principled ideals of statecraft, defined by its founder Quaid-I-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and allied itself with the Western bloc led by the United States in the post-World War II world order (Hyder, 1987). Three months before Pakistan's independence,

Quaid-I-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah told the U.S. diplomat Raymond Hare on May 1, 1947 that “*Muslim countries would stand together against Russian aggression and would look towards the U.S. for assistance*” (Kux, 2001). U.S. was the first foreign nation that Muhammad Ali Jinnah directly addressed on radio in 1948 (Dar, 2014). For Pakistan’s founder, this reflected the significance of building close relations between Pakistan and the United States in the emerging world order, in order to attract foreign assistance and build a new, resource-constrained and regionally threatened State. Pakistan’s first Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan’s maiden official visit to the United States in May 1950 was a marathon countywide trip, during which he also went to New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Houston, New Orleans and Boston (U.S. Department of the State, 1950).

Like the United States, the Pakistani nation also gained independence after a long and difficult struggle against the British colonial rule, in order to protect their lives, values and way of life. Considering the United States as the land of hope and opportunity, millions of immigrants from around the world fled from their homelands to settle down in the U.S. Similarly, immediately upon gaining independence in 1947, the young Pakistani nation opened its borders to welcome the largest migration in human history since the European exodus towards the two American continents. Despite great economic challenges, Pakistani nation not only opened their borders but also their homes to millions of immigrants who sought to protect their lives, values and way of life from the Hindu majority by giving up their personal wealth and properties. Karachi, which at the time of independence was a small port city of two hundred thousand inhabitants, has now become one of the largest megapolis in the entire Muslim world and contributes the lion’s share to the Pakistan’s tax revenue. Like New York, today the cosmopolitan population of Karachi mostly consists of three generations of immigrants from all parts of South Asia including Bangladesh, Afghanistan, India and Sri Lanka.

Since independence, Pakistan and United States have shared common perceptions, interests and concerns towards the emerging world order and closely collaborated in shaping and preserving it. The creation of Pakistan was marked by the decline of the sprawling British Empire and the rise of the American global pre-eminence. This led to the emergence of a new U.S. led world order, manifested in the form of establishment of new global political, economic and military institutions. These international institutions included the creation of the United Nations, World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and military alliances such as NATO, CEATO and CENTO. The United Nations emerged as a global institution, which helped regulate world politics while the IMF and World Bank enabled the management of global wealth and its distribution between world powers and newly independent states. Various military alliances helped manage international security in different regions while the gradual evolution of the non-proliferation regime aimed to restrict the spread of technologies and materials that had strategic applications and utility.

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Pakistan joined these political, economic institutions and military alliances not merely to protect and promote its own national security and economic interests but also to fulfill what it considered as its moral responsibility towards a liberal world order that promised world peace, global prosperity and international security. Even before independence, Muhammad Ali Jinnah asked the British government to submit an application on behalf of Pakistan for the United Nations' membership (United Nation, 1947) and sent Muslim League's representative M.O.A. Baig to meet the UN Secretary General Trygve Lie and seek Pakistan's immediate UN membership upon independence, which would allow it to play its due role in world peace, prosperity and security (Dar, 2014). In response to Pakistan's early initiative, the UN Security Council decided on August 19, 1947 to recommend to the UN General Assembly to make Pakistan a UN member during the next month.

Two and a half decades after an intense and dangerous global, ideological and geo-political competition between the United States and Soviet Union, Pakistan played a pivotal role in stabilizing and reshaping the world order by helping Washington peacefully engage with Beijing through rapprochement that divided the Communist bloc. Islamabad, despite earning Soviet animosity (Khan, 1999) and grave security threats from India, helped the US Republican Administration open up to China by facilitating Henry Kissinger's secret Beijing visit (U.S. National Security Archives, 1971). Later, the Chinese also actively supported the Afghan mujahideen fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan (Pear, 1988). This critical Pakistani initiative represents a historic contribution towards international peace and security by reducing the threat of a global conflict between the capitalist and communist blocs despite the fact that it deepened the Indo-Soviet strategic relations.

Almost three decades after independence, Pakistan joined the United States and its various global allies in spearheading the Afghan national struggle for territorial sovereignty and independence from foreign occupation. Moreover, like the U.S., Pakistan once again opened its borders to welcome the largest human migration since its own independence and presented itself as the land of opportunity to over three-and-a-half million Afghans. Almost 1.4 Million of these Afghan refugees still reside and earn their living in different parts of Pakistan and prefer to live in Pakistan than returning to their own homes (UNHCR, 2022). This is an evidence of the hospitable nature, better economic prospects and cultural warmth, which they have received in Pakistan during the past almost four decades. During the first two decades after independence, Pakistan's close alliance with Washington helped Islamabad gradually build its civil, military, academic and research institutions, peacefully resolve water distribution dispute with India and improve its food and human security. During 1960s, Pakistan's manufactured exports were greater than Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines and Indonesia (Husain, 2004).

However, the close alliance with Washington could not adequately fulfill Pakistan's national security needs, prevent conflict, achieve a stable regional

balance of power or resolve major regional disputes. In 1971, the Indian supported *Mukti Bahini* followed by the Indian military invasion led to the tragic loss of East Pakistan (U.S. National Security Archives, 1971). Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, while reacting to the Indian nuclear tests in an October 10, 1974 interview with the *New York Times*, stated that Pakistan could consider not developing nuclear weapons if its security needs were adequately met with sufficient conventional weapons (Kux, 2001). However, the East Pakistan debacle, the May 1974 Indian nuclear test and lack of substantive U.S. security guarantees convinced Pakistan about the realist principle of 'self-help' because it could no longer protect itself through external dependence or being part of an international alliance (Sattar, 2007).

After some of the most eventful years in Pakistan's history, the Ford Administration lifted the U.S. sanctions, which were imposed by the Johnson Administration on Islamabad after the 1965 War (Sattar, 2007). However, for Pakistan's national security needs, it was too little, too late and could not help restore the level of bilateral trust, intimacy and cooperation, which Washington and Islamabad once enjoyed during the 1950s and early 1960s. Thus, the 1971 debacle, New Delhi's 1974 nuclear test and 1983 *Indira Doctrine* (Mohan, 2003), which epitomized India's hegemonic and interventionist ambitions along with inadequate and timely external security assistance, galvanized Pakistan to develop its independent nuclear deterrent to ensure its survival and maintain regional peace. In contrast, according to some Indian experts, the *Indira Doctrine* aimed to keep the U.S. and other great powers out of the Indian sphere of influence (Mohan, 2001). These growing Indian strategic ambitions coincided with the reduced U.S. security commitments towards Pakistan at a time when Islamabad desperately faced a critical security dilemma, after losing half of its nation and territory.

The ominous regional and lonely global security environment compelled Islamabad to divert its limited resources towards immediate traditional security needs, prefer short-term measures rather than pursue long-term economic growth-oriented policies. The declining U.S. security and economic commitments forced Pakistan to seek diversified foreign sources of diplomatic, economic and military assistance. These grave security compulsions led to the neglect of the national need to continuously develop human capital, industrial infrastructure, high quality education and health care system. Its natural consequence was a slow economic growth rate, which was eclipsed by rapid population growth, created major challenges for the political and economic stability and shrunk export revenues and economy. Under these testing times, Pakistan sought greater U.S. understanding of its security, economic and developmental needs. However, instead of being supported, Islamabad faced an enduring U.S. policy approach, based more on sticks than carrots, which blended frequent coercion and sanctions with limited economic assistance, along with sporadic and stringent military support.

Perhaps the most intense and intimate but temporary Pak-U.S. alliance was during the last and decisive decade of the Cold War in 1980s. During this period

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the U.S. economic assistance helped keep Pakistani economy afloat, forced America to tolerate Islamabad's nuclear program and encouraged Pakistan to help Washington in resisting the Soviet Union occupation of Afghanistan. The U.S. provided Pakistan 4.2 billion dollars aid package in economic and military assistance during this time (Wines, 1988) (Kronstadt, 2013). Nevertheless, the U.S. assistance fell far short of helping Pakistan gradually develop as a vibrant and growth-oriented economy, undergoing industrialization. Pakistan remained a heavily aid-dependent economy. Its society also suffered heavily and failed to maintain a liberal societal outlook, develop a stable political system or a growth oriented economy, like other U.S. allies including Japan, South Korea, Germany and Israel. In fact, the U.S.-led Afghan *Jihad* project profoundly affected the Pakistani society, economy and culture. It left deep scars on its identity, security, economy and social fabric, which despite concerted efforts, could take decades to heal. Due to security concerns and rigid and nascent economic structure and hardly any substantive U.S. investment in Pakistan's economy, the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) ranged from a paltry \$35 million in 1980-81 to a modest \$211.5 million in 1989-90 (Khan & Kim, 1999). Pakistan's geo-strategic environment made Pakistan relevant to U.S. global security interests during the bipolar world order. However, it made Pakistani economy addicted to U.S. foreign assistance. Despite maintain modicum of economic stability, Pakistan's industrial sector witnessed little investment and economic growth in real terms. It not only exacerbated the divergence between Pakistan's high population growth rate and the modest economy but also had far-reaching implications for the country's employment level, political stability and national security.

The end of the bipolar world order in 1990s, the collapse of the Soviet Union and end of the Afghan war downgraded Pakistan from being a close and frontline U.S. strategic ally, into a sanctioned American liability which was viewed with growing concern and limited interest. During the bipolar world order, the U.S. considered Pakistan as a strategic ally and helped build its civil, economic and military institutions and initiate its civil nuclear program. However, as soon as the U.S. altered a competitive bipolar world order into an unchallenged and American dominated unipolar order, its relationship and perception towards Pakistan radically transformed. Consequently, Pakistan was frequently coerced for its nuclear program, extremism became a major U.S. concern while democracy and human rights became major irritants in the bilateral relations. However, for Pakistan the last decade of the twentieth century was important because Islamabad responded to the Indian nuclear explosions in kind, with its own six nuclear tests in May 1998. This led the U.S. to impose yet another series of sanctions which further deepened Pakistan's economic challenges.

For Pakistan, the most valuable lesson from its bipolar world order alliance with the U.S. has been that it is the most important, necessary and costly relationship it has had with any other state. It helped Pakistan build its state institutions but also made its political elite dependent on external ideas, material

assistance, economic relief and foreign solutions to meet domestic challenges rather than seeking indigenous ideas to use local human and material resources to address these.

### **Unipolar World Order: Greater Challenges and Limited Opportunities for Pakistan**

The Post-Cold war unipolar world order can be characterized in terms of initial hopes, followed by great fears and eventually a dynamic mix of both hopes and fears. This is the result of various rising, declining and resurgent great powers, emerging regional powers, growing unilateralism and accelerated cultural, economic and political globalization, respectively. Henry Kissinger concluded that the unique character of nations would determine whether they challenge or accept the transforming global distribution of values and power (Kissinger, 2014). In contrast, Graham Allison argued that the history offers several useful lessons for modern state behavior and the transformation of the contemporary world order can be managed if the United States learns from the United Kingdom and China learns from Germany. In the last sixteen rise and falls of great powers, there were four occasions when the transformation of the world order did not lead to a great war (Allison, 2015).

During the twentieth Century, United Kingdom accepted the loss of its colonial order and accommodated the American rise rather than challenging it. This British restraint, perhaps driven more by shared Protestant identity and values than realist security considerations, helped form the special relationship, that now both powers virtually take for granted. UK values its close political, economic and security relations with the US much more than its relations with Europe, which was proven by the British exit from the European Union but its enduring commitment and role within the trans-Atlantic alliance of NATO (Allison, 2017). Similarly, deeply conscious of its twentieth century history, Germany has preferred to peacefully exert its growing power through its geo-economic influence instead of seeking regional military dominance or reasserting geopolitical influence to directly challenge Washington's influence over European politics (Allison, 2017).

In certain ways, the more demanding and less magnanimous U.S. attitude towards Pakistan during the early phases of the unipolar world order helped Islamabad look elsewhere as well as internally to solve some of its security and economic problems. During this period, Washington and New Delhi began to build the foundations of a long-term and broad based relationship because India was no longer hostage to Indo-Soviet security relationship. However, this era of bilateral Pak-U.S. disenchantment during the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century did not last long. The cataclysmic 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001 revived the U.S. interest in South Asia and restored Pakistan's security relevance for the costliest war in human history that the United States unleashed on Asia and Africa – the global



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war on terror. In this war, Washington did not bother with diplomatic niceties and coerced Pakistan into yet another costly and temporary strategic partnership. Although the revival of U.S.-Pakistan relations during this era led Washington to waive its economic sanctions related to 1998 nuclear tests and 1999 military coup, the American demands for counter terrorism cooperation and pressure on Islamabad for nuclear restraint, non-proliferation and greater transparency also increased (Kronstadt, 2003).

Pakistan was concerned about the costly nature of its cooperation with the US in the war on terror. During the unipolar world order, Pakistan paid far more than what any U.S. ally has afforded in terms of its lives, economy, social impact and slow national development, which has further aggravated the regional balance of power in Indian favor. During the era of unipolar world order, the U.S. policy towards Pakistan offers an interesting case study of a superpower's coercive foreign policy towards smaller states, in order to compel them into cooperation. An independent task force, headed by the former U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage and Samuel Berger issued a report in 2010 that foresaw the U.S. change its strategy towards Pakistan from that of extensive outreach and inducements towards a policy based on coercion and containment (Armitage & Berger, 2010).

### **Emerging Multipolar World Order: Avoiding the Thucydides Trap**

The hope of peaceful Chinese rise or the fear that Washington and Beijing are destined for war deserves deeper reflection of the contrasting histories, worldviews and self-images of the United States and China. Despite sharing the desire for more power, the contrasting histories, cultures, economies, populations and geographies deeply influence the ends, ways and means of its exercise. How power is acquired, exercised by a nation is deeply influenced by its peculiar and socially constructed national character (Kissinger, 1994). Perhaps China treasures status more than the U.S. values power while Russia prizes independence more than material destruction. That is why Russia absorbed much greater loss of life during World War II than both Japan and Germany but eventually emerged as a victor of the most destructive war in entire human history.

Allison recognizes that the end of the Chinese foreign policy is the peaceful and patient realization of its long-term national objectives, not immediate or temporary victory at war (Allison, 2017). This creates the shared hope, global need and collective responsibility upon all peace-loving nations to find ways to ensure that the transition of the contemporary world order remains peaceful and mutually beneficial rather than a perilous zero-sum contest which would always fulfill the doomsday prophecy of Thucydides or the tragic fate predicted by Mearsheimer (Mearsheimer, 2001).

The U.S. foreign policy during the Obama Administration reflected hope towards weaker states but demonstrated fear of rising and resurgent powers and

invoked suspicions of its traditional allies. The U.S. peacefully engaged with weaker states like Cuba and Iran during Obama administration but projected excessive hard power towards China by militarily pivoting to Asia. It maintained suspicious lull with Moscow but endangered South Asia by strategically building up India while neglecting Pakistan's security needs, its close ally for almost seven decades.

The disproportionate U.S. reliance on its hard power and unequal and wavering security commitments towards various allies has diminished U.S. global influence, dented its soft power and has raised questions regarding Washington's commitment to its liberal identity and values. This policy approach will not help restrain China, neither improve Washington's global influence nor increase U.S. national wealth or promote its liberal values. The only 'hyperpower' in human history has a global opportunity and national responsibility to demonstrate confidence and cautiously deal with the inevitable shifts in the global distribution of power and wealth.

The resolute multilateral diplomacy in contrast to unilateral military interventionism does not imply weakness or retreat but exudes strength of U.S. soft power and confidence in its liberal values. The emergence of a multipolar world order requires greater rather than reduced American ability to lead in multilateral diplomacy to engage and persuade other nations towards evolving a peaceful and equitable world order. It also exhibits superior rationality, confident and calculated exercise of global power, instead of an impatient and excessive use of force, based on fear that could lead to unintended consequences. Acting hastily or excessively will only realize the U.S. fears by provoking and uniting other major powers against it. Through diplomacy, inter-dependence and collective approach, fear can and must be replaced and defeated with hope. It will enable America and China to escape Thucydides' Trap, (Allison, 2015) and avoid its destabilizing consequences for the world and South Asia.

The fears of the American political and strategic elite are deeply rooted in the Cold War experience of dealing with a heavily militarized and ambitious Soviet Union, despite Moscow's ideological, economic and diplomatic limitations. In contrast, the Chinese civilization, despite its growing wealth, does not seem willing and far from being capable of challenging the worldwide U.S. political, economic or strategic preeminence. Through its unparalleled soft power, the U.S. continues to attract the best minds and innovative ideas that help Washington dominate the world in most technological innovations and research fields. Eight out of ten most innovative companies in the world are U.S. based (Forbes, 2018) whereas ten out of the world's leading fifteen spenders on research and development are also of U.S. origin (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2018).

Furthermore, the pacifist character of the Chinese nation, heavy stakes in mutually beneficial Sino-U.S. relations, Beijing's capitalist economy, open society and defensive nature of its strategic culture makes China inherently unique and different from an ambitious and assertive former Soviet Union. That is why; China

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deserves a different U.S. behavior from the one Washington employed against the Soviet Union.

Moreover, unlike the closed communist Soviet Union, U.S. cannot economically isolate China. China continues to participate in the U.S. led global institutions such as the United Nations and World Bank and stresses the centrality of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in response to suggestions of expanding the Nuclear Suppliers Group (Times of India, 2017). In 2021, the size of the Chinese economy was almost seventy-seven percent of the U.S. economy (World Bank, 2021) but its defence budget was approximately thirty-seven of the United States' defense budget (SIPRI 2022). China maintains approximately 350 nuclear warheads (SIPRI, 2022) as compared to the more than ten times bigger U.S. stockpile of 3,708 nuclear warheads. This does not include the 1,720 stored U.S. nuclear warheads held in reserve, which brings the total American nuclear warhead inventory to 5,550 nuclear warheads, making it more than fifteen times larger than the entire Chinese nuclear arsenal (SIPRI, 2022).

The above independent estimates indicate that Beijing, despite growing prosperity, is sensitive to the U.S. security concerns and threat perceptions and is deeply conscious of the need to exude strategic restraint and not to be viewed as a challenger of the global U.S. military supremacy. China is not a proportionate spender on defense, indicating strategic restraint instead of strategic competition, which was viewed between Moscow and Washington throughout the Cold War. Moreover, in case of the Beijing-led regional groups such as the SCO, China has pursued an inclusive approach towards its new members, welcoming even close U.S. strategic partners such as India and old allies such as Pakistan. China has also participated in multi-lateral efforts with the U.S. to counter terrorism and stabilize Afghanistan (Yusuf, 2016).

A cooperative and negotiated approach towards addressing global and regional challenges such as Afghanistan and stabilizing South Asia could help build trust between an existing and emerging great power and reduce mutual suspicions. Moreover, China is the third biggest U.S. export market and along with Washington, jointly forms the world's single largest bilateral trade relationship between the world's largest two capitalist economies, annually worth approximately seven hundred and ten billion dollars (Office of the United States Trade Representative, 2022). In addition, the U.S. hosts the largest Chinese immigrant population outside Asia and constitutes the third biggest immigrant group after Mexican and Indian origin immigrants (Zong & Batalova, 2017). This large Chinese American diaspora is not only contributing to the U.S. economy but also helps improve the American understanding of Chinese values, interests and way of life.

### **The Future World Order & Pakistan**

“Geography has made us neighbors. History has made us friends. Economics has made us

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partners and necessity has made us allies. Those whom God has so joined together, let no man put asunder” (Mueller, 2008). - John F. Kennedy

The threat to the emerging world order is not merely due to the rise or growing assertiveness of great powers like China or Russia but the lack of American experience with a balance of power system. Henry Kissinger aptly encapsulates the dilemma for American power in 21<sup>st</sup> Century that the United States can now neither withdraw nor dominate the emerging world order (Kissinger, 1994). The U.S. transformed a bipolar world order into a unipolar one without any direct or great war against its ideological, political and strategic opponent, Soviet Union. This American lack of experience towards exercising restraint and compromise towards other great powers is what compounds the challenge of preventing a great war in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The emerging world order is witnessing the rise and resurgence of various great powers that share complex economic interdependence but are simultaneously strategically competing with each other in almost all domains and even the global COVID pandemic was significantly influenced by vaccine politics. This creates a security compulsion and an economic incentive for Pakistan to diversify its economic and security relations with more than any single great power, not only to avoid economic coercion and exploitation by becoming an ally of any single great power but also to reduce direct threats to its national security from the competing great powers. Interestingly, Pakistan’s large eastern neighbor India, despite embracing Washington in a close strategic partnership is simultaneously maintaining close military and industrial relations with Moscow while also building a large-scale economic cooperation with Beijing.

This increasing complexity of great power politics creates the need for strengthening multilateralism and diplomacy to use dialogue and international institutions to resolve conflicts and manage crises and avoid wars. At the global level and all multilateral forums, Pakistan remains a strong proponent of territorial integrity and respect for international law and recognizes the central role of the United Nations in promoting peace, progress and security between all nations. It has maintained a longstanding position that all disputes must be peacefully resolved through negotiation, based on sovereign equality and mutual respect. Islamabad expects from the United States and other major powers to contribute towards maintaining regional security and strategic stability in South Asia and progressing beyond crisis management and facilitating a result-oriented and sustainable dialogue process, which can eventually lead to conflict resolution and durable peace.

At the regional level, Pakistan’s foreign policy seeks peaceful relations with all states particularly its neighbors (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022). No other state has paid a greater price of the instability in Afghanistan and Islamabad is convinced that no country will benefit more from a stable Afghanistan. In fact,

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Pakistan can help the U.S. and China come closer yet again to stabilize Afghanistan. This could gradually lead to both Washington and Beijing evolving a win-win approach which allows both great powers to mutually cooperate in addressing the common threat of terrorism and reconstruction of Afghanistan.. It could also help mutually manage a peaceful and stable transition towards the new world order that prevents a great war between two nuclear-armed great powers (Athar & Ali, 2012). Despite difficulties, Pakistan has repeatedly played a pivotal role by supporting and participating in various global and regional initiatives to bring all Afghan stakeholders together and negotiate their mutual differences and achieve peace (Zafar, 2019). However, Pakistan has concerns regarding the increasing Indian security role within Afghanistan and in the interest of good neighborly relations, it expects Afghan administration to ensure that its territory, population and resources are not used against Pakistan's interests (Hindustan Times, 2017). At bilateral level, particularly with India, Pakistan desires resumption of sustainable and result-oriented dialogue to resolve all outstanding issues particularly Kashmir dispute, which has led to repeated conflicts and crises between the two neighbors (China Daily, 2019).

In terms of economic dimension, perhaps for the first time in its entire history, in the form of the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative's southern initiative called China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Pakistan has a major opportunity to significantly improve and expand its national energy and communication infrastructure. This long-term \$62 billion project is expected to eventually help Pakistan gradually transform itself as an industrialized and service-oriented society. The success of CPEC would require long-term policies, good governance, internal security and political stability and cooperation from all national stakeholders including political parties, military services, bureaucracy, private sector and international partners. This project could eventually help Pakistan become a stable polity, vibrant economy and lucrative international trading hub. In tandem with substantial Chinese investment in Pakistan, Islamabad has attempted to simultaneously maintain diplomatically cordial and closer trade relations with the United States. U.S. is Pakistan's largest and fast growing export market. During the fiscal year 2021-22, Islamabad's annual revenue from exports to the U.S. has touched an all-time high US\$ 9 billion dollars and has significant potential for further growth (Iqbal, 2022).

Pakistan's economic and industrial development in tandem with the Indian economic rise will mutually reduce incentives for conflict and reinforce strategic stability. Hopefully, the two nuclear armed neighbors, once prosperous and politically stable, will learn to resolve their mutual disputes and collectively usher in a new era for this conflict prone region, based on peaceful and normal South Asia and its belated economic integration with the rest of the world. Introduction of education, prosperity and stability could lead to an improved quality of life for the people of this region. This will reduce the threat of global terrorism, enhance the national security of the United States and other major powers, reduce the costs

and save lives, which Washington has spent in fighting the longest (CNN, 2017) and costliest war (Batley, 2013) in its entire history, against global terrorism.

The future outlook indicates that South Asian militaries will face various complex, demographic, technological, economic and strategic challenges. Industrialization of society will profoundly affect the ends, ways and means of warfare as well as other methods of statecraft in all its current and emerging dimensions. Therefore, in the nuclear realm, despite massive Indian buildup, Pakistan is likely to maintain its policy of credible minimum deterrence but carefully adapt an affordable but effective force posture to ensure its deterrence remains credible against a dynamic and increasingly complex threat environment. Both India and Pakistan are likely to continue developing nuclear triad but their relative capabilities will be differently distributed, due to differences in resources, geography as well as peculiar strategic objectives. Rapid advances in cyber and significant investment in space-based capabilities and Artificial Intelligence are growing in South Asia. Indian government has allocated \$480 million for investment in emerging technologies including Artificial Intelligence (Dutton, 2018). These developments would pose new dilemmas for the strategic planners because introduction of new cyber technologies would enhance offensive electronic warfare capabilities and advances in space program would improve early warning and could lead to diversified and redundant nuclear command and control systems.

In the interest of durable strategic stability, it is imperative that the U.S. in particular and international strategic export control regime in general, pursue a criteria-based approach towards providing equitable access to modern land, air, sea, space and cyber technologies. This would help ensure these technologies are used to improve the equitable sharing of technologies between all states and not to destabilize deterrent, ignore the energy security and other peaceful needs of any state.

In the conventional realm, as discussed earlier, Pakistan's deterrent posture is sensitive to the Indian conventional capabilities, doctrines and acquisitions (Ali, 2016). Therefore, it is essential that the U.S. and other major arms suppliers remain cognizant of the need to maintain conventional balance in South Asia to prevent strategic instability. Greater access and sale of latest land, air and sea based weaponry to any single state would have destabilizing effects on this conflict-prone region. Moreover, the South Asian economic progress and industrial growth would gradually improve the performance of locally produced land, air and sea-based weapon systems and their indigenous manufacturing and maintenance capabilities. Industrialization of South Asian societies could gradually reduce the human element in active combatant's role because of the increasing cost of human resource as well as the evolution of cost-effective, reliable and less risky technological solutions to meet security needs. Development of armed drones, Unmanned Undersea Vehicles (UUVs) and Lethal and Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS) indicate that desired physical or non-kinetic effects can be

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achieved without endangering human lives or limbs (Santos, Chansoria & Roff, 2016).

South Asia is likely to face significant challenges in eliminating the menace of terrorism due to socio-economic inequality, cultural, ethnic and religious diversity along with the combined effects of globalization. Countering terrorist individuals and organization through military means could temporarily achieve limited physical effects. However, in order to address the causes and achieve lasting impact, good governance, sustainable socio-economic development, moderate society and liberal education system are needed at least for an entire generation. Instead of blaming each other for one's impatience and mistakes, regional and global powers must re-prioritize their counter-terrorism strategies and focus on understanding and learning to coexist with other value systems by promoting mutual respect and tolerance for different ways of life rather than killing those who practice different culture or ideology. It is unrealistic for the U.S. or any other State to expect to win a total war against a different value system only through excessive hard power, within a single presidential term (Ali, 2011).

### **Conclusion**

The emergence of a multi-polar world order does not mean all great powers can exercise equal influence on the world stage in all regions or all domains. Today the world order is much more complex, inter-dependent and multi-domain than has ever before. In the evolving global great power politics, the status quo, emerging and resurgent powers have more diverse capabilities and enjoy relative advantages in different domains rather than exercise total global dominance across the entire power spectrum in all regions, as was the case in the bipolar world order. Therefore, different types of cultural, economic, technological and military powers are increasingly defused across several domains and regions rather than remaining concentrated in a few state structures or regions. While the U.S. is concentrating its hard power in Asia-Pacific, Russia, despite getting entangled in Ukraine, has gradually regained significant influence in the Middle East and Central Asia. In contrast, China is militarily more assertive in East Asia but careful and restrained in its geo-economic engagements with Africa, Latin America and Middle East, in order to gradually build its wealth and influence without provoking the Western powers. The U.S. has become increasingly conscious of strategic overreach and reviewing its security commitments towards Western Europe by demanding much substantive contribution more from its European and East Asian allies.

The stakes, interests and approach of status quo, emerging & resurgent great powers towards South Asia are undergoing a major transformation. The Pulwama crisis indicates that the U.S. initially played a pro-India and somewhat reduced role in timely crisis management in South Asia than several previous crises. In contrast, Chinese stakes are increasing in South Asia, not only in the form of CPEC but also in terms of its interest in extending CPEC to Afghanistan,

investments in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka and expanding bilateral trade with India. This could make China much more sensitive towards protecting its economic interests and maintaining regional stability and security. Similarly, Russian engagements towards South Asia have also increased beyond New Delhi and there are signs that its relations are gradually recovering from the bitterness of 1979-1988 Afghan War. Russia recently invited Afghan Taliban to visit Moscow and has encouraged Central Asian republics to improve their relations with Pakistan. This indicates that the great powers could have a major and enduring but unequal stake in keeping South Asia stable, secure and prosperous in the emerging new world order and averting and managing future crises.

Furthermore, the slowing Western economies and large industries need new markets, innovative ideas, cheap labor and space for expansion and growth. A secure and stable South Asia offers a huge and timely opportunity and win-win situation for both East and the West. The various CPEC industrial zones offer useful opportunities to both China and Western powers because they can benefit from Pakistan's cost-effective human resource, ideal location and trans-regional trade corridors. Various multinational companies can establish their assembly lines in these industrial zones to assemble consumer products not only cheaply but also close to the large South, Central, West Asian and African consumer markets.

In 1971, Pakistan helped divide the Communist bloc by separating Soviet Union from China and facilitating rapprochement between Washington and Beijing (Ali, L. G. S. A. & Ali, S. M., 2012). Today, Pakistan can again emerge as a mercantile bridge of peace between an existing and an emerging great power, to benefit both and also help manage a peaceful transformation of the contemporary world order instead of becoming victim of the Thucydides' Trap.

The United States' greatest strength lies not in its ability to physically destroy other nations like Iraq and Afghanistan but valuing and embracing them as allies and rebuilding them, as it did in case of Japan and Germany after World War II. Pakistan, by its close and friendly relations with both the United States and China, can again play a vital role in contributing towards gradually and peacefully shaping a peaceful and mutually beneficial world order which not only brings greater prosperity but also reduces the dangers of another great war, which could possibly also involve the potential use of nuclear weapons. Therefore, it is the common interest of all existing and rising powers to avoid a 'Thucydides Nuclear Trap' in the new world order because coercion and isolation may not only force more states to join the existing nuclear club, which currently consists of only nine countries but also encourage the existing nuclear powers to build larger and more ready nuclear arsenals. Therefore, a sustainable intellectual and diplomatic dialogue among civilizations, deeper economic interdependence and strategic restraint is recommended, both at global and regional levels instead of containment and economic coercion by global powers and hegemony and compellence by regional powers.



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Lastly, the benefits of peace, prosperity and progress must be equitably shared between all states. Unequal distribution of power, wealth and technology is the actual cause of an unstable world order that threatens sustainable global peace, prosperity and regional stability and prevents resource rich great powers' ability to find solutions to common global challenges like climate change, COVID pandemic, food and water issues. Fear prevents aggression but also reduces the human ability to mutually construct a shared, peaceful, stable and progressive world that all nations, irrespective of their faith, color, language and wealth, dream about in their own different ways. The greatest strength of the United States is its ability to offer freedom to all its citizens to pursue and fulfill their individual dreams. It is about time the U.S. leadership and statesmen learn to also understand, respect and value the dreams of all other nations as well, including those whose ways of life and cultures are different but with whom the American nation is destined to share this planet in the new emerging world order, which will be characterized by unprecedented globalization, the challenge of climate change, novel opportunities due to innovation an creation of knowledge societies, rapid population growth, deepening material resource constraints & massive rearmament.

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