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Pakistan and Indian Ocean Region: A Study in Contested Orientations

Sanjeev Kumar Bragta¹

¹ Associate Professor-Political Science, Himachal Pradesh University, Department of Evening Studies, The Mall-Shimla, India-171001. Phone & Fax: +91 0177-2652765. Email: sanjeevbragta@hotmail.com

Abstract

The proposed study will direct particular attention to firstly, geographical contexts of a state, and its perceptions and policies will be identified via consideration of various set of factors like Geographical—the description, evaluation and changing value and changing perception of locational and regional factors including, for example, proximity, relative location, degree of control of strategic waterways and to degree of access to strategic resources. The Economic—the stability and change of economic linkages in order to maximize economic security. The Political—causes of regional peace and conflict and changing threat perceptions. Secondly, State perceptions and policies will be especially concerned with the perceived global and regional positions. For instance, Pakistan's perception of its 'regional centrality' in South Asia and its sphere of influence in the Indian Ocean. Further, the state policy documents which identify particular orientations or changes in orientations in geopolitics, geoeconomics and geostrategic terms. These analyses, will lead to an increased understanding of the behaviour of Pakistan as a state in the Indian Ocean Region. That will contribute to an environment of peace and stability in the region.

Keywords: Geopolitics, Geoeconomics, Geostrategy, Indian Ocean Region, Pakistan

1. Introduction

The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) possesses considerable and often underrated geopolitical significance, if only because of its use as a maritime highway. Given its location and the fact that it provides a relatively short and thus economic link between the Pacific and the Atlantic Oceans, it is perhaps not surprising that not only does the ocean account for the transportation of the major tonnage of commodities in the world, but that more than three-quarters of this extra-regional trade. The Indian Ocean is known to contain natural resources, the significance of which is yet to be fully determined. The maintenance of safety and security of the sea-lanes and associated choke points is especially significant for the movement of commodities, especially oil to North-east Asia, Western Europe and North America. There are several possible threats to the security and safety of sea-lanes in the Indian Ocean including of piracy, inter or intrastate conflicts, terrorism and creeping jurisdiction. In overall, the Indian Ocean proved a wide range of collaborative prospects.

Given the varied set of circumstances and Pakistan's continental mindset initially-land orientations of military

strategy (especially army) in case of Pakistan, led to wars between the two nations. However, the Pakistan navy in comparison to the army and air wings does not share the memories of war and conflict that the other two services do. The naval engagement was not as intense as the army and the air forces. The chance of naval encounter is increased because of the political disputes and outstanding issues. In addition to this, since the inception of Pakistan as a state the primary bone of contention between the two countries (India and Pakistan) are territorialized threats. But there are other issues as well that relate mainly to naval dimension as well in recent times. Such issues have been categorized as military and non-military at sea that poses concern to India with the member of western blocs in 1950s and nexus of China- Pakistan gradually emerged as all-weather friendship. The right from the beginning Pakistan's quest for parity with India was in its security dilemma. This security dilemma and strategic balance has increased more after the dismemberment of Pakistan during in 1971.

As a part of the globalization the world order has changed so fast. The last decade of the 20th century has witnessed a resurgence of regionalism in world politics. Since the end of the Cold War, there had been a significant acceleration in the institutionalization of regional relations beyond Europe. The mid-1990s marked the beginning of a new phase in regional diplomacy of the littoral countries of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Pakistan's current moves towards the development of a cross-cultural, regional dialogue across the Indian Ocean have to be understood also in the context of changes in the global power structure, and sweeping structural reforms of the global economic order. Yet the emerging regional economic institution and geopolitical reconfigurations are ones that many policy-makers and foreign policy analysts, both inside and outside the IOR suggest a set of geopolitical equations, coordinates a relationship that is more relevant to grappling with the post-cold war realities. However, for purpose of the present study, it becomes very pertinent to define the term 'Orientation' here in this regard. The Reader's Digest Oxford Wordfinder (1993:1072) defines the term orientation as, "the act or an instance of orienting; the state of being oriented; a relative position; a person's attitude [for that matter the attitude(s) of various intellectuals and institutions of statecraft] or-adjustment in relation to circumstances, especially politically or psychologically." Fairly diverse orientations could be – and often are – produced and propagated by both state and non-state actors dealing with both 'home' and 'foreign' affairs -be they political, strategic or economic. While it is useful to study such orientations in their written form – the text(s) – it is equally significant to pay attention to the institutional and material contexts in which they are produced.

The proposed study taking Pakistan and Indian Ocean as its research study in brief, aims at problematizing the taken-for-granted meaning or common sense understanding of 'policy', or 'policy making', through a critical examination of various orientations that are often found to be competing with one another for greater visibility, salience and even hegemony. Such a study, it is hoped, will lead to a better understanding of a complex, two-way relationship between perceptions and the perceived. To elaborate the point, a little further, Pakistan, for example, by virtue of its physical location, apparently qualifies to be an Indian Ocean littoral or rim state. However, physical location, which could be pin-pointed in terms of latitudes and longitudes and described in terms of certain natural endowments, is only one among several, possibly diverse locations. States -Pakistan being no exception-- do not occupy a single place within an unchanging geopolitical structure. It is conceivable that a country has diverse positioning or locations, which, in turn, keep changing due to domestic, regional and global contexts or circumstances. For example, Pakistan vis-a-vis Indian Ocean appears to be simultaneously 'positioned' in diverse geopolitical geostrategic and geo-economic discourses, and the practices that flow from them. Each one of these locations seems to offer its own specific 'view' of the Indian Ocean as well as understanding of its power-capability-security generating aspects. It's against this backdrop the present research work tries to unfold briefly the Pakistan's contested orientations within the IOR

1.1. Objectives of the Study

1. Firstly, to discuss in brief a conceptual-analytical framework of the present work.
2. Secondly, the present study tries to critically enquire into the nature, scope and substance of Pakistan's orientations-geopolitical, geostrategic, and geo-economic towards the 'Indian Ocean'.

3. Finally, the research study will take into account the degree of convergence and/or divergence among such orientations through various phases of Pakistan's existence as a post-partition, post-colonial, 'nation-state'.

2. Methodology

The proposed research will be based on data collected from various primary and secondary sources pertaining to government, non-governmental organizations. One of the major sources of data for the proposed thesis will be the state policy documents, reports, parliamentary speeches and debates of Pakistan which identify particular orientations or changes in orientation.

3. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

A comprehensive survey of the varied uses of the term 'geopolitics' reveals that, 'in all cases, geopolitics are about power and space, usually about the state and its territory, often about power relations between states'. (Mamdouh 1998:246). For the purposes of the proposed thesis, however, we look at Geopolitics as politics using geographical reasoning for the purposes of defining and positioning a 'national' identity. As David Newman (2000:305) puts it, "the geopolitical imagination and positioning of a country is, to a great extent, dependent on the way in which the individual identities are defined and understood, both internally (by the residents of a country) and externally (by other countries in the global system). While the geopolitical imagination of a state may be determined from within, its actual positioning within the regional and global system is largely determined from without. The so-called 'national' identity and interests are formed in interaction with one another. The geopolitical imagination of a country's political elites may often contrast with the geopolitical positioning of that state by other states within the system, resulting in inter-state tension on the one hand, and attempts to become accepted on the other. In short, the fact that the position accorded to the state does not necessarily coincide with preferred location of the state, as reflected in its geopolitical imagination(s), may often be the cause for conflict and tension.

The term geo-economics has been popularized, rather sensationalized, by 'defense intellectuals' like Edward Luttwak, (1990,1993) who argue that "old fashioned" geopolitics has been displaced by the new phenomenon of geo-economics, with disposable capital becoming more important than firepower, civilian innovation more significant than military-technical advancement, and market penetration a greater mark of power than the possession of garrisons and bases. We are told that states compete with each other for economic power, and no more for territorial power. Without undermining in any way, the appeal of such arguments to many Western intellectuals and institutions of statecraft, however, for the purposes of proposed thesis, we tend to draw more from the insights offered by Timothy Luke (1997,1998) Luke argues that economic, cultural and political globalization, and the move to more informational and transnational form of corporate capitalism, are transforming such traditional anchoring principles of world politics as state sovereignty, territorial integrity and place-bound communities. Power, Luke notes, is no longer bound to place but also often more placelessly beneath, behind, between and beyond boundaries set into space as new senses of artificial location become very fluid or mobile. Accordingly, one needs to pay greater attention to interplay between states, commercial enterprises and markets. Put simply, geo-economics is the analysis of the economic strategies of the states.

Whereas, the term geostrategy implies the application of geographical reasoning to the setting-up of a national defence scheme (Foucher 2000:165). What often figure as central to geo-strategic calculations are factors of size and location, and the militarily important terrain, maritime choke points, and areas containing critical resources (Harkavy 2001:37). Geostrategy relates to concrete practices in places -terrestrial as well as maritime-- that are analysed as theatres of operation, actual or potential. It thus considers spatial, physical and human configurations in terms of war and defence.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Locating Pakistan: Geopolitical Contexts and Constraints

The new state of Pakistan, demanded on the basis of two-nation theory, and achieved through a bloody partition (more than one million died due to communal violence and more than ten million were displaced) was indeed a bizarre geopolitical entity; a country – “created by the stroke of a pen”(McGrath 1996:3). Despite the mythical aspirations of the two-nation theory and the partition formula of Muslim majority contiguous areas, the idea of Pakistan was eventually realized in the form of a ‘moth-eaten’ geo-body. It consisted of two wings, located at the opposite western (comprising ethno-linguistically different Sindh, Baluchistan, NWFP and partitioned Punjab) and eastern (comprising Bengali speaking Muslim populations, culturally closer to Bengali speaking Hindu than to Pashto speaking Pathan) ends of the vast alluvial Indo-Gangetic plain; or allegedly hostile geopolitical space occupied by ‘Hindustan’. Despite, and in some ways perhaps due to, such territorial truncation, Indian Ocean -the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal—seemed to carry considerable geopolitical, geostrategic and geo-economics implications for Pakistan: especially before emergence of Bangladesh in 1971.

As Paul Bracken (1999:210) puts it, -The Cold War had its own geography... Asia disappeared in the mental map of the West, in its place arose the Middle East, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Northeast Asia... Likewise, the Middle East, a term originally coined by American naval strategist Alfred Mahan in 1902 to describe the lands surrounding the Persian Gulf, also received a new geographic unity in the Cold War... Geographic designation drove strategic declarations.” Once Pakistan chose to embrace the Western geopolitical discourse of ‘containing the evil empire’, and thereby perhaps also aspiring to contain ‘hostile’ India, its location on the regional as well as global geo-strategic chessboard was ‘fixed’ ‘more or less in accordance with Western perceptions of threats as well as ‘appropriate’ responses to those threats.

Pakistan’s reaction--as a member of the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) and Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO)--to ‘super-power rivalry’ in the Indian Ocean, and militarization/nuclearization that followed was therefore one-sided and biased. Located on the vital trade and oil supply routes from the Persian Gulf, Pakistan also remained acutely aware of its close proximity to Islamic world (an ideological location of critical importance for Pakistan right from the beginning) as well as geostrategic as well as geo-economic importance of Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOCs) and maritime choke-points.

Today’s Pakistan appears to be facing a series of crises. For the past decade and more, Pakistan’s economy has suffered from serious stagnation in growth and payments crisis. Even Bangladesh and Nepal have been able to manage growth rates above five’ percent per annum in the last decade of 20th century (See Special Issue of *Himal: South Asia*, July 2002). According to some analysts, Pakistan has the requisite wherewithal and potential for a middle power, but a great incongruity exists between its external facade of a regional achiever and fundamental internal contradictions. The fractured nature of its internal politics, “myth of constitutionalism” (Maluka 1995), derailment or hijacking of otherwise feeble democratic institutions at regular intervals by highly politicized army or ‘geopoliticians in uniform’, extraordinary regional imbalances and inability to create a national ethos even after 64 years, are reflected most dramatically in the frequent ethnic violence in Sindh -especially the port city of Karachi--and sectarian clashes in Punjab (Nasr 2002). Pakistan’s biggest systematic weakness remains in that its power structure continues to be elitist, feudal, militaristic and unrepresentative of the masses. Even though the extent to which Talibanization is going to overtake or overrun the polity and society of Pakistan remains uncertain and debatable (Shafqat 2002), development of this kind could have far reaching implications, especially after 11th of September 2001, for Pakistan’s competing geopolitical, geostrategic and geo-economic (re)orientations towards what Robert Harkavy (2001) calls the ‘Greater Middle East’-the sum of the core Middle East, North Africa, the African Horn, South Asia and ex-Soviet Central Asia – and the surrounding Indian Ocean rim. According to Oliver Roy (2002:149):

The Pakistani support for the Taliban since 1994 can be explained at two levels: (1) a geo-strategic perspective, designed at the time of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, with the aim of asserting the regional influence of

Pakistan by establishing a kind of control on Afghanistan through a fundamentalist, Pakhtun-dominated movement. (2) An ideological and religious, connection provided by extending the informal network of madrasas in Pakistan, which at the same time challenge the Islamic credentials of the Pakistan Government and provide it with non-governmental tools of influence in the region.

The collapse of Soviet Union, the end of Cold War, emergence of 'Islamic' Central Asia, the so-called war against 'global terrorism' on the one hand, and the growing scope and salience of 'corporate globalization' are likely to have a significant bearing on the trajectory and thrust of geopolitical, geostrategic and geo-economic orientations of Pakistan towards the Indian Ocean. Whereas the 'hegemony of trans-nationalism' has reinforced the economic importance of the Indian Ocean -forcing some observers to comment that geo-economics is fast replacing geopolitics in some parts of the region-the so-called 'war against terrorism' appears to have pushed the Indian Ocean once again in the direction of militarization.

While Pakistan's response to the Indian Ocean component of its 'external security' environment appears to be still in the making, the geostrategic significance of Pakistan location at the cross-roads between the volatile Middle East and Gulf, the resource-rich but land-locked central Asian countries and South Asia, seems to have increased in the eyes of major powers, especially those in closer proximity to the region like China. Its endemic internal turbulence notwithstanding, there are indications that Pakistan is rethinking its foreign policy objectives in order to be able to play a wider role in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). The priority given by Pakistan's power elite to deriving maximum possible political-economic leverage from Central Asia is rather obvious, Pakistan looks at the Central Asian Muslim states as critical new space for launching various diplomatic and economic initiatives. At the same time Pakistan as a spatial-have-not vis-a-vis India perceives in Central Asian Republics a vital 'strategic depth', while tempting these republics to pursue shortest possible outlet to the sea, provided of course Afghanistan is successfully brought within the dominant U.S.-lead post-Cold War geopolitical order as a partner; something easier desired than achieved.

One of the key Pakistani responses to above mentioned, rapidly changing, and circumstances are the so-called 'Look East' policy. Especially during 1999, friendly relations between Pakistan and the South East Asian countries continued to grow. Despite the South Asian regional economic meltdown and difficulties faced by Pakistan in the aftermath of the 'nuclearization' of South Asia, Pakistan continued to make consistent efforts to strengthen its political, economic and even military links with the region. That Pakistan's 'look East' policy, as an increasingly significant component of foreign policy was yielding some, result was evident in the high level of exchanges and agreements signed between Pakistan and the countries of south-East Asia.

As Pakistan looks East, it is to be expected that the country's most likely to be affected by such a policy would also show a greater sensitivity towards what Pakistan has to offer in a term of a number of important issue-areas. A large volume of international long haul maritime cargo, bound for Africa, South East Asia, North America and Europe passes through the Persian Gulf, and in close proximity to Pakistan. The third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS III) has not only provided Pakistan with extended maritime zones (including 200 nautical miles of Exclusive Economic Zone), but also entrusted the country with a range of obligations -including the protection of marine ecosystems – as a coastal state. Whether Pakistan is sensitive and sensible enough to recognize the necessity for international co-operation, in order to meet the challenge of ecologically sustainable development and management of fast-multiplying uses (shipping, recreation, living and non-living resources etc.) of the Indian Ocean remains to be explored.

4.2. Geo-economics Replacing Geopolitics?

In this post-Cold War period, Pakistan geo-economic orientations are being increasingly driven and dictated by the search for new markets. On the one hand, emergence of Central Asian Republics (CARs) and the withdrawal of Russians from Afghanistan is increasingly seen by Pakistan as an opportunity to increase its geo-economic, political, religious and diplomatic influence in the new Muslim states. By the end of 1992, the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) comprising Pakistan, Iran and Turkey were reactivated and expanded to include

Afghanistan and six Central Asian republics of the former USSR (Pomfret 2000). In order to meet the maritime trade requirement of landlocked Central Asian republics, the cargo facilities at Karachi port are being modernized and expanded.

As far as the import and export of its bulk items are concerned, there is no doubt that Pakistan relies on the Indian Ocean. Its import includes oil, steel, minerals, and machinery. Its exports are cotton, cotton yarn, its manufactures and rice. The lion's share of these goods is transported via sea routes. Pakistan's Federal Minister of Commerce Abdul Razzaq Dawood announced on 9th July 2002 (Islamabad-Internet Source: A), that in accordance with the objectives of Pakistan's trade policy for the year 2001-2002, the country was slowly but surely moving from traditional market to non-traditional markets. Pakistan's exports partners for the year 2010 includes U.S. 15.8 percent, Afghanistan 8.1 percent, UAE 7.9 percent, China 7.3 percent, U.K. 4.3 percent, Germany 4.2 percent. Pakistan's imports partners for the year 2010 includes China 17.9 percent, Saudi Arabia 10.7 percent, UAE 10.6 percent, Kuwait 5.5 percent, US 4.9 percent, Malaysia 4.8 percent.

Pakistan's geopolitical orientation towards the East or search for a new national and regional identity is not entirely devoid of developmental-commercial concerns. Ever since Indian Ocean Rim-Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC) was established in the Indian Ocean region (IOR), it has been accompanied by a measure of controversy over membership. The preamble to its Charter, adopted at the First Ministerial Meeting in Mauritius in March 1997 (by the governments of Australia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and Yemen) reads in part:

Conscious of historical bonds created through millennium, peoples of the Indian Ocean, with a sense of recovery of history; cognizant of economic transformation and speed of change the world over, which is propelled significantly by increased intensity in regional economic cooperation and... Conscious of their responsibility to promote the welfare of their peoples by improving their standards of living and equality of life: the governments... hereby establish ... IOR-ARC).

The rationale for the formation of the IOR-ARC is said to lie with the ascendancy of economic issues, and the trend towards regional economic cooperation and integration in the post-Cold War world. The fear of being economically marginalized, and an attempt to wield greater influence through collective action led urgency to the association. More recently, however, there are indications of dwindling interest in the IOR-ARC on the part of all the three major actors namely, India, Australia and South Africa (Kelegama, 2002). Whether the Sri Lankan proposal to make IOR-ARC a result-oriented Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) association will eventually be a reality remains to be seen, especially in view of the fact that many IOR-ARC countries are already members of PTAs, such as ASEAN, SAARC, GCC, SADEC, and so on.

It appears that sharp political tensions and conflicts are often the underside of the aspiration for greater economic and political cooperation. Pakistan has not been allowed to join the IOR-ARC. China, although not strictly a littoral state, has negotiated a form of informal membership, while more distant states like the U.S. and members of the EU have been unable to refashion the map in a way that would allow western powers to become part of the Indian Ocean region.

4.3. Geo-strategic Dynamics and Dimensions: Growing Salience of Pakistan Navy?

Ever since 1947, the Navy wing of Pakistan's armed forces was somewhat undermined and neglected, also because of predominantly land-oriented strategic thinking. It never received the share of the resources it demanded and deserved. The Indian victory in the 1971 war and consequent dismemberment of the country provided an enormous push forward to what Ayesha Jalal (1992) has rightly termed as 'Pakistan's Political Economy of Defence' which has been meticulously nurtured in direct reference to Indian hostility. The net result was a substantive increase in military power, especially between 1972 (When the war with India was over) and December 1979 (when the Soviet troops marched into Afghanistan), when the size of the army nearly doubled, the navy grew three times and the air force grew one-and-a-half times (Chawla 2001:705). After the loss of its eastern wing in 1971, Pakistan ceased

to be exposed directly to the eastern Indian Ocean and the South East Asian landmass, and was now firmly ensconced in the Arab Muslim world with which it always had proudly proclaimed its more intimate identity and emotional affinity.

However, an unprecedented rejuvenation and modernization of Pakistan's navy have taken place during the 1990s. So much so that Navy has come to acquire the biggest share in the major equipment procurement. Pakistan is currently investing heavily in naval expansion. During 1994-95, it purchased three Agosta-90 diesel/electric-powered submarines from France, worth \$950 million-for which a loan was provided by the French to be paid in five to six years- which are to be armed with Exocet SM-39 anti-ship missiles (Siddiqa-Agha 2001:162). The air independent propulsion (AIP) Agostas was planned to be commissioned into Pakistan Navy from 1998 onwards, qualitatively improving its offensive capability and significantly outclassing the numerically superior Indian Navy. Pakistan's submarine fleet is said to be the most prestigious part of its Navy.

Pakistan also acquired six type-21 frigates from the UK in 1993-94 for about £50 million, after its lease on nine US warships expired (Bedi 1996:136). Pakistan has also upgraded its fixed wing naval aircraft and received an injection of sophisticated naval hardware, among other military equipment, worth \$ 368 million from the U.S. after waiver of the arms embargo under the Pressler amendment. In June 1999, the government of Pakistan made an announcement regarding giving the Navy a nuclear role. This was in anticipation of the development of future Indian capabilities (Siddiqa-Agha 2001:191).

Why has the navy suddenly received attention, despite having been marginalized in the military-strategic planning for more than four decades? In other words, how do we account for a critical shift in the strategic calculations whereby it is considered necessary to enhance Navy's defense capabilities? Is it due to the perceived need to secure the Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOCs), which have acquired new meaning and significance in the context of corporate globalization? But security against whom or what kind of threats? It is important to raise this question because only five to ten percent of the country's trade is actually carried out by its own merchant navy, and "Pakistan Navy's strategic planning had before never gone beyond defense of the SLOCs-a limited role natural for a small navy"(Siddiqa-Agha 2001:160). May be the rejuvenated Pakistani navy is a reaction, grounded in suspicion, to the build-up of blue water navies by India. One of the recurrent themes in dominant geostrategic discourse in Pakistan relates to the alleged Indian designs to establish a regional hegemony in the Indian Ocean-from the Persian Gulf to the Straits of Malacca. It also appears that the memory of the Indian naval blockade of Karachi during 1971 war is still fresh in the minds of the Pakistani navy's top brass, which remains of the view that a fourth war with hostile India could be a long one, with India holding Pakistan under siege through the sea.

It has been argued that if India continues to develop a sea-based nuclear weapon capability, Pakistan may opt to respond in the same coin. (Siddiqa-Agha 2001:191). The Indian Navy has one aircraft carrier, 26 surface combat ships, and 40 patrol and coastal craft to counter Pakistan's eight surface combat ships, nine submarines, and 10 patrol and surface vessels. Upgrading naval capabilities and acquiring a nuclear arm are likely to appeal to Indian policy-makers. Major projects include the development of sea-launched cruise and ballistic missiles and the construction of indigenous nuclear-powered submarines. Pakistan sees such developments as highly threatening. Islamabad, which makes no claim to being a regional power, is said to be alarmed by New Delhi's technological acquisitions. Pakistani analysts believe that, with its growing naval power and blue-water capability, India would be able to throttle its smaller adversary, if war comes. Ninety-seven percent of Pakistan's trade is by sea. With the memory of the blockade of the single seaport at Karachi during the 1971 war, appears to be fresh in the minds of certain naval planners, who continue to push the government for funds to enhance the service's capabilities.

According to Siddiqa-Agha (Siddiqa-Agha 2001:192), in view of country's lack of resources and the orientation of military-strategic planning towards land war, Pakistan's naval leaders are considering adopting the poor man's option, adapting surface ships to launch Shaheen and Ghauri missiles, which were primarily developed for the army. It is important to note that Pakistani navy was 'assigned a nuclear role' in May 1999, an action taken to give the impression that Islamabad was thinking of developing a nuclear triad. After the nuclear tests in 1998, Pakistani policy-makers, it seems, felt pressured to appear capable of managing nuclear deterrence. Pakistan's lack of

strategic depth makes nuclear deterrence important vis-a-vis India, but the government has not yet initiated any work on developing a sea-launched missile capability or procuring a platform capable of handling nuclear weapons.

It is the Arabian Sea segment of Indian Ocean that is specifically highlighted in the naval-strategic discourses as Pakistan's 'heart' which is pumping life into its economy through its exports/imports. The scope of Indian Ocean related geographies of fear, which otherwise are predominantly India-centred, is also sometimes expanded to include the imagination of fast-depleting land-based resources and how this will compel Pakistan in future to turn to sea in order to secure its legitimate share and to protect its EEZ. General Musharraf proclaimed on May 5th, 2001 that "main objective of the letting the Chinese develop the Gwadar (port) was that when needed Chinese Navy would be in Gwadar to give the benefiting reply to anyone". In his view, ships operating from Gwadar could pose serious threats to trade, oil and gas supply during the crisis situation.

To move from the realm of discourse to practices, Islamabad seems to be vying for regional influence in the Indian Ocean through augmenting naval cooperation with Indian eastern neighbour, something not done since East Pakistan became Bangladesh. Ever since the military took power in Myanmar in 1988, General Musharraf's visit to India's easterly neighbour is the first by a leader of a nation other than China or an Asian country. A Pakistani frigate, submarines and fleet tanker have concluded a port call to Myanmar. Apparently, Pakistan's navy is on a modernizing mission. According to some commentators, a new Cold War is already going on in the Arabian Sea, and Pak-China nexus appears to have posed already a serious concern to New Delhi.

In the wake of 11th of September, the inauguration of a new security partnership with the U.S., has posed an unprecedented dilemma before the ruling elite of Pakistan, positioned as it is, between the deep and the devil, the manner in which the intellectuals and institutions of statecraft in Pakistan would respond the pressures emanating from fundamentalist groups on the one hand and the geopolitical imperatives of solidarity with the universe of Islam remains to be seen. Pakistan, as one of the founding members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), with 56 Muslim States as members and four Observers, established in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco, on 25th September 1969, has shown abiding interest in all its activities and programmes. Relations with the Islamic world have remained one of the corner stones of Pakistan's 'foreign' policy. As a founding member of the OIC, Pakistan is said to have 'an abiding commitment to the purposes, principles and objectives of its Charter. Pakistan's image of itself appears to be that it has always played, and will continue to play, an important role in strengthening cooperation among Muslim States by its active participation in the programmes and activities of the OIC'. Moreover, it is important to bear in mind that a large number of OIC member countries (including Yemen, Iran, Maldives, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Malaysia, Maldives, Indonesia, Iran, Bangladesh) are located in the Indian Ocean region. In the wake of 11th of September 2001, according to a keen observer of geo-strategic environment of the IOR.

The IOR is also becoming more strategically significant because it is home to the world's greatest concentration of Muslims. Some decades ago, this may not have been a consideration of importance. Today, however, for a variety of reasons, Islamic civilization often finds itself at odds with the West -including Israel—and Hindu India, and it will be in the IOR that this contest frequently will play out ... The Indian Ocean thus, may be seen -depending upon your view point—as on the front lines in (a) struggle against terrorism: or (b) the West's "crusade" to contain the world of Islam (Berlin 2002:30).

Pakistan has approved the OIC Convention on Combating International Terrorism (concluded in June 2002), thereby committing itself to 'not to execute, initiate or participate in any form in organizing, financing, committing, instigating or supporting terrorist acts whether directly or indirectly'. Pakistan is also a party to as many as nine other conventions on terrorism. Having noted that, the proverbial billion-dollar question remains whether Pakistan could afford to see eye to eye with the United States on latter's interpretation of 'friends' and 'foes' in the IOR in the war against terrorism.

5. Conclusion: The Way Forward

At a conceptual-analytical level, the proposed research tries to unfold the insights offered by what has come to be known as a 'critical' perspectives or approaches Geopolitics. Even the very existence of the Pakistan as a territorial construct is challenged. There are some scholars, think that the state borders do not amount to anything much in the global economy or that states are undermined by the rise of supranational and subnational authorities, whereas others consider that the features of the state as an ideological construct is much more important than the territorial component. Correspondingly, some argue that geo-economics is said to be superseding more and more geostrategy as the twin sister of geopolitics. But the fact is that Pakistan foreign policy and IOR policy is still dominantly embedded in its geopolitical orientations and its territorial construct. Simultaneously, converging and diverging with its geo-economic and geostrategic orientations.

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