

# **OBAMA'S ASIA PIVOT POLICY: IMPLICATIONS FOR SOUTH ASIA**

**Dissertation submitted to the Central University of Punjab**

**For the award of**

**Master of Philosophy**

**In**

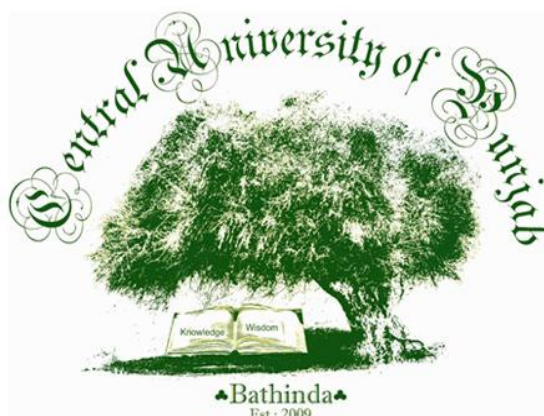
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**2014 July**

## **CERTIFICATE**

I declare that the dissertation entitled “OBAMA’S ASIA PIVOT POLICY: IMPLICATIONS FOR SOUTH ASIA” has been prepared by me under the guidance of Dr. Nishtha Kaushiki, Assistant Professor, Centre for South and Central Asian Studies, School of Global Relations, Central University of Punjab. No part of this dissertation has formed the basis for the award of any degree or fellowship previously.

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## ABSTRACT

### Obama's Asia Pivot Policy: Implications for South Asia

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Key words: *Asia pivot/rebalancing, string of pearls, geopolitical opportunity, strategic triangle, security architecture, Asian super complex, Indian foreign policy.*

One of the hallmarks of US President Barrack Obama's foreign policy is the 'pivot to Asia'. This policy is aimed at rebalancing US defence policies towards Asia. The Obama administration has rearticulated its policy away from the Middle East toward the Asia-Pacific. The focus of this research is on the strategic aspect of the policy. Under this rebalancing strategy, Washington, aims to increase its naval presence from the current 50/50 split between Atlantic and Asia-Pacific to 40/60 respectively by 2020. Further, the geographical scope of the Asia-Pacific has been defined as 'stretching from the Indian subcontinent to the western shores of the America's, the region spans two oceans, the Pacific and the Indian oceans that are increasingly linked by shipping and strategy. As India has been termed as a 'linchpin' of this policy; it is going to be more affected.

This research is a humble attempt to analyze the consequences of the Pivot on South Asian countries, with special focus on India. The first section of the dissertation discusses the rise of China and US's relative decline in order to explain the background of the pivot. It then moves on to discuss the changing geopolitical shifts in the Asian balance of power. This part sets to explain how the US and Chinese competing interests have changed the security architecture of

Asia and how South Asian countries, particularly India is going to deal with it. Finally, the study would attempt to recommend some measures that India could adopt and benefit from the geopolitical opportunity from the emerging competition between US and China.

Name and signature of student

Name and signature of supervisor

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

All with the blessings of Almighty Allah, I am able to fulfil this challenging task, which is a milestone in my academic career. I am grateful to a number of persons who guided and supported me throughout my research work and provided necessary assistance to me from time to time in order to make this dissertation success.

First I would like to thank my Parents who encouraged me for this study. I pay my hearty gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Nishtha Kaushiki, Assistant Professor Centre for South & Central Asian Studies, Central University of Punjab, for her guidance, support, patience, constructive criticism, keen interest, cooperation and valuable advice as a mentor and friend throughout the research work, without which I could not be able to complete this work.

I felt it moral obligation to extend my special thanks to my teachers; Dr. V.J. Varghese, Dr. Kiran K. Singh, Dr. Bawa Singh and Dr. Sandeep Bhatia, for their kind and generous support.

I greatly appreciate all my batch mates especially; Mudasir Gulam, Parvez Thokar, Mohammad Hussain, Amandeep Kaur, Ghulam Mohiudin, Mansoor lone, Manpreet Brar, Kumhari Nidhi, for their cheering support and guidance.

My sincere thanks goes to; Firdousa Akhtar, Raoof Najar, Sameer Ahmad, Rizwan Lone, Yasir Nazir, M. Sadiq, Arif Mir, Mudasir, Waseem Ahmad, Masroor Ahmad, Khursheed Ahmad, Sheetal Meenia, for their valuable suggestions and support.

I am also thankful to my brothers, Fayaz Ahmad, Mohammad Yaseen, Shabir Ahmad and my sister Shafeeqa, for being a constant companion throughout my research work.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents for their patience, encouragement, love and countless prayers.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Sr. No.	Full Form	Abbreviation
1.	Afghan National Security Forces	ANSF
2.	Afghanistan-Pakistan	AF-PAK
3.	Air Defence Identification Zone	ADIZ
4.	Anti-Access	A2
5.	Anti-Ship Ballistic Missiles	ASBMs
6.	Anti-Ship Cruise Missiles	ASCMs
7.	Area Denial	AD
8.	ASEAN Plus Defence Ministerial Meeting	ADDM+
9.	ASEAN Regional Forum	ARF
10.	Association of Southeast Asian Nations	ASEAN
11.	Brazil, Russia, India and China	BRICs
12.	Central Intelligence Agency	CIA
13.	China's Overseas Shipping Corporation	COSCO
14.	Command and Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance	C4ISR
15.	Congressional Research Service	CRS

16.	Department of Defence	DOD
17.	East Asian Summit	EAS
18.	Free Trade Agreement	FTA
19.	Gross Development Product	GDP
20.	Group of Two	G2
21.	Guided Missile Destroyers	DDG
22.	Guided Missile Frigates	FFG
23.	Indian Navy	IN
24.	Indian Ocean Region	IOR
25.	Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis	IDSA
26.	International Security Assistance Force	IASF
27.	Inter Services Intelligence	ISI
28.	Japan's Maritime Self-Defence Force	JMSDF
29.	Joint Working Group	JWG
30.	Land Attack Cruise Missiles	LACMs
31.	Littoral Combat Ships	LCS
32.	Manoeuvrable Re-entry Vehicle	MaRV
33.	Mine Counter Measures	MCM
34.	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation	NATO

35.	Operation Enduring Freedom	OEF
36.	Operation Iraqi Freedom	OID
37.	Operation New Dawn	OND
38.	Peoples Liberation Army	PLA
39.	Regional Security Complex	RSC
40.	Sea Lines of Communication	SLOC
41.	Surface to Air Missiles	SAMs
42.	Trans-Pacific Partnership	TPP
43.	Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India	TAPI
44.	United Kingdom	UK
45.	United States	US

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

#### 1.1— Introduction

One of the hallmarks of US President Barack Obama's foreign policy is the "Pivot to Asia". The Obama administration has rearticulated its policy away from the Middle East toward the Asia-Pacific. The structure of the "Asia pivot" has diverse aspects. From an economic aspect, Washington intends to integrate the emerging Southeast Asian economies into its sphere through the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), on the security front the policy involves an increased military presence in the region on rotational basis, and lastly the renewed political engagement with the countries across the Indo-Pacific region (Auslin, 2014). Since announcement of the policy, special focus has been given to its military aspect, mainly because it was acknowledged as a rebalance in US priorities after a decade of costly wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.<sup>1</sup> Given increasing significance on the security issues, this policy aimed at rebalancing US defence policies towards Asia. The US aims to increase its naval presence from the current 50/50 split between Atlantic and Asia-Pacific to 40/60 respectively by 2020 (Logan, 2013).

In January 2012, the US Department of Defense (DOD) released its new strategic guidance, entitled, "*Sustaining US Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*." This document dignified what President Barack Obama had already stated in his November 17, speech to the Australian Parliament, in which he affirmed that the Asia Pacific is in the top US national security priority and that defense sequester cuts in its spending will not be at the cost of this fundamental region.<sup>2</sup> With the new strategic guidance, adopted in January 2012, the US military strategy in the Pacific is changing (Ungaro, 2012). As the defense priority changes for the Asia Pacific region, it will have its consequences for South Asia too. India

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<sup>1</sup> "Obama's Asia policy takes a blow, Fast-track legislation seen as a key to TPP opposed by leading Democratic senator", *The Japan Times*, February 1, 2014, available at: <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/02/01/business/obamas-asia-policy-takes-a-blow/> , accessed on: February 25, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> The White House Office of the Press Secretary, "Remarks by President Obama to the Australian Parliament" (November 17, 2011), available at; <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/11/17/remarks-president-obama-australian-parliament>, accessed on: March 16, 2013.

too would be affected by it as it has been termed as a 'linchpin' of the policy.

The geographical scope of Asia-Pacific has been defined as "stretching from the Indian Subcontinent to the western shores of the America's, the region spans two oceans—the Pacific and the Indian—that are increasingly linked by shipping and strategy."<sup>3</sup> This implies that South Asia as a whole is going to be affected by this policy. Though India has welcomed the US initiative tactically, yet, it has not announced its formal alignment with the US to contain China owing to its possible implications.

## **1.2— Rationale behind the New Strategy**

The rationale for this new direction has been twofold. First, the pivot assumed that conflicts in the Middle East, primarily Iraq and Afghanistan, were winding down, allowing the U.S. to focus its attention and resources elsewhere. Second, the pivot acknowledged that the Asia-Pacific region is becoming a major driver of global politics that the US cannot afford to ignore. The region has overtime acquired its own importance due to the Malacca Straits as the passage of oil and sea bound trade, fastest growing economies of China & India, nuclearization of South Asia and North Korea, and above all, an aggressive China. North Korea and the China threat are the two main reasons that its allies in East and South East Asia fear the most, thus, raising suspicion amongst them on the US ability to protect them against any eventuality (Morse, 2012). US have thus been compelled to refocus on the Asian Pacific region by its allies who want it to demonstrate its commitment to their security.

US too have its interests in the region. First, it wants to avoid a Sino centric regional order that is based upon its whims and fancies. As a hegemon it would be reluctant to accept the Chinese supremacy in the region where it has been the provider of security in the past. Thus, the policy aims to demonstrate that despite the budget cuts in its defense policies and its 2008 financial crisis, it has the ability to prove itself in order to eliminate the suspicion among its allies regarding security commitment in the region. Second, Washington perceives that the future developments of the twenty-first century are going to take place in this strategically

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<sup>3</sup> Hillary Rodhan Clinton, 'America's Pacific Century', *Foreign Policy Magazine*, (11 October, 2011), available: [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/10/11/americas\\_pacific\\_century](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/10/11/americas_pacific_century) , accessed on: March 18, 2013.

vital region and is of the view that it could overcome its economic low-down only by involving economically itself with the countries of this region (Manyin, 2012). Third, as the US has faced many casualties in Afghanistan and the main objective-killing of Osama Bin Laden is now over, the US is no longer interested in extending its military deployments, though it wants to continue its minimum strategic presence. Also, it does not want to interfere or involve itself in military interventions in the Middle East any longer (Azizian, 2012). Asia Pacific region thus is seen as a solution to its problems. And what's more, it has been invited in the region by its allies because they need an outside power to contain China.

### **1.3— Strategies for the Pivot**

While recognising the significance of the pacific region, Obama administration has announced six key lines of action which include; strengthening bilateral security alliances, deepening working relationships with emerging powers, including China, engaging with regional multilateral institutions, expanding trade and investment, forging a broad based military presence, and advancing democracy and human rights.<sup>4</sup>

As part of its proclaimed “strategic turn” toward Asia, along with the repositioning of its naval fleet, the United States has, among other steps:

- Announced new troop deployments to Australia, new naval deployments to Singapore, and new areas for military cooperation with the Philippines;
- Stated that, notwithstanding reductions in overall levels of U.S. Defence spending, the U.S. military presence in East Asia will be strengthened and be made “more broadly distributed, more flexible, and more politically sustainable”<sup>5</sup>;
- Released a new defence planning document that confirmed and offered a rationale for the rebalancing to Asia while retaining an emphasis on the

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<sup>4</sup> Hillary Rodhan Clinton, ‘America’s Pacific Century’, *Foreign Policy Magazine*, (11 October, 2011), available: [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/10/11/americas\\_pacific\\_century](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/10/11/americas_pacific_century) , accessed on: March 18, 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Tom Donilon, America is Back in the Pacific and will Uphold the Rules, *Financial Times*, November 27, 2011, available at; <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/4f3febac-1761-11e1-b00e-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2sEQoA1bD> . , accessed on: March 18, 2013.

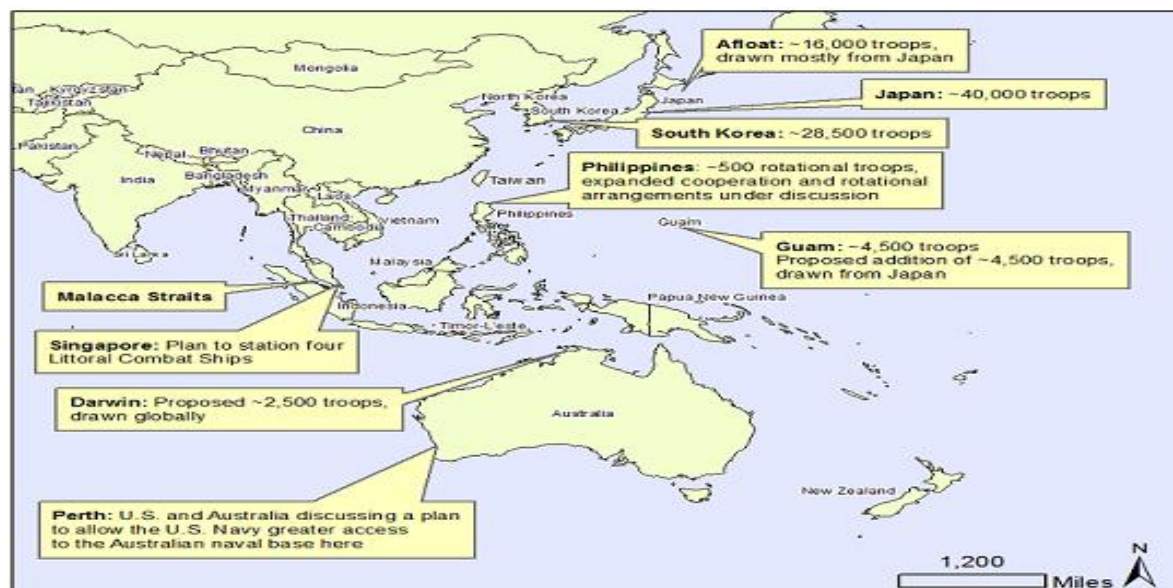
Middle East;

- Joined the East Asia Summit (EAS), one of the region's premier multinational organizations; and
- Secured progress in negotiations to form a nine-nation Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership (TPP) free trade agreement (FTA) (Manyin et al., 2012).

The new deployment plan will include six aircraft carriers in the Pacific, as well as most US cruisers, destroyers, Littoral Combat Ships (LCS), and submarines (Ungaro, 2012). Further the Obama's 'Asia pivot' policy has a broader geographical vision that includes the Indian Ocean and many of its coastal areas.

**Figure–1: Map of the Asia-Pacific**

Including Selected U.S. Troop Deployments and Plans



Source: CRS report for Congress, March 2012

The map given above highlights the developments under the new US policy. It is a clear indication of how the events in the near future can take the shape of great power rivalry between US and China. It is important to point out here that though these events have taken place in East Asia, yet consequences on South Asia are inevitable. As both the superpowers have their inherent weakness and strengths, it is extremely crucial for India to view the developments from the prism of its national interests (Jacob, 2012).

#### 1.4— Asia Pivot and India

The shift in the US policy along with the recent developments in the East Asian region clearly shows that the most important international political developments in the coming years are likely to happen in Asia. In the coming years, both China and North Korea can individually pose a threat to Asian peace and security. South Asia as a region will be particularly affected with the developments to come.

India, because of its remarkable economic growth and strategic position in the Indian Ocean and Malacca Straits has been assigned a significant position under this policy. India looks favourably towards this strategy owing to its own concerns about an assertive and militarily powerful China (Muni, 2012). The main reason of growing Indo-US strategic relations in the Asia-Pacific region is Washington's perception of looking upon India and its rising influence as an alternative to Chinese hegemony in the region (Sahgal, 2012). Arun Sahgal in his article, "India and US Rebalancing Strategy for Asia-Pacific", also mentioned—

“While most of the countries such as Australia, Japan and the smaller South East Asian countries do hold strategic relevance for America's “Asia pivot” strategy, it is perhaps the nuclear India with its growing economy that currently tops the US priority list for its regional designs.”

The US defence secretary Leon Panetta also projected India to be the ‘linchpin’ of the American strategy, because of being the biggest and most dynamic country in this region.<sup>6</sup>

The question that arises here is whether India would be willing to allow US play a dominating role in the region and eventually allow its foreign policy being “hijacked” by the US aims and ambitions. The answer to this question is not as simple as it seems to be. Since both the powers share a relationship of complex interdependence, India might be eventually drawn in the game.

Within India there are two schools, one in favour of closer Indo-US strategic ties and another against it. Under the former one there are those both within policy

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<sup>6</sup>“Partners in 21<sup>st</sup> Century”, Leon Panetta, June 6, 2012, available at: <http://www.idsa.in/keyspeeches/LeonEPanettaonPartnersinthe21stcentury>, accessed on: September, 5, 2013.



establishments as well as elites who believe that in the prevailing geostrategic environment, building a strong politico-military partnership with Washington is an imperative and in India's advantage. On the other hand there are also others both within the policy establishments as well as elites who are sceptical about US intentions and caution India against allowing it to become a pawn in the America's China containment strategy (Sahgal, 2012). The geographical scope of the "Asia pivot" clearly indicates that South Asia as whole is going to witness the impact of the US rebalancing strategy toward Asia as it includes the coastal areas of south Asia in its grip.

India thus would have to remain cautious while dealing with the two super powers— US and China. And with the most recent military standoff with China, it has to play its cards right in order to maintain its status quo in the region and in the world, if not lose out to either of them or avoid such steps that would antagonise either of these two competing powers against India. Thus, the extent and pace of India's participation in the US strategy would, be defined by the considerations of India's own strategic autonomy in the region and China's behaviour towards its border dispute and India's strategic priorities in the immediate neighbourhood. All this shows the strategic importance of India for the new US rebalancing policy or we may say the policy shift towards Asia.

### **1.5— Objectives**

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- a)** To examine the scope, background and challenges that the policy has.
- b)** To evaluate its implications on South Asian region with a special focus on India in particular. It also attempts to explore how India is responding to the 'key role' assigned to it under this strategy, and to what extent it is adopting and in future will adopt an independent foreign policy for south Asia without being heavily influenced by the US despite having strategic relations with it.

### **1.6— Programme of Work**

A major section of the research focuses on the geostrategic consequences on India and the policy options available for India in the wake of the geopolitical shifts

that entail the “Asia Pivot” policy. It also attempts to analyze how New Delhi would manage a tightrope walk between ‘strategic autonomy and geopolitical opportunity’. Subsequently, the research also analyzes the changes in the foreign policies of major regional powers like China and Pakistan in the backdrop of the policy.

### **1.7— Methodology**

The methodology used for this research is descriptive and analytical. The data for the research is mainly collected from the primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include defence reports issued by the US and China etc, foreign policy documents, official statements.

The secondary data is collected from different books, journals, articles and working papers of various educational and research institutes etc such as the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies etc.

### **1.8— Significance of the Research Topic**

Obama’s ‘Asia pivot’ policy is one of the most debatable issues in international arena. There is a growing consideration that this policy is going to create a ‘cold war’ like situation between US and China in the pacific region. The major Asian powers would not want to submit themselves to the discipline of a bipolar framework as they did during the cold war period. India has been assigned a key role (linchpin) in the ‘Asia pivot’ policy. India’s response to the new US rebalancing strategy is and also in future would be largely manipulated by its relations with China. Indian subcontinent is also witnessing the impact of this policy and the magnitude of this impact may increase in response to the growing competition between China and US. The pivot policy is going to have a great impact on its South Asian neighbours particularly to those who are having strategic relations with Beijing. Since the available literature lacks various dimensions, a research on this topic seems to be a substantial contribution in the academics.

## **1.9— Chapterisation**

### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

It includes a general overview on the Obama's 'Asia Pivot' policy, objectives of the study, methodology of the study, significance of the research and chapterisation.

### **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

This chapter gives a brief review of literature, and knowledge gap.

### **Chapter 3: US Imperial Overstretch and China's String of Pearls – Prelude to Asia Pivot**

This chapter examines in detail how the US and Chinese policies served as a prelude to the Asia Pivot. It discusses in detail how the US upon reaching its limits in the Afghanistan is now desperate to exit it by 2014. As US was involved in the Iraq and Afghanistan invasion on account of regime change and war on terror respectively, China made use of the vacuum created by the US in the region and forged new strategic partnerships with Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Sri Lanka with the motive of tying down India to South Asian region. The policy later came to be known as 'String of Pearls' by the western security experts. Lastly this chapter discusses the Chinese naval military modernisation with the aim of securing its interests in the region—protection of third party intervention and securing the sea lines of communication. Thus this chapter discusses the developments that led the US to announce its "Asia pivot" policy.

### **Chapter 4: India in the Changing Asian Security Architecture; Challenges and Opportunities**

This chapter discusses in detail the Changing Asian security architecture characterised by China's rise, US relative decline and the latter's return to Asia under the aegis of 'Asia pivot'. As India has been described as 'linchpin' in the new US rebalancing strategy, this chapter also analyses the India's response toward the policy. Finally this chapter also discusses in detail how India is responding and in future is going to respond to the changing Asian security architecture.

## **Chapter 5: Pivot and Geo political Shifts: South Asian Response**

As South Asia has been included in the geographical scope of the 'Asia pivot', the South Asian region at large is and will be affected under this policy. This chapter discuss in detail the implications of pivot policy on South Asia. It also discusses in detail the South Asian response to the policy.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations**

This chapter contains the summary and conclusion of the research and an attempt to present the findings, observations and recommendations of the research work.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

The Obama's "Asia pivot" Policy announced in 2011, also known as the new US policy shift, has acquired the attention of many thinkers and has become a debatable issue. Ample literature is available on this topic. Most of the literature available on the topic holds the perspective that Obama's "Asia pivot" policy is the continuation or we may say the extension of the policies carried out by the previous administrations towards the Asia-Pacific region. Most of the available literature also holds the opinion that rising China is a key driver that has prompted the United States to announce this policy of rebalancing towards Asia. A major opinion on the topic argues that since US is eager to exit Afghanistan at any cost; the Asia Pivot strategy is thus the next stop for the US at military level.

**Manyin et al., Alessandro Riccardo Ungaro, Michael D. Swaine and Rouben Azizian** focussed on the military aspect of the 'Pivot' policy. This school of thought argues that the "Asia pivot", policy is military and resource centric. The importance of Malacca straits, South China Sea and Indian Ocean being the major routes through which China's sea bound trade passes (that is about 80 percent) has been highlighted. China's string of pearls and its aggressive behaviour in South China Sea undermining the US interests and the security of its allies and friends has compelled US to make revisions in its policy toward Asia. It is in this backdrop that the US wants to contain the rising China and its string of pearls policy. Further America wants to exit Afghanistan and will maintain a minimum strategic presence in the Central Asian region. US wants to exit because of the major objective of hunting Osama Bin Laden has been achieved and economic cost of continuing presence in Afghanistan is huge. US has also realised that the major political developments in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are going to take place in the strategically important Asia Pacific region. Facing the economic slowdown since the global financial crises Obama administration is aware of the fact that US could overcome this problem by having economic relations with the countries of Asia-Pacific region in particular and Asia as a whole in general. Manyin, Alessandro Riccardo Ungaro and Rouben Azizian, talked about the areas of continuity and change as far as the new defence strategic guidance report is concerned. **Mark E. Manyin and his**

**associates**, in their study, *"Pivot to the Pacific? The Obama Administration's Rebalancing Toward Asia"*, (2012), argues that most of the new things of the pivot policy lie in the military sphere like: The Obama Administration has announced new deployments or rotations of troops and equipment to Australia and Singapore. The Obama's policy involves the inclusion of the coastal areas of South Asia in the geographical scope of the "Pacific pivot", because of the strategic significance of the energy resources and trade that pass through the Indian Ocean and the straits of Malacca before reaching the manufacturing sectors of East Asia. **Alessandro Riccardo Ungaro**, in his paper, *"Developments in and Obstacles to the US Pivot to Asia: What alternatives for Europe"*, (2012), is of the view that 'Pivot to Asia' is one of the hallmarks of US President Barrack Obama's foreign policy. It aims at rebalancing US defence policies towards Asia. After the release of the new US strategic guidance in 2012, the US military strategy in the Asia-Pacific is changing. Regarding the innovative aspects of the Pivot policy, Ungaro is also of the opinion that military and strategic dimension of the pivot is the most concrete one. The strategic guidance envisages the reallocation of American military assets from Europe to the Asia-Pacific. **Michael D. Swaine**, in his study, *"Chinese leadership and elite responses to the US pivot"*, (2012) also focussed primarily on the military dimension of pivot and discusses the pivot policy in the Chinese context. The author reads the policy as response to the growing clout of China and argued that Asia pivot policy has raised the concerns for china particularly by the military domain of the pivot. **Rouben Azizan**, in his study *"United States and the Asia-Pacific: Balancing Rhetoric and Action"*, (2012) is of the opinion that Obama administrations new major initiatives in the Asia-Pacific region indicates a recognition of the dramatic shift of economic, political and strategic power towards the region. The author states that China is the main, driver of the Asia's rise. The author further argues that the military element of the pivot to Asia is understandably been the most controversial as China and many regional experts see it as primarily driven by the rise of China's military power.

Another school of thought focuses on challenges to the Obama's 'Asia pivot' policy. **Satu Pal Limaye**, in his study *"The United States and the Asia-Pacific: Challenges and Opportunities"* (2012), talks about the three broad challenges to the US in Asia-Pacific; 1) sustaining the pivot policy economically and strategically,

2) managing the already existing alliances while forging new strategic partnerships and making multilateralism work, and 3) despite being China centric, US has to adopt a favourable approach to the various multilateral institutions in the Asia-Pacific region such as ASEAN, ARF etc.

There is another school of thought, which describes the position of India in the Asia pivot policy and its implications on New Delhi. This school includes; **S.D. Muni, C. Raja Mohan, Ninan Koshy, David J. Karl, Evan Braden Montgomery**. Almost all of them argue that, while recognising the growing economic, military and political power and the major provider of the security in the Indian Ocean and Malacca straits, India has been given key position (linchpin) in new Asia 'pivot policy', by United States. They discuss its positives and negatives for New Delhi. Their studies conclude on a note that in order to achieve its own interests what India required is to play its diplomatic cards in a proper way, so that neither of the two powers got antagonised. **S.D. Muni**, in his work, entitled, "*Obama Administration's Pivot to Asia-Pacific and India's Role*", (2012) argues that the new US policy aims to 'rebalance' its position in the Asia-Pacific region. The author explains the role of India in the Asia Pivot. India is seen as a 'linchpin' because of its impressive economic growth and strategic position in the Indian Ocean and Malacca Strait areas. India looks favourably towards this strategy owing to its own concerns about an assertive and militarily powerful China. Further the extent and pace of India's participation in the US, Asia Pivot strategy would largely depend on considerations of India's own strategic autonomy in the region, China's behaviour towards its border dispute and also will be guided by India's own strategic priorities in the immediate neighbourhood. **C. Raja Mohan**, in his article, "*The New Triangular Diplomacy: India, China and America at Sea*", (2012) is of the opinion that as both China and India are rising as naval powers their dealings with the United States will truly be a defining feature in the Indo-Pacific region. Both Washington and Beijing are encircling each other in Asia. India is one of the major important regional powers having the third largest economy in Asia, and the fourth biggest spender on defense in the Indo-Pacific after US, China and Japan. As the maritime interests of India and Beijing expand resulting in a conflict of interests, there emerges a new friction between the two countries in the Pacific and Indian Oceans. The US military rebalance toward Asia is marked undoubtedly due to

China's rise and thus it has resulted in a great eagerness on part of the US to strengthen its partnership with India. This has set in motion what one may call the triangular dynamic in the Indo-Pacific. C Raja Mohan is of the opinion that in this strategic triangular dynamic Beijing clearly has the upper hand. The study concludes with a foresight that China could accommodate either New Delhi or Washington to limit the depth of a potential Indo-US strategic partnership. **C. Raja Mohan**, in another work, entitled, *India: Between "Strategic Autonomy" and "Geopolitical Opportunity"*, (2013) argues that Obama's Asia pivot policy has intensified the triangular dynamic among US, China and India. Washington makes specific moves as part of the pivot policy and China responds these policies with its own policy decisions, India can no longer ignore the consequences of its relations with any of these two countries on other country. New Delhi's response to the policy is focussed on enhancing its ties with both the powers since it can't antagonise either of them. Consequently, pivot policy has made New Delhi to think more carefully about the pros and cons of a tight embrace with Washington. Mohan further argued that a strong and sustainable US role in Asia would be welcomed in New Delhi, however, like many other Asian nations India will not want to be seen as simply joining the US bandwagon against China. **Ninan Koshy**, *"India: Linchpin of the Pivot?"* (2012) focuses on US-India relations in the background of the Asia pivot policy. India has been given a prominent place in the America's "Asia pivot" policy. As the US administration has described the defence cooperation with India a "linchpin" in the US strategy in Asia, there would be substantial consequences for the South Asian region. America has not only encouraged India's "look east" policy but has rather coaxed India to "engage east" in order to have an important role in the Asian affairs. Regarding the diplomatic response from India, Koshy opines that on the one hand New Delhi is happy by availing US military technology but on the other hand it is cautious about aligning too closely with US against China. **Evan Braden Montgomery**, in his article, *"Returning to the Land or Turning Toward the Sea? India's role in America's Pivot"*, (2013) is of the opinion that both India and China traditionally focused on ensuring security along their land borders. Talking about the rivalry between these two countries he is of the view that it may have begun on land, but it has started shifting into the maritime domain as Beijing, as part of its 'pearl of strings' policy, is making inroads with island and littoral countries in the Indian Ocean while New



Delhi continues to strengthen its maritime capabilities. Washington is looking for opportunities to preserve its position in the Asia-Pacific as China's influence continues to increase which is posing biggest threat to Washington, its allies and in particular its interests abroad. US can do little by itself in this respect. This is the area where India's role is felt. India is the only reasonable candidate that might be able to divert China from its growing focus on naval and aerospace modernisation and reinforce Beijing's traditional focus on territorial defence. **David J. Karl** in his article, "*US India Ties: Pivot Problems*", (2012) talked about two conflicting dynamics in India-US relations that is the growing strategic cooperation in East Asia and unfolding differences over the future of Afghanistan. In order to have more focus on strategically important Asia-Pacific region US is eager to extricate itself from military conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan as according to US officials the future political actions are going to take place in the Asia-Pacific region. India also started to carve out its position in the strategically important region of Asia-Pacific. As the Obama's Asia pivot policy in part is aimed to counter China's rise it will undoubtedly push New Delhi to align closer to US because India is also sceptical about the growing clout of China. On the other hand US disengagement from Afghanistan is going to have adverse effect on India's security concerns. Key differences are bound to emerge between Washington and New Delhi regarding the political endgame.

Another school of thought comprises of **Joseph Yun** and **Vikram Nehru**. This school of thought discuss the importance of South Asia in the US "rebalancing" strategy and argue that India occupies a central position towards this end. While discussing the importance of South Asia in America's "Asia pivot" policy, **Joseph Yun** in his testimony, "*The Rebalance to Asia: Why South Asia Matters (Part 1)*", (2013) is of the opinion that it is increasingly important for US to view Indian Ocean region and East Asia in a coherent and integrated manner because both the regions are having cultural and economic linkages. The economic growth that has been taking place in South and East Asia particularly since the last decade has acted as a driving force behind the increasing integration between the two regions. The rising economic integration of South and East Asia has reinforced the strategic importance of the Indian and Pacific Oceans as a permanent route for global commerce and energy. Near about 90 percent of globally traded

merchandise travels by sea. Given this backdrop it becomes clear that any disruption of trade in the Indian and Pacific Oceans would have serious consequences that would also bring US into its ambit. As America's economic and strategic interests continue to span the breadth of the Indo-Pacific region, it became imperative for Washington to ensure freedom of navigation, promote respect for international law, and foster greater cooperation and dialogue with and among the countries of both regions on maritime security. Both East and South Asia are also linked in other key regional arrangements. India's membership in the East Asia Summit and the ADMM+, and India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Srilanka's membership in the ASEAN Regional Forum, also provide US an opportunity to engage nations of both the regions in the same multilateral fora to address shared concerns and build concrete habits of cooperation. While talking about the importance of India, Joseph Yun, is of the opinion that India's engagement within East Asia under the auspices of "look east" policy has been welcomed as most of the East Asian countries see India as a rising power that will contribute to the regional balance and its large and growing domestic market as an opportunity to diversify their economic engagement. So this also adds to the significance of South Asia to the America's "rebalancing" strategy. **Vikram Nehru** in his testimony, *"The Rebalance to Asia: Why South Asia matters"*, (2013) also mentions the significance of South Asia in US "rebalancing" strategy. He is of the opinion that extending America's "rebalancing" to include South Asia is not just important, it is essential. South Asia matters because a stable and outward looking South Asia that joins East Asia's production networks will offer a counterpoint to China's economic predominance in the region and provide additional momentum and resilience to Asia's rise. As being driven by the inevitable logic of markets and geography, the Indo-Pacific region comprising East Asia and South Asia has the potential to become world's economic power house. Nehru argued that Indo-Pacific regions peaceful rise should be a core objective of American foreign policy. While discussing the significance of South Asia in the US "rebalancing" strategy Nehru mentioned the following points 1) India's recognition that it must not only "look east" but also "engage east." 2) Japanese and Southeast Asian investors consider India as a potential location for their export-oriented investments as a hedge against their perceived over-dependence on China. 3) Myanmar's pivot toward the outside world and away from its dependence on China, created new

opportunities to India for opening a potential land bridge to Southeast Asia and Southern China. 4) South Asian Free Trade Agreement signed in 2004, which is on track to create a South Asian Free Trade Zone by 2016.

## **2.1— Knowledge Gap**

The available literature on the topic holds almost the same opinion with minor differences. The literature lacks in the following aspects:

- a)** A South Asian perspective of the Asia Pivot policy. It overlooks the individual country policy of the South Asian states in particular India. How the Indian foreign policy has rearticulated itself in the backdrop of the shifting geopolitics of the region has been outside the ambit of most of the available literature.
- b)** The literature available does not cover the consequences of US troop withdrawal from the Afghanistan on India. As Asia pivot and troop withdrawal are interconnected, its consequences on South Asian security balance has been understudied. The available literature does not explain how it will change/affect the relations between the major powers of the region i.e., India & Pakistan and also between India & China.
- d)** Finally, the literature misses out to a large extent the strategies that China has adopted in response.

## Chapter 3

### **US Imperial Overstretch and China's String of Pearls— Prelude to Asia Pivot**

This chapter examine in detail how the US and Chinese policies served as a prelude to the Asia Pivot. The first part of this chapter discusses in detail the US decline. Then it discusses about the costs of US involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq wars. The second part of this chapter analyses, how China made the use of the vacuum created by the US to increase its sphere of influence in South Asian region by forging closer strategic relations with countries in the India's neighbourhood and also building closer economic relations with east Asian countries as the later was involved in the Iraq and Afghanistan invasion on account of regime change and war on terror respectively. The motive behind this was to counter the increasing US influence in the region and the growing indo-US strategic presence in the Indian Ocean in order to secure its sea lanes of communications and lastly tying down India within the South Asian region. The policy has been called as 'String of Pearls' by the western security experts. Lastly it discusses the China's naval modernisation with the aim to counter third party intervention in its interests and to secure its sea lanes of communication.

#### **3.1— US Imperial Overstretch/Decline**

Ever since the end of World War Second US enjoyed its rapid economic growth, emerged as a leading nation in the world economy and was also successful in extending its sphere of influence from Latin America to South and South East Asia. Washington has also been at the centre of the establishment of many global economic institutions, including the World Trade Organisation, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.<sup>7</sup> Through these developments, the US has largely set the global economic rules (McDaniel & Army, 2012). These developments also gave Washington immense opportunities to be a norm setter in international relations, and thereby, having far reaching influence in the international politics.

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<sup>7</sup> John Ikenberry, 'American Unipolarity: The Sources of Persistence and Decline', *America Unrivaled: The Future of the Balance of Power*, Cornell University Press, New York, 2002, p. 306.

Further the cold war provided it with an opportunity to form alliances in order to fight against adversaries on different fronts. Right from the World War Second, Washington emerged as one of the most influential and powerful nations in the world. America has also emerged as the lone superpower and a primary security provider in the Asian subcontinent after the collapse of Soviet Union. Some two decades later, however in a very different international environment, its position of both absolute and relative powers appears to have changed significantly. As a result, many scholars and strategists now contend that the US is in decline. They argue that America's economic, structural, political and even military vulnerabilities are causing the erosion of national capabilities (Lieber, 2011).

The question of whether United States leadership is on rise or decline has been frequently debated both in the US and at international level. In line with this debate, the concept of 'imperial overstretch' was coined by Paul Kennedy in 1987 in his book "*Rise and Fall of Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000.*" Subsequently his work was both supported and criticised by many scholars. However, Kennedy's work set the ball rolling on an unending debate of whether US is at decline or not. There are two schools of thought, one speaks about the relative decline of US and also foresee that China's economic advancements will surpass that of US. On the contrary another school of thought out-rightly rejects the claim that US is on decline. The current debate on the Washington's position is of such nature that both sides have a strong case to make. Those who advocate that US is on a decline point persuasively to the national debt and deficit, low rates of savings and investment and difficulties in competing with successful economies of the time (McLean, 1991). Meanwhile, the rise of important regional actors, especially Brazil, Russia, India and China (the BRICs), as well as others such as South Africa, Turkey, Iran and the increasingly prosperous and dynamic countries of East and Southeast Asia, are said to diminishing the US primacy in World affairs (Lieber, 2011). They draw a deep attention to deep seated inefficiencies and inequalities in American society and emphasise their implication for America's international standing. On the other hand another school of thought reject the declinist arguments, and even argue that US is undergoing a process of renewal and remind us that Washington is without equal as a military power, that its economy is still the world's largest that the

influence of its culture is universal and that it is the only nation with a high ranking in all the major indices of national power (McLean, 1991). While commenting on the 2008 economic crisis and the declinist view Robert Kagan is of the opinion that—

“just as one swallow does not make a spring, one recession or even a severe economic crisis, need not mean the beginning of the end of a great power.”

He argued that, US suffered deep and prolonged economic crisis in the 1890s, the 1930s, and the 1970s. In each case, it rebounded in the following decade and actually ended up in a stronger position relative to other powers than before the crisis. The 1910s, the 1940s, and the 1980s were all high points of American global power and influence (Kagan, 2012).

### **3.1.1—End of the Cold War and US Involvement in Middle East & Afghanistan**

The end of cold war with the disintegration of Soviet Union changed the position of USA in Asia. Although challenged by the major competitors US became the dominant power in Asia. The global war on terrorism saw the US leadership and influence spread to South and Central Asia. US became the leading foreign power in South Asia, enjoying friendly relations with the two major powers of South Asia—India and Pakistan (Sutter, 2008).

Currently US is burdened with the responsibility for fulfilling the promises and commitments that were the legacy of cold war which include sustaining stability in Europe, East Asia and the Persian Gulf. During the last two decades, Washington has taken on the additional responsibility of involving itself in the Middle East, Central Asia and Eastern Europe. These strategic commitments require on part of the US to sustain large, capable and above all an expansive military forces. Yet, strategic experts increasingly realise that America's current force structure is insufficient to meet all of the US far-flung security commitments (Layne, 2011).

After the end of the cold war, the foreign policy objective of the US was to maintain its 'unipolar moment' and thus diverted its military activities towards the Middle

East. However, the events of 9/11 again diverted the US attention to the Afghanistan-Pakistan region. The September 11, attacks on the United States by Osama Bin Laden-led Al Qaeda network marked a turning point in the relationship between the US and the Muslim countries. Since, 2001, Washington has been engaged in a phase of militarisation and imperial expansion that has fundamentally changed the scenario of international politics. Under George W. Bush, US attempted to reconfigure world affairs through the force of arms. In the background of a broad military technological mobilisation, the US armed forces have swept across Central Asia and the Gulf, occupied Afghanistan and Iraq, and established a dense new network of forward military bases in the strategically sensitive arc stretching from the Gulf to South Asia (Golub, 2004). The 9/11 attacks in the heartland of the west led to the US invasion of Afghanistan and the subsequent unjustifiable Iraq invasion, for which Bush administration was severely criticised. The war on terror and the Iraq war were the main wars which along with the global financial crisis of 2008, led to the relative decline of the US powers. Unlike the 1991 Persian Gulf War, which involved only 100 hours of ground combat, fighting in Iraq lasted more than eight years and the war in Afghanistan has gone on for more than 11 years (Gartner, 2013).

The costs of war of the post 9/11 conflicts vary according to the reports of the various research institutes using multiple indicators such as financial costs, human lives lost, and, its adverse effects on the stature of US in the international arena. Thus, the costs of these conflicts have been estimated and even predicted differently by different officials, economists and organisations.

In September 2002, Lawrence B. Lindsey, the then Chairman of President's Council of Economic Advisers, estimated that the new Iraq War would cost \$100 billion, may be \$200 billion at a maximum.<sup>8</sup> As against this (later that year) Mitchel E. Daniels J., then head of the Office of Management and Budget, told the New York Times that \$50 to \$60 billion would be a more realistic figure, the same or a bit less than the cost of the 1991 Gulf War.<sup>9</sup> As it turned out, the cost of the Iraq

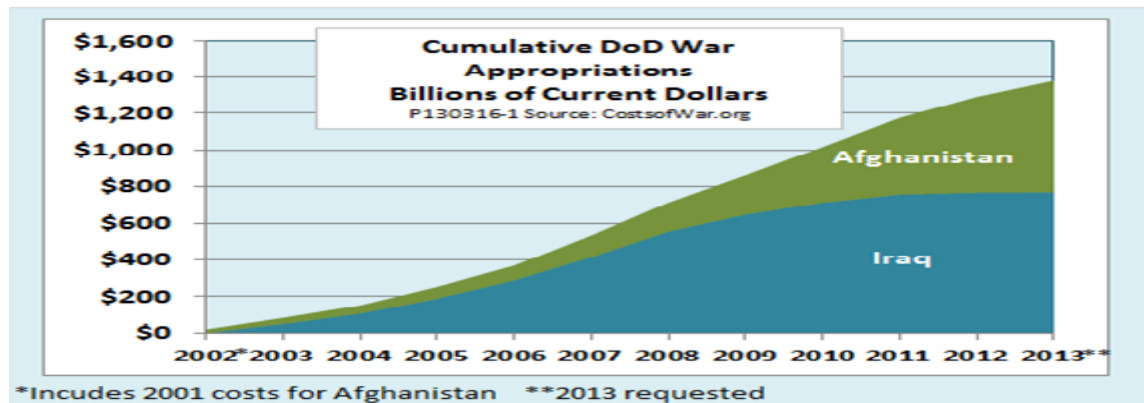
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<sup>8</sup> Ed Dolan, 'Ten Years on, New Estimates of the Economic Cost of the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan', March 18, 2013, available at; <http://www.economonitor.com/dolanecon/2013/03/18/ten-years-on-new-estimates-of-the-economic-cost-of-the-wars-in-iraq-and-afghanistan-2/>, accessed on; 18/11/2013.

<sup>9</sup> Elisabeth Bumiller, 'Threats and Responses: The Cost;white House Cuts Estimate of Cost of War With Iraq', The New York Times, December 31, 2002. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/12/31/us/threats->

war came to \$770 billion over the next twelve years, measured by US Defence Department appropriations alone. DOD (Department of Defence) appropriations for Afghanistan added another \$609 billion, pushing the cost of the two wars to well over a trillion, or \$1,379 billion to be exact.<sup>10</sup> However, the following chart, contradicts Lindsey's and Daniel's estimates (Dolan, 2013).

**Figure 2: Costs of War**



P130316-1 Source: CostsofWar.org, Ed Dolan, 'Ten Years on, New Estimates of the Economic Cost of the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan', March 18, 2013

An ongoing 'costs of war' project, based at Brown University, estimates that the total monetary cost, including long-term veterans care of Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan may eventually total as much as \$4 trillion.<sup>11</sup>

Another estimate suggests that up to 27, August 2013, \$1.48 trillion has been allocated to fund the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, including \$98.7 billion in fiscal year 2013. Out of this total, \$814.6 billion has been allocated for the war in Iraq since 2003, including \$7.2 billion in fiscal year 2013 and \$662.4 billion has been allocated for the war in Afghanistan since 2001, including \$91.5 billion in fiscal year 2013. These totals are based on appropriations that provide funding through the end of fiscal year 2013, as well as a May 2013 overview by the Department of Defence Comptroller.<sup>12</sup> These figures include both military and non-military

responses-cost-white-house-cuts-estimate-cost-war-with-iraq.html. Accessed on: 19/ 11/ 2013

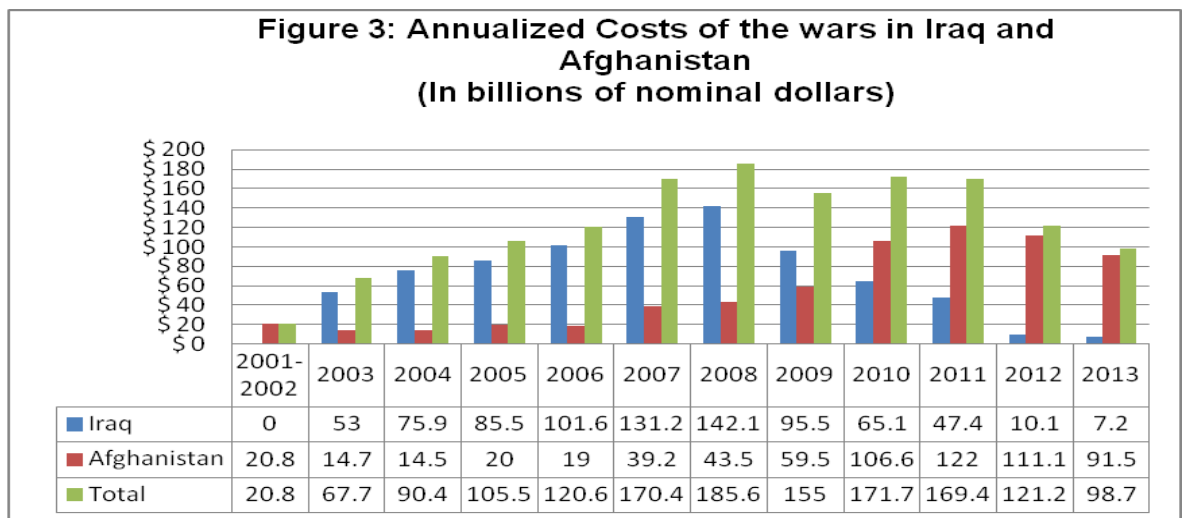
<sup>10</sup>Ed Dolan, 'Ten Years on, New Estimates of the Economic Cost of the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan', March 18, 2013, available at; <http://www.economonitor.com/dolanecon/2013/03/18/ten-years-on-new-estimates-of-the-economic-cost-of-the-wars-in-iraq-and-afghanistan-2/>, accessed on; 18/11/2013.

<sup>11</sup> John Wihbey, 'US military casualties and the costs of war: Iraq, Afghanistan and post-9/11 conflicts', October 22, 2013, available at: <http://journalistsresource.org/studies/government/security-military/us-military-casualty-statistics-costs-war-iraq-afghanistan-post-911>, accessed on: 21/11/2013.

<sup>12</sup> Cost of National Security-Notes and Sources, More About the Cost of War Counters, last updated, 27



spending, such as reconstruction. Spending includes only incremental costs.<sup>13</sup> For example, soldier's regular pay is not included, but combat pay is included. Potential future costs, such as future medical care for soldiers and veterans wounded in the war, are not included. These figures also do not include interest payments on the national debt that will result from higher deficits due to war spending. Finally these figures are based on an analysis of legislation in which Congress has allocated money for war and researched further by the Congressional Research Service, which has access to Department of Defence financial reports.<sup>14</sup>



Source: National Priorities Project analysis of annual appropriations, Congressional Research Service reports, and Department of Defence Comptroller reports.

To understand the true cost of war, one must consider not only the military operations themselves, but also the loss of life and the need of returning veterans for long-term medical and disability benefits. Indeed, even as overseas troop levels and operations costs begin to fall, the Obama administration has stated that it anticipates keeping approximately 10,000 troops in Afghanistan after 2014, down from a high of 100,000 in 2011.<sup>15</sup> Certain long-term costs are going to rise continuously as soldiers return home and start claiming for benefits.

August, 2013, available at: <http://nationalpriorities.org/cost-of/notes-sources/> , accessed on: 20/11/2013

<sup>13</sup> Means those additional funds that are expended due to the war.

<sup>14</sup> Cost of National Security-Notes and Sources, More About the Cost of War Counters, last updated, 27 August, 2013, available at: <http://nationalpriorities.org/cost-of/notes-sources/> , accessed on: 20, November, 2013.

<sup>15</sup> 'costs of long-term benefits to Afghanistan and Iraq veterans', available at; <http://journalistsresource.org/studies/government/health-care/cost-long-term-medical-disability-benefits-afghanistan-iraq-veterans-research-roundup-> , accessed on; 18, November, 2013.

Professor Linda J. Bilmes from Harvard University has come up with her estimates, according to which, the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts, taken together, are set to be the most expensive wars in the history of US totalling somewhere between \$4 to \$6 trillion. The years of conflict have left America still burdened with heavy costs, even with the ground combat phase drawing to a close. These costs include the immediate requirements to provide medical care for the wounded, as well as the accrued liabilities for providing lifetime costs and disability compensation to those who have survived injuries. Long-term costs also include structural increases to the military personnel and health care systems, depreciation on military equipment and weaponry, restoring the military, Reserves and National Guards to pre-war levels of readiness, maintaining a long-term military and diplomatic presence in the region (Bilmes, 2013). The Afghanistan and Iraq wars also cost US heavily in terms of casualties under the operations namely; Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF, Afghanistan), Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF,

**Table 1: Overall casualties in OIF, OND, and OEF**

(As of November 18, 2013)

Operations	US Service member Deaths	US Department of Defence Civilian Deaths	US Service Members Wounded in Action
Operation Iraqi Freedom	4,410	13	31,941
Operation New Dawn	66	0	295
Operation Enduring Freedom	2,287	3	19,475

Source: Compiled from reports of Congressional research Service<sup>16</sup> and from internet resource; [www.defense.gov/news/casualty.pdf](http://www.defense.gov/news/casualty.pdf), accessed on: November 20, 2013.

<sup>16</sup>Hannah Fischer, 'US Military Casualty Statistics: Operation New Dawn, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation Enduring Freedom', February 5, 2013, Congressional Research Service 7-5700, [www.crs.gov](http://www.crs.gov), RS22452.

Iraq, referred to as Operation New Dawn since August 2010)<sup>17</sup> and Operation New Dawn (OND, Iraq) which ended on 15 December 2011.

America's active involvement in the Middle East both diplomatically and militarily for many decades in particular the two wars in the last decade carried with it an unavoidably deeper focus that has been consuming at national level.<sup>18</sup> The US national level spending on these two wars consumed valuable national reserves<sup>19</sup> at a time of global financial crisis and the US is in such difficult economic circumstances that it has had to raise its foreign debt ceiling to US \$16.2 trillion (from Oct. 1 through Nov. 15, 2013, total public debt jumped from \$16.738 trillion to \$17.190 trillion)<sup>20</sup> to avoid defaulting.<sup>21</sup>

The controversies surrounding the US treatment of Iraqi prisoners and international terrorist suspects meted out by it have severely spoiled its image of being a nation known for supporting and propagating human rights and due process according to democratic principles. Washington has been widely seen in the region as absorbed in the conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan and the broader war on terror and insensitive to Asian regional trends emphasizing cooperation, multilateral consultation and development (Sutter, 2008). Washington's policies and the conduct of operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan alienated the majorities in Asia. From 2000 to 2007 there was a growing anxiety on the US even among the public of traditional NATO allies particularly on its 'war on terror' and Iraqi invasion (Ahmadov, 2012).

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<sup>17</sup> Leslie Larson, 'Iraq and Afghanistan wars set to be the most expensive conflicts in US history with a \$6 trillion price tag', 29 March 2013, available at: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2301235/Iraq-Afghanistan-wars-set-expensive-conflicts-U-S-history-6-trillion-price-tag.html>, accessed on: 20/11/2013.

<sup>18</sup> Obama, *Remarks by President Obama to the Australian Parliament*. (November 17, 2011), available at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/11/17/remarks-president-obama-australian-parliament>, accessed on : March 16, 2013.

<sup>19</sup> Costs Of War, *Economic Costs Summary: \$3.2 – 4 Trillion and Counting*, available at <<http://costsofwar.org/article/economic-cost-summary>>, accessed 18 June 2012. As at 2011, the total monetary cost to the US of the Middle Eastern wars was between US\$3.2 – US\$4 trillion.

<sup>20</sup> Obama's Debt Build-up Risks, A Major Fiscal Catastrophe, available at: <http://news.investors.com/ibd-editorials/111913-679856-us-issues-1-trillion-new-debt-in-just-6-weeks.html>, accessed on: November 21, 2013.

<sup>21</sup> 'Federal Debt Ceiling', *The New York Times*, available at: <[http://topics.nytimes.com/topics/reference/timestopics/subjects/n/national\\_debt\\_us/index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/topics/reference/timestopics/subjects/n/national_debt_us/index.html)>, accessed 17 June 2012.

Although US dominates in most of the key areas of national power, it is financially stretched and nationally tested by a decade of Middle Eastern wars that have crushed the nation's finances and reduced its domestic desire for conflict. There are a number of evidences that the Bush administration wanted to use military option to squash the nuclear programs of Iran and North Korea but was prevented from doing so because of the US military's deep involvement to the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is now clear that American military is too small to meet the demands of those two wars alone and is not in a position to fight wars on multiple borders either by itself or along with its allies. As a result, the US governments image in Asia and the ability of the US government to lead by example or to otherwise persuade the governments and peoples of the region to follow Washington's policies and initiatives on a variety of international issues have declined (Sutter, 2008).

The declining economy and the nation's expanding budget deficit are going to make it more and more difficult to uphold the level of military commitments that US hegemony requires in the decades to come. United States is imperially overstretched as its strategic commitments have far exceeded the resources available to support them. The economic and fiscal constraints are going to have more subtle effect on US primacy in the years to come. US superiority at levels of warfare is supposed to prevent the emergence of great power challengers to its hegemony. To maintain this status-quo power in the future, the American military will have to be expanded in size, because it is too small to meet present and likely future commitments (Layne, 2011).

After being engaging itself in Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts, US policy appeared inattentive to concerns with development, nation building and regional cooperation in multilateral organizations. Burgeoning intra-Asia trade and investment seemed to diminish the importance of Washington in regional economic matters (Sutter, 2008). The evidence that international system is rapidly becoming multi-polar and that, perforce, America's relative power is declining is now difficult to deny.

Thus, we are now witnessing a seismic shift in global economic power from the Euro-Atlantic world to Asia (Zakaria, 2008). Rising powers including India and especially China were portrayed as gaining regional influence and leadership as

the US was seen on the path of its decline (Sutter, 2008). Although the US still enjoys dominant lead, the trend lines favour Beijing, which already has overtaken Washington as the world's leading manufacturer that is a crown United States held for more than a century<sup>22</sup> (Dyer & Luce, 2009). China has already surpassed Japan as the second largest economy in the world and it is also widely believed that China is also on the track to overtake the United States in GDP in the coming decades. China's rise will cause difficulties for US that already is over-taxed strategically.

In the past decade as US was involved in the long drawn two wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, China used the vacuum created by US in order to increase its strategic influence in its immediate neighbourhood and also in the East Asian region. China's trade with the Association of the Southeast Asian nations (ASEAN) has grown from \$8 billion in 1991 to \$400 billion in 2012 and Chinese President Xi Jinping has pledged to increase China-ASEAN trade by two and a half-fold to \$1 trillion within the next five years, on the other hand US trade has also grown but at a much slower rate, and consequently its share of East Asia trade has declined over the past decade from 19.5 percent to 9.5 percent, while China's share has grown from 10 to 20 percent.<sup>23</sup> Beijing has become the biggest trading partner of the Association of the Southeast Asian nations (ASEAN) since 2009, and its direct investments are surging, and since 2011, China has consolidated its position as the largest trading partner with most Asian countries.<sup>24</sup> While leveraging its commercial ties, Beijing is also mounting its diplomatic, political and military influence more in the region, though its efforts are handicapped by persistent maritime tensions with Japan, the Philippines and several other nations.<sup>25</sup> China's great power posture is reflected by greater economic influence over countries in the region and elsewhere and also in its steps to strengthen Beijing's military. By many measures, China is now clearly the world's second largest power, after the

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<sup>22</sup> These include defence spending, defence spending as a percentage of total great power defence expenditures, defence research and development spending, defence spending as a percentage of GDP, GDP per capita and GDP as a percentage of great power GDP (Brooks and Wohlforth 2008, 27–35).

<sup>23</sup> John J. Brandon, "Obama's Asia Pivot on Shaky Ground", A Weekly Insight and Analysis from The Asia Foundation, October 9, 2013, available at: <http://asiafoundation.org/in-asia/2013/10/09/obamas-asia-pivot-on-shaky-ground/>, accessed on: 15 January, 2014

<sup>24</sup> Stuart Grudgings, "As Obama's Asia 'pivot' falters, China Steps into the Gap", *Reuters*, available at: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/10/06/us-asia-usa-china-idUSBRE99501O20131006>, accessed on: 15 January, 2014.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid*

US, and its aggregate economy is due to surpass that of the Washington sometime around 2025 (Shambaugh, 2013). Though China's growth has been multidimensional in nature (financial, military) across varied regions, and has threatened the security of its neighbouring countries in East & South Asia, the focus of this section of the chapter is on string of pearls so as to bring an interlinking factor with the South Asian region, with particular emphasis on India's encirclement.

### **3.2—China's String of Pearls and India's Encirclement**

The concept of 'String of Pearl's' is a western conception of how the People's Liberation Army-Navy (PLA) and its auxiliary, the China Overseas Shipping Corporation (COSCO) had been able to sustain a maritime extension of developing the civil-military infrastructure access build-up in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) covering Southern Asia and East African Coast. Chinese efforts to negotiate basing rights have earned the moniker 'string of pearls'<sup>26</sup> in the United States (Holmes & Yoshihara, 2008). Broadly speaking, each "pearl" in the 'string of pearls' is a nexus of Chinese geopolitical or military presence (Lin, 2008). These pearls extend from the coast of mainland China through the littorals of the South China Sea, the Strait of Malacca, across the Indian Ocean, and on to the littorals of the Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf. China is building strategic relationships in order to advance its naval presence along the Sea Lanes of Communications (SLOCs) that connect China to the Middle East. The list of pearls include the following: upgraded military facilities in Hainan Island; upgraded airstrip on Woody Island located in the Paracel archipelago about 300 nautical miles east of Vietnam; container shipping facility in Chittagong, Bangladesh; construction of a deep water port in Sittwe, Burma; construction of navy base in Gwadar, Pakistan; pipeline through Islamabad and over Karakoram Highway to Kashgar in Xinjiang province that would transport fuel to China itself; intelligence gathering facilities on islands in the Bay of Bengal near the Malacca Strait, Hambantota port in Sri Lanka (Pehrson, 2006).

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<sup>26</sup> The term first appeared in a Washington Times article after originating in a Booz- Allen study commissioned by the Pentagon's Office of Net Assessment. See Bill Gertz, 'China Builds Up Strategic Sea Lanes', Washington Times, 18 Jan. 2005, [http:// www.washtimes.com/national/20050117-115550-1929r.htm4](http://www.washtimes.com/national/20050117-115550-1929r.htm4).

China is acquiring naval facilities along the crucial choke points in the Indian Ocean not only to secure its economic interests but also to enhance its strategic regional presence. There is a clear indication of China comprehensively building up its maritime power in all dimensions. Its growing reliance on bases across the Indian Ocean region is a response to its perceived vulnerability, given the logistical constraints that it faces due to the remoteness of the Indian Ocean waters from its own area of operation. Yet, China is consolidating power over the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean with an eye on India.

As the ability of China's navy to project power in the Indian Ocean region grows, it has raised the concerns for India. Despite enjoying diverse geographical advantages India is likely to feel even more vulnerable. China's presence in the IOR is worrying as it restricts India's freedom to manoeuvre in the region. Of particular note is China's so-called 'string of pearls' strategy that has drastically expanded its strategic depth in India's backyard (Pant, 2011).

It is possible that the China's construction of these ports and facilities around India's periphery can be explained away on purely economic and commercial grounds, but India views it as a policy of containment. Quite clearly, a complementary aim of this policy is the strategic encirclement of India, which has vital security interests in the Indian Ocean. PLA Navy presence in these waters would no doubt pose a threat of serious magnitude to these interests (Prakash, 2011).

### **3.2.1—Strategies under String of Pearls**

- ***Access to airfields and ports.*** This is to deter the state that may interdict China's shipping and strategic trade. China perceives that its 'peaceful rise' has several adversarial accents among the peer powers and great powers that may exploit China's sea trading routes to interdict during times of crisis and war (Prabhakar, 2009). Hence this may be accomplished through building new facilities and gaining access along the littorals by establishing pleasant relations with other nations. In some cases it also involves heavily subsidizing construction of new port and airfield facilities in other countries with the understanding that these facilities will be made readily available as

needed (Lin, 2008).

- ***Increase diplomatic relations.*** The second objective of this strategy is to engage with the great power navies at one end while keeping in mind a long term objective of establishing dominion and dislodge major economic competitors in the Indian Ocean Region/Asian littoral (Prabhakar, 2009). This is also to ensure shipping lanes and airspace remains free and clear and may also be used to establish mutually beneficial trade and export agreements. Since a string of pearls rely on linking a series of pearls, it is important to ensure that each pearl is also safe and not be threatened by neighbouring states (Lin, 2008).
- ***Modernising military force.*** A modern military can move successfully to maintain/hold individual pearls. It will also be prepared for various actions and exercises on the part of a parent nation (Lin, 2008). This also includes the strategy to reinforce sea-based nuclear deterrence against India and other powers through forward deployment and patrol of its nuclear attack and fleet ballistic missile submarines in the region (Prabhakar, 2009).

### **3.2.2–Rationale behind String of Pearls**

The rapidly growing demand from China's energy hungry economy has led to its increasing dependence on overseas imports. China has acquired energy assets abroad, mostly in Africa and the Persian Gulf, and most of it comes home by sea. This is perceived as a strategic vulnerability, because about 60% of China's exports and 90% of her oil imports are shipped via the Indian Ocean, and have to transit across extended sea lanes via the Hormuz and Malacca Straits (Prakash, 2011).

In November 2003, President Hu Jintao declared that 'some big powers have tried to control and meddle in the Strait of Malacca shipping lanes' and called for adoption of a 'new strategy' and 'active measures to ensure (China's) energy security'. This was widely reported by the Chinese press as Beijing's 'Malacca Dilemma'<sup>27</sup> (Khurana, 2008). At a high level economic work conference in

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<sup>27</sup> 'Energy Security Runs Up Against "Malacca Dilemma"', Will China, Japan & Korea cooperate?' (translated



December 2003, President Hu Jintao reacted strongly to this predicament, calling for a solution to be found to the PRC's 'Malacca dilemma' and for sharp attention to be paid to securing China's energy resources (Chambers, 2008). Beijing perceives a greater threat from 'control' of sea-lines and maritime choke points by unfavourable naval powers (particularly India and USA). China has, therefore, made extensive efforts in the past decade to bypass 'insecure' waters for its strategic energy imports (Khurana, 2008).

### **3.2.3—Important 'Pearls' of China, Encircling India:**

**Gwadar in Pakistan:** Gwadar is a key pearl within the 'String of Pearls' (situated in the Pakistan's largest province, Baluchistan) and China's first strategic foothold in the Arabian Sea. China's involvement in constructing the deep-sea port of Gwadar has attracted significant attention due to its strategic location of about 72 kilometres from the Iranian border and 400 kilometres east of the Strait of Hormuz, a major oil supply route. Some suggest that it will provide China with a 'listening post' from where it can 'monitor U.S. naval activity in the Persian Gulf, Indian activity in the Arabian Sea, and future Indo-US maritime cooperation in the Indian Ocean' (Lin, 2008). The first phase of the project, which includes the construction of oil refineries, too, has already been completed and as of 2012 the port was being further extended. Beijing also plans to build additional pipelines from Gwadar to Xinjiang in West China and thus convert the Pakistani port to a full-fledged centre for energy imports from the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, Africa and even partly South America, saving much shipment time and costs and avoiding possible disruptions by hostile countries (Weimar, 2013).

**Hambantota in Srilanka:** The port after completion will consist of a harbour, cargo terminals, repair, bunkering and refuelling facilities (Khurana, 2008). The total cost of the project is estimated to be US \$1.4 billion.<sup>28</sup> The Chinese-funded Hambantota Port Development Project near Dondra Head in the southern part of Srilanka will set up a naval military base in response to that of the UK's Diego Garcia military base in the Chagos Islands, which is currently leased to the United

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from Chinese), *China Youth Daily*, June 15, 2004, at

<http://japan.people.com.cn/2004/6/15/2004615101302.htm> (Accessed October 22, 2007).

<sup>28</sup> "Sri Lanka's Hambantota Port 'not deep enough'," <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-15661917>

States Navy. Hambantota is strategically acting as a vital gateway for securing access to sea lanes of communication (SLOCs) in the Indian Ocean. The new port is only six nautical miles from major SLOCs between the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea (Hayward, 2010).

**Chittagong in Bangladesh:** Geographically continuing the encirclement of India, China is investing in the construction of a deep-sea port in the south eastern Bangladeshi city of Chittagong, east of India's provinces West Bengal and Orissa at the Bay of Bengal. Chittagong lies strategically close to the Bangladesh–Myanmar border. Apart from this US \$870 million port project, China is also building roads between Bangladesh and Myanmar (Weimar, 2013).

**Myanmar:** It is well known that over the years China has been constantly assisting Myanmar to build new military facilities and upgrade existing ones. Apart from supplying naval vessels and training Myanmar Navy personnel, China has developed a deep sea port in Kyaukpyu at the Bay of Bengal and is constructing naval facilities and road connections to Yangon in Sittwe which is close to Kolkata. The PRC is moreover alleged to have installed major reconnaissance and electronic intelligence systems on the Great Coco Island, located 18 kilometres from India's Andaman and Nicobar Islands, giving China theoretical capabilities to monitor India and its regional military operations (Weimar, 2013). These facilities also bear the potential of being used by Chinese naval vessels. India's offer to develop the Myanmar's ports of Dawei and Sittwe could be seen as a response (Khurana, 2008).

**Maldives:** Due to its strategic location along the China's and India's major shipping lanes Maldives possesses a significant importance. China has been involved in a range of construction projects in the Maldives and acted as an important supplier of military hardware. Beijing has expressed strong interest in building a transit port at the Haa Alif Atoll in northern Maldives. Apart from that, the PRC has taken action to build the South Asian country's second airport in Hanimaadhoo Island and there are circulating rumours and allegations of a Chinese submarine base project in Maro Islands (Weimar, 2013).

Thus, China as shown in the map below seems to garland its 'String of Pearls' around India as it continues its defence cooperation and 'arms for pearls' policy with countries surrounding India by establishing a listening post in Gwadar, Pakistan, equip Bangladesh with Chinese military hardware in an anti-India defence cooperation, military agreement with Cambodia in November 2003, military ties with Burma and leasing Coco Island in 1994 for SIGINT installation, and the latest pearl acquisition on 31 October 2007 to construct Hambantota port in Sri Lanka (Lin, 2008).

**Figure: 4: Map showing how Beijing is encircling India**



Source: <http://abhijit-suryawanshi.blogspot.in/2012/02/string-of-pearls.html#/2012/02/string-of-pearls.html>. Accessed on: 25 October, 2013.

Thus as China becomes more and more dependent on imported energy resources for its fast growing industrial economy, it will develop and exercise military power projection capabilities to protect its vital Sea Lanes of Communication. This would require China's access to advanced naval bases along the sea lanes of communication. The so called 'pearls of string' policy has considerably weakened India's zone of influence in the South Asian states. Chinese trading practices with South Asian states has the apparent intent and effect of being a benevolent trading

partner while the political and boundary disputes with India and South Asian states present India as a bully power and China as the championing power for the economic and development interests of the smaller states of South Asia. China's extensive infrastructure development assets in Myanmar, Pakistan and Sri Lanka and with growing interests in Nepal is consolidating China's eyes and ears in Southern Asia against India (Prabhakar, 2009).

### **3.3—Naval Modernisation—a Corner Stone of Chinese Military Modernisation and Area Denial and Anti Access (A2/AD) Capabilities**

China, since the end of the cold war and particularly since the last decade, has vigorously adopted the policy of military modernisation. China is continuously spending a huge amount towards this goal. Between 2001 and 2011, the average annual increase was 10.3 percent in real terms. Its defence spending exceeded \$100 billion for the first time in 2012, and the 2013 defence budget announced in March stands at \$112.6 billion, a 10.7 percent nominal increase over the previous year.<sup>29</sup> China now spends about three times as much as India (\$36.3 billion) on defense and more than neighbouring Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Vietnam combined (Marcus, 2014).

As China has emerged as a global and regional economic power, its dependence on the Sea has grown as much of its imports and exports are seaborne. It has lately translated its economic growth into increasing its defense capabilities. Also, on the diplomatic front, as it is already involved in territorial disputes with Japan and other South- East nations, its defense modernisation was expected by most of the countries. Given this backdrop, it became imperative for China, to modernise its naval assets in order to make PLA Navy worth enough to counter perceived future threats to its growing energy demands and to fulfil its ambitions of becoming a major maritime power.

China's naval modernisation effort, which began in the 1990s, encompasses a broad array of weapon acquisition programs, including programs for anti-ship ballistic missiles (ASBMs), anti-ship cruise missiles (ASCMs), surface-to-air

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<sup>29</sup> IISS 'Strategic Comments', "China's Defence Spending: New Questions" Volume: 2013, Edition number: 22, 02 August 2013, available at: <http://www.iiss.org/en/publications/strategic%20comments/sections/2013-a8b5/china--39-s-defence-spending--new-questions-e625> , accessed on: 10, February, 2014.

missiles, mine, manned aircraft, unmanned aircraft, submarines, aircraft carriers, destroyers, frigates, patrol craft, amphibious ships, mine countermeasures (MCM) ships, and supporting C4ISR (Command and Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance) systems (O'Rourke, 2013).

The PLA Navy remains at the forefront of the military's efforts to extend its operational reach beyond East Asia and into what China calls the "far seas." Missions in these areas include protecting important sea lanes from terrorism, maritime piracy, and foreign interdiction; providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief; conducting naval diplomacy and regional deterrence; and training to prevent a third party, such as the United States, India, Japan etc., from interfering with the exercises off China's coast in a Taiwan or South China Sea conflict (Department of Defense, 2013).

Military modernisation of Peoples Republic of China is directed on increasing PLAs ability to engage in Anti-Access and Area Denial (A2/AD).<sup>30</sup> Towards this end China is installing diverse weapon systems intended to counter the capability of a technologically superior power to gain access to a conflict zone or contested area during times of any eventuality. Chinese A2 capacity comprises a large ballistic missile force intended to hit targets, such as air bases and naval facilities and Chinese AD capabilities consist of advanced counter-maritime and counter-air systems (Singh, 2013).

As PLA Navy stands at the forefront of Beijing's A2/AD developments, in a near-term conflict PLA navy operations would likely begin in the offshore and coastal areas with attacks by coastal defence cruise missiles, maritime strike aircraft and smaller combatants. These operations are also expected to extend as far as the second island chain and Strait of Malacca using large surface ship and submarines. As the PLA Navy gains experience and acquire large numbers of more capable platforms, including those with long-range air defence, it will expand the depth in the Western Pacific (Department of Defence, 2013).

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<sup>30</sup> Anti-access (A2) challenges prevent or disgrace the ability to enter an operational area. These challenges can be geographic, military, or diplomatic and Area denial (AD) refers to threats to forces within the operational area or threats that are characterized by the opponent's ability to obstruct the actions of foreign forces (like U.S. forces) once they have deployed.

Anti-ship ballistic missiles (ASBMs), attack submarines , and supporting C4ISR systems are viewed as key elements of China's emerging A2/AD force, though other force elements, such as, Anti-ship cruise missiles (ASCMs), LACMs (for attacking US bases and other facilities in the western Pacific), and mines are also of significance. China's emerging maritime A2/AD force can be viewed as broadly corresponding to the sea-denial force that the Soviet Union developed during the Cold War to deny US use of the sea or counter US forces participating in a NATO-Warsaw Pact conflict. One potential difference between the Soviet sea-denial force and China's emerging maritime A2/AD force is that China's force includes ASBMs capable of hitting moving ships at sea (O'Rourke, 2013). Coupled with china's growing fleet of surface combatants, the military means of supporting China's goal of being a "strong maritime power" are being put into place (Cheng, 2013).

### **3.3.1—Essential Elements of Chinese Naval Acquisitions and Modernisation Effort**

***Anti-Ship Ballistic Missiles (ASBMs):*** China for several years has been developing and testing an anti-ship ballistic missile referred to as the DF-21D, that is a theatre-range ballistic missile equipped with a manoeuvrable re-entry vehicle (MaRV) designed to hit moving ships at sea. The DF-21 has a range exceeding 1,500 km (810 nautical miles) and is armed with a manoeuvrable warhead.<sup>31</sup> The DF-21D (carrier killer), the world's most developed anti-ship missile has raised deep concerns for many observers, as such missiles, in combination with broad-area maritime surveillance and targeting systems, would permit China to attack aircraft carriers, other US ships or ships of its allied or partner navies operating in the western pacific. This is also referred to as a game changing weapon. Due to their ability to change course, the MaRVs on an ASBM would be more difficult to intercept than non-manoeuving ballistic missile re-entry vehicles (O'Rourke, 2013).

***Anti-Ship Cruise Missiles (ASCMs):*** Among the most capable of the new ASCMs that have been acquired by China's navy are the Russian-made SS-N-22 Sunburn (carried by China's four Russian-made Sovremenny-class destroyers) and the

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<sup>31</sup>"Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China", P: 5, Annual Report to Congress 2013, Department of Defence, United States of America.

Russian-made SS-N-27 Sizzler (carried by 8 of China's 12 Russian-made Kilo-class submarines). China's large inventory of ASCMs also includes several indigenous designs. China is also working to develop a domestically-built supersonic cruise missile capability (O'Rourke, 2013).

**Submarines:** China since the mid-1990s has acquired 12 Russian-made KILO-class non-nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSs) and put into service at least four new classes of indigenously built submarines, which includes; Jin-class or Type 094 (a new nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) design), currently three Jin-class SSBNs (Type 094) are operational and up to five may enter service before China proceeds to its next generation SSBN (Type 096) over the next decade, the Shang-class or Type 093 (a nuclear-powered attack submarine (SSN) design), two SHANG-class SSNs (Type 093) are already in service, and China is building four improved variants of the SHANG-class SSNs, which will replace the aging HAN-class SSNs (Type 091), the Song-class or Type 039/039G, the PLA navy possesses 13 SONG-class SS (Type 039) and eight YUAN-class SSP (Type 039A)<sup>32</sup> (Department of Defence, 2013).

**Aircraft Carriers: The Liaoning,**<sup>33</sup> the Beijing's first aircraft carrier was put into service on September 25, 2012, and is supposed to carry out wide-ranging local operations (like; focussing on shipboard training, carrier craft integration, and carrier formation training) before reaching to an operational efficiency in the years to come. While not ready for 24/7 flight operations along the lines of a US Nimitz-class vessel, the Chinese have clearly moved to basic takeoffs and landings ahead of projections. In the meantime China has also commissioned a number of underway replenishment ships as an essential part of any future carrier operation (Cheng, 2013).

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<sup>32</sup> The YUAN-class SSP is armed similarly to the SONG-class SS, but also includes an air-independent power system.

<sup>33</sup> Liaoning is a refurbished ex-Ukrainian aircraft carrier, previously named Varyag that China purchased from Ukraine as an unfinished ship in 1998 (Annual Report to Congress 2013, P: 6, Department of Defence, USA).

***Among Other efforts towards PLA Navy's modernisation the Annual Report to Congress, (2013), US DOD mentioned the following developments—***

“China is engaged in the construction program of various classes of ships, including guided missile destroyers (DDG) and guided missile frigates (FFG). During 2012, China continued series production of a new generation of DDG. Construction of the LUYANG II-class DDG (Type 052C) continued, with one ship entering service in 2012, and an additional three ships under various stages of construction and sea trials, which when completed will bring the total number of ships of this class to six. Additionally, China launched the lead ship in a follow-on class, the LUYANG III-class (Type 052D), which will likely enter service in 2014. The LUYANG II incorporates the PLA Navy's first multipurpose vertical launch system, likely capable of launching ASCM, land attack cruise missiles (LACM), surface to air missiles (SAM), and anti-submarine rockets. China has continued the construction of the workhorse JIANGKAI II-class FFG (Type 054A), with 12 ships currently in the fleet and six or more in construction. Augmenting the PLA Navy's littoral warfare capabilities, especially in South China Sea and East China Sea, is a new class of small combatant. At least six of the JIANGDAO-class corvettes (FFL) (Type 056) were launched in 2012. The first of these ships entered service in February 2013; China is expected to build 20 to 30 of this class. These FFLs augment the 60 HOUBEI-class wave-piercing catamaran missile patrol boats (PTG) (Type 022), each capable of carrying YJ-83 ASCMs, for operations in littoral waters. The PLA Navy has also increased its amphibious force in 2012. Two YUZHAO-class amphibious transport docks (LPD) (Type 071) were accepted into service during the year bringing the total of YUZHAO LPDs to three.”

As Washington is confronted with enormous problems encompassing its declining economy, expanding budget deficits and above all its imperial overstretch particularly since the last decade, it is going to be more and more difficult for Washington to uphold the level of military commitments necessary for US hegemony. This has also affected the image of US as the potential saviour for its allies in case of any eventuality. Given the America's involvement in long drawn



wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, China used the vacuum created by the US in order to establish its strategic foothold in East, South, and Southeast Asia. While leveraging its commercial ties, Beijing is also mounting its diplomatic, political and military influence more in the region. Thus China which is going through military modernisation has emerged as a great challenger to US hegemony and its leading role in Asia as the formers economic and military might is undermining the security of latter's Allies and friends. In order to counter the bullying China, America has returned to Asia under the aegis of "Asia pivot" policy to maintain status-quo. These developments have changed the security architecture of Asia.

## Chapter 4

### India in the Changing Security Architecture of Asia: Challenges and Opportunities

Given the background in the previous chapter about the reasons which led the US to announce its 'Asia Pivot' policy, the focus of this chapter would be on the changing security architecture of Asia with the emergence of an Asian 'super complex' that has been the result of China's rise and Asia pivot/rebalancing policy. As the triangular dynamics of the strategic triangle between India, China and the US is taking shape, it has created geopolitical opportunities, as well as challenges for India. The aim of this chapter is to discuss the same.

#### 4.1—Defining Security Architecture

The use of the term "security architecture" appeared in the international relations domain at the end of the cold war and the collapse of Soviet Union with its far reaching impact on the security of Asia and the possible potential for reconstruction.<sup>34</sup> Security architecture in the words of Tow has been defined as, "an overarching, coherent and comprehensive security structure for a geographically-defined area, which facilitates the resolution of that region's policy concerns and achieves its security objectives" (Tow & Taylor, 2010). Current changes in the Asian security architecture have been marked by China's rise, a relative decline of the U.S., and latter's 'return to Asia' under the auspices of "Asia Pivot" policy. In this line, William T. Tow and Brendan Taylor in their study entitled as, *"What is Asian Security Architecture?"* opine that—

"as the region's strategic environment has become more complex, the need for viable security architecture in Asia has become more pressing than ever."

The current century has been described as the Asian century, because according to many observers, particularly the US public officials, the major developments in the ongoing century are going to take place in Asia. It is the rise of China that seems to be the most significant element in a fundamental shift in the global centre

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<sup>34</sup> Yang Xiaoping, "The Security Architecture of Asia: Problems and Prospects" P: 3, available at: <http://indiachinainstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/Yang-Xiaoping-Security-Architecture-of-SA.pdf> accessed on: 17 December, 2013.

of magnitude from Euro-Atlantic world to Pacific world. China's rise is viewed both with the positives and negatives by most of the Asian countries. The US largely dominated the Asian continent, but since the last decade it is now facing a major challenge to its dominance from the rising clout of Beijing. The aggressive behaviour of China towards its neighbours with whom it has territorial conflicts has served as positives for the US to maintain its strategic influence throughout the region. Given the above background, the "Asia pivot" policy or "rebalancing strategy" is welcomed by most of the East Asian countries and India, though it has not welcomed the US policy shift publicly, given the economic stakes of New Delhi in Beijing. All these developments serve as an engine for the changing security architecture of Asia.

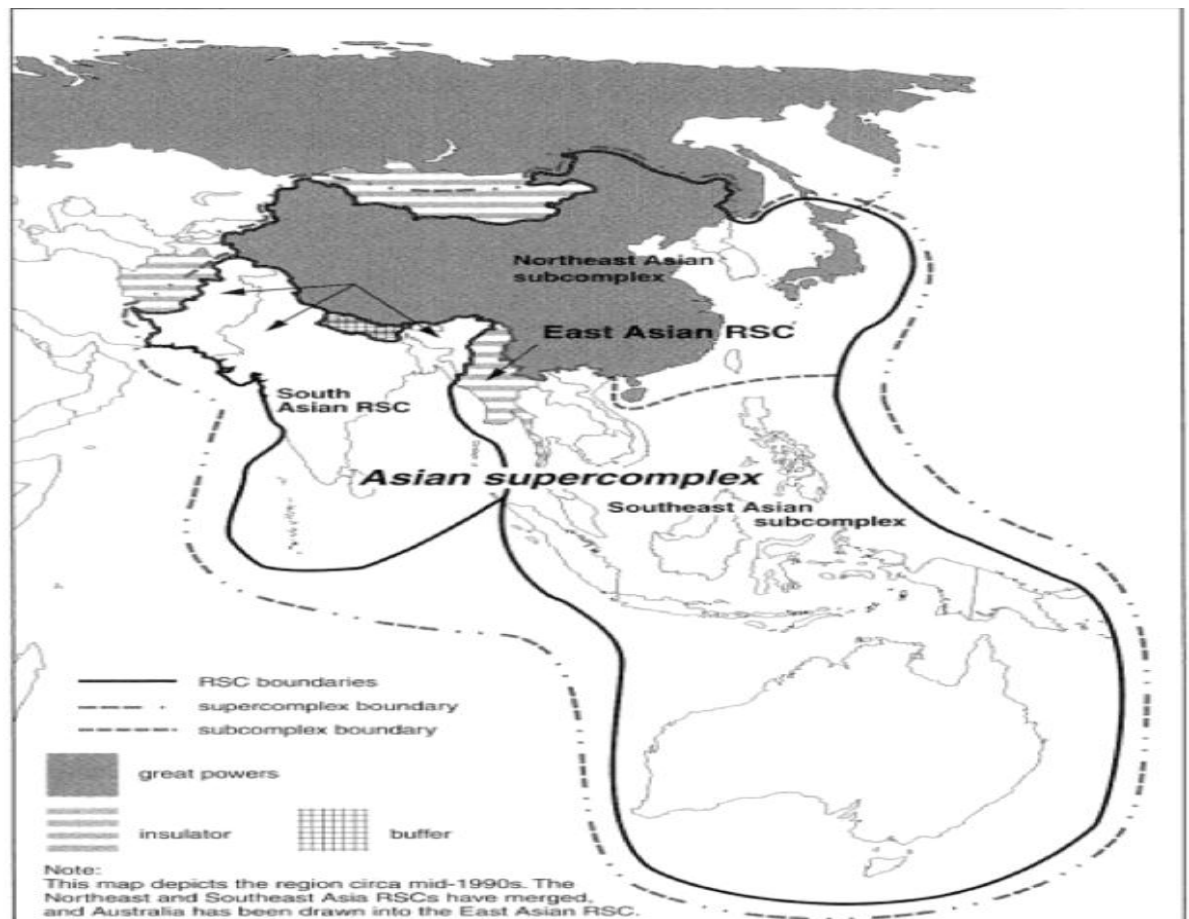
#### **4.2—Emergence of Asian Super Complex**

In 2003 Barry Buzan, gave the regional security complex theory in which he focussed on the South Asian regional security complex. Regional Security Complex not only refers to security interdependencies between the states in the region but also includes the effect, the powerful external actors (like China, the US and Russia) and geopolitical interests have on regional dynamics (Dutt & Bansal, 2013). Regional security complex in South Asia according to Buzan, is in a conflict formation mode. The main characteristics of which is deep and ongoing hostility between the two local dominant powers (India and Pakistan) of the region and the steady emergence of India as a regional hegemonic power due to its rising economic and military power while Pakistan remained mired in deepening political instability. Given the little economic linkages among the South Asian states, India being the regions dominant economy, looked towards outside the region for boosting its steadily growing economy. As New Delhi felt less threatened by its neighbours, it was in a position to pursue its 'look east' policy by becoming active economically and strategically in East Asia (Buzan, 2012). Since last two decades India was operating more on all-Asia scale in a framework increasingly defined by the growing clout of China. Currently India securitizes China more than Pakistan and on the other hand Beijing, which previously was not seeing India with concerns, has changed its perceptions, particularly since the Indo-US nuclear deal and growing strategic ties between India and Washington. Because of China's

involvement in South Asia due to its historical border disputes with the emerging South Asian local giant India, and Beijing's closer ties with Pakistan and rivalry for influence in Burma, there remain significant connections between the RSCs of South Asia and East Asia (Buzan, 2012). However, both the RSCs have their own security concerns.

Given the changing security dynamics of Asia, Buzan altered the regional security complex theory in 2012 and came up with his new "Asian super complex" theory. A 'super complex' can be understood as a set of Regional Security Complexes (RSCs) within which there is the presence of one or more great powers which creates relatively high and dependable levels of interregional security dynamics.<sup>35</sup>

**Figure: 5: Map showing the emergence of Asian super complex**



Source: <http://policytensor.com/2012/05/25/the-topology-of-global-power/>, accessed on: 13 December, 2013.

<sup>35</sup>Policy tensor, the topology of global power, May 25, 2012, available at: <http://policytensor.com/2012/05/25/the-topology-of-global-power/>, accessed on: 13 December, 2013.

Barry Buzan in his article entitled, '*Asia: A Geopolitical Reconfiguration*' (2012), rightly argued that–

“the Asian ‘super complex’ has emerged which is apparent within the cross membership model to Asian intergovernmental organisations like; ASEAN-plus-3 (APT), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), East Asian Summit (EAS) etc, and through the counterweights to the growing clout of China, particularly in India, and Washington’s engagements in East and South Asia.”

The main engine behind this change is the rise of China and the relative decline of US and more importantly their rising competition for influence in Asia. Securitisation of China is of course, the linking threat between the RSCs of the East Asia, South Asia and South East Asia. The growing economic and military clout of China over the past three decades has not only increased Chinese influence throughout Asia, it has also sharply raised the fears of Chinese dominance in Japan, Australia and India.<sup>36</sup>

In the current scenario all Asian states including India, have to position themselves in relation to an emergent rivalry which is also termed by many thinkers as the beginning of a new cold war between the US and China. The policy options available to Asian states under this scenario is to avoid becoming too knotted with either against the other and to exploit the positive externalities flowing from the emergent rivalry or by playing the two rivals against each other (Tellis, 2011).

All these developments were gradually shaping the external penetration by the US into both the individual RSCs in Asia and the Asian super complex as a whole. The responses to the growing clout of China have now given shape to a weak but definite Asian super complex (Buzan, 2012). This drift is being toughened both by China’s turn to a harder line policy since 2009 (particularly its growing territorial claims in South China Sea), and by increased US strategic presence as an intervening external power in South and East Asia (Buzan, 2012).

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<sup>36</sup> Policy tensor, “the topology of global power” May 25, 2012, available at: <http://policytensor.com/2012/05/25/the-topology-of-global-power/> , accessed on: 13, December, 2013.

### **4.3—The Emergence of Balancing/Asia Pivot**

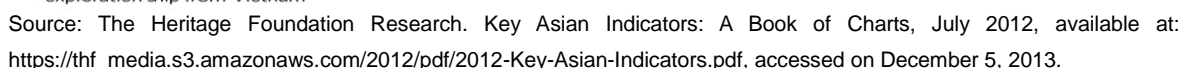
With the demise of Soviet Union the cold war has ended, and in the post cold war era a new geopolitical scenario emerged particularly since the last decade. In this scenario, China gradually appeared to be a new global power with its fast growing economic and military powers. Thus David Shambaugh, in his study entitled as, *“China Goes Global, The Partial Power”* (2013), rightly argued that, for the past decades scholars of international relations have observed how the world has affected China, now the situation has reversed and it is necessary to understand how Beijing is affecting the world (Shambaugh, 2013).

The ongoing rise of Beijing is perhaps the most significant element in a fundamental shift in the global centre of magnitude from Euro-Atlantic world to Pacific world. China’s economic rise, accompanied by an even faster rise in its military strength and reach, is swiftly concentrating power in the region. The ongoing rise of Beijing is viewed from two angles; first, China with its rising internationalism and sense of positive engagement with the rest of the world. And, on the other hand, there is a rising China that seems less comfortable with the existing international society, a China wanting to use its rising power to assert its status and territorial claims. In the backdrop of this split personality of Beijing different opinions have been generated regarding the nature of its rise i.e., from quite benign one to quite threatening one. The assertive behaviours of Beijing raise the question mark on its claims about peaceful rise and make them look like weak propaganda at best to deceive at worst (Buzan, 2012).

Almost all Asian States are intensely entangled with China economically. On the one hand every state is aware of the material benefits that commercial intercourse with China brings but on the other hand every nation in different ways is deeply concerned about the long-term objectives of the rising power. Subsequently every state seeks to protect their security and autonomy in relation to China’s growing military might and assertive behaviour without forsaking the material gains that come from the economic intercourse with Beijing. While, China terms its rise as a peaceful and benign one, but its ambitions make it an alarming global power. The rapid rise of China and its increasingly assertive behaviour is being viewed as a major challenge by leaders and policy makers in the US, India, Japan and many

Given the disputes with China, most of its neighbours fear that the Beijing's recent shift (since 2009) to a more bullying posture on territorial disputes raised the alarm that something worse has to come. China's growing defence spending and the growing quest of sophisticated military capabilities along with its assertive military behaviour in the South and East China Seas since the last decade pose a possible military threat and fear of Chinese domination to the US and its allies. Consequently, the allies of the US and its friendly nations have called upon it to take immediate measures. Given the military capabilities of China, no other power in South-East and South Asia can potentially balance it. Thus, US is now seen as a saviour to many. Given below are the maps indicating the South-China Sea disputes and other territorial disputes of China?

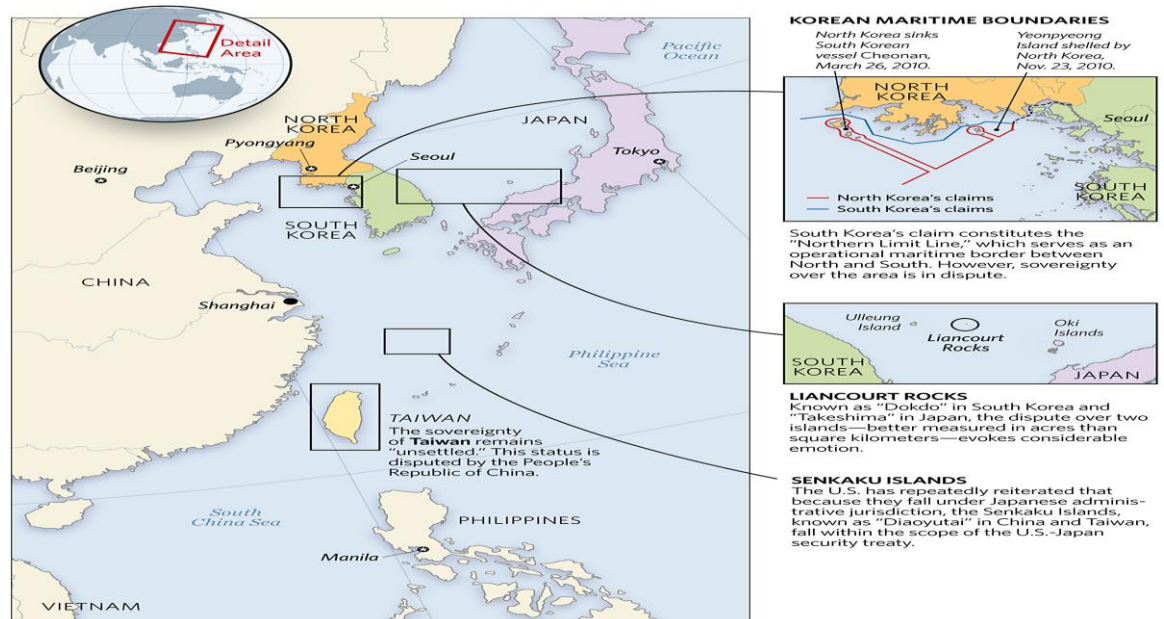
*Since 2009 Chinese vessels have been involved in a number of aggressive incidents in the disputed waters of South China Sea.*





## Figure 7: Map Showing Areas of Dispute: China, Japan and the Korea

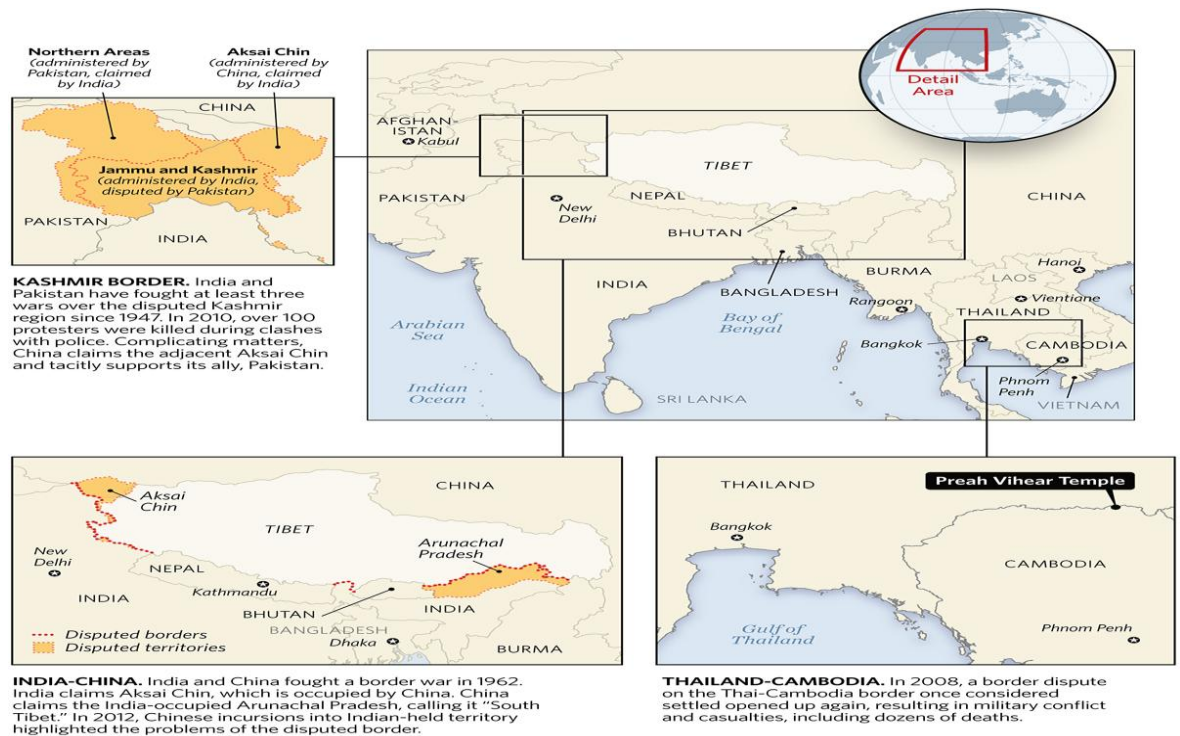
The Western Pacific is home to several heated sovereignty disputes with the potential for conflict.



Source: The Heritage Foundation Research. Key Asian Indicators: A Book of Charts, July 2012, available at: [https://thf\\_media.s3.amazonaws.com/2012/pdf/2012-Key-Asian-Indicators.pdf](https://thf_media.s3.amazonaws.com/2012/pdf/2012-Key-Asian-Indicators.pdf), accessed on December 5, 2013.

## Figure 8: Map Showing Areas of Dispute: China, India and Mainland South East Asia

Several of the most volatile border disputes in Asia focus in the west, where China, India and Pakistan come together.



Source: The Heritage Foundation Research. Key Asian Indicators: A Book of Charts, July 2012, available at: [https://thf\\_media.s3.amazonaws.com/2012/pdf/2012-Key-Asian-Indicators.pdf](https://thf_media.s3.amazonaws.com/2012/pdf/2012-Key-Asian-Indicators.pdf), accessed on December 5, 2013.



India and several Southeast Asian states increasingly look more to each other and Japan, as well as to the US, to balance the menace they see from the already risen China. Further Beijing's non democratic system of governance and its ambitions to be the leading nation at the world stage appears to have led the US to engage with other Asian nations. The US is not only strengthening its old alliances with Asia-Pacific nations but is also in the process of forging closer partnerships with nations like India which have shared values such as democracy (Shrivastav, 2013).

It is in response to these developments, that the US has returned to the Asia-Pacific region, though the return is a relatively benign one. The US is trying to forge a coalition of like-minded Asian countries favouring continuing 'peace and stability' a coalition that might deter, the Chinese assertiveness (Das, 2013). These developments greatly facilitated the recent US policy shift of 'returning to Asia' pronounced as 'Asia pivot' or 'rebalancing' strategy. This policy shift represents the core focus for the US security policy towards Asia. Thus, Obama administration has rearticulated its policy away from the Middle East toward the Asia-Pacific. Under this policy shift, US aim to increase its naval presence from the current 50/50 split between Atlantic and Asia-Pacific to 40/60 respectively by 2020 (Logan, 2013).

India because of its growing global posture and key position in the Indian Ocean has been assigned an important position under this policy shift. Despite that New Delhi lags behind Beijing with respect to its advancement and influence at the international stage but the consistency of its economic growth has been adequate to register its growing posture at international level. Unlike China, India's rise because of its democratic posture has not generated the same western concerns as Beijing's but its rise has been welcomed both in the US and Southeast Asian states particularly by US allies. Closer ties with America have helped India to achieve great power status at international level. Signing of the nuclear deal with Washington has largely resolved its status as a nuclear weapon state which further strengthen India's claim to be recognised as a great power (Buzan, 2012).

Being the dominant local power in the Indian Ocean also reinforces its claim to be accepted in the family of great power states as a nation that has sustained and significant economic, political and military influence in more than one region. In the

twenty first century it seems quite clear that the rationale behind US policy towards India is countering the rise of Beijing. As New Delhi is fearing the rise of China and is in search of measures to balance the rise of China, New Delhi is quite aware that it cannot balance China on its own and therefore it look toward the US which is also concerned about the rise of China. The recent military standoffs by China in 2013 can make New Delhi to further tilt towards Washington. Thus China has occupied the central position in the relations between India and the United States. In the present century, the key to greater strategic interaction between South and East Asian states would be largely determined by, how the rise of India and China play both into each other and into the existing set of US alliances and engagements in Asia (Buzan, 2012).

#### **4.4—United States-India-China Triangular Dynamics: A Tightrope Walk for India between US and China**

The concept of a strategic triangle is now familiar to analysts of international affairs. It refers to a situation in which three major powers are sufficiently important to each other and that a change in the relationship between any two of them has a significant impact on the interests of the third. The greater that impact, actual or potential, the greater is the significance of the triangular relationship (Chatterjee, 2011). According to Henry Kissinger, the most advantageous position in the strategic triangle is the 'pivot' role which maintains goodwill with the other two players while pitting them against each other. In the emerging triangle between New Delhi, Washington and Beijing, America expertly maintains the 'pivot' position keeping a delicate balance between its relations with the two wings, India and China and deriving maximum benefits as the latter two engage in a rivalry to outbid each other (Chatterjee, 2011).

Under this strategic triangle, Washington forges closer ties with New Delhi with the aim of containing a potentially aggressive China. On the other hand, China is viewed as an unpredictable regime. Despite its stated philosophy is one of peaceful rise, its defence expenditures are rising and now rank third in the world after US and Russia and is on the track to surpass Russia in the coming decades. Beijing is also known as the proliferator of the nuclear technology to rouge states such as Libya, Pakistan, Iran and North Korea. It is in this backdrop that

Washington tilted towards New Delhi, which is growing less rapidly as compared to Beijing and that too in a non-threatening manner, and also in part as a hedge against a potentially aggressive China (Malone, 2011). The deep geopolitical rivalry between India and China, combined with the extended influence of the US, makes support of one Asian rival against the other an extremely strategic factor (Garver, 2002).

In the emerging strategic triangle, under the current scenario, all the three actors (India, China and US) are intensely aware of the actions and policies adopted by each other and how the policies/decisions of other are going to affect ones interests. Further, in the current scenario it is apparent that the emerging triangle is in such an environment where Beijing fears India's rise and US containment particularly in the backdrop of growing Indo-US cooperation, New Delhi fears Chinese containment particularly by its encirclement of India under the 'string of pearls' strategy, and Washington fears Chinese dominance particularly by the growing clout of the aggressive communist China. Such an environment is a clear indication that minor differences could evolve into a potential conflict (McDaniel & Army, 2012).

Under the new triangular dynamics between India, China and US, Washington-New Delhi convergence appear to be on the positive track of rapid improvement. While on the other hand Washington-Beijing partnership remains one of a suspicious nature. The Indo-China relations being characterised by fluctuations, and unresolved border disputes, New Delhi is keeping a vigilant eye on the Beijing's growing global posture. The recent intrusions into Indian Territory in Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir by Chinese army in the summer 2013, has once again heated up the unresolved border disputes between the two countries. In the backdrop of growing challenges posed by China, Indian policy makers are scrambling to develop effective policies in order to cope with the rising and aggressive China. New Delhi at the same time is following both a robust diplomatic strategy aimed at encouraging peaceful resolution of border disputes and forging strong economic ties and an ambitious military modernisation that will build Indian air, naval, and missile capabilities (Curtis & Cheng, 2011).

As New Delhi and Washington move gradually towards each other, there remains

uncertainty about the strength of their triangular dynamic involving China. Despite the Beijing's rising power raised concerns for both New Delhi and Washington, none of them is in a position to declare an explicit policy of countering/balancing or containing rising China. The difficulty lies in the economic stakes of both India and US in China. The economic interdependence of both the countries with China, pose significant limits on Indo-US strategic policies against the aggressive China. New Delhi, being the weakest of three powers, is quite aware of the fact that it is going to be more vulnerable to shifts in Sino-US relations and that a relatively declining US might be tempted to accommodate China in order to avoid the burdens of balancing the growing clout of China (Mohan, 2011). New Delhi has always viewed closer Sino-US ties with uncertainty and contrary to its interests. The reason behind this is its past experience where US and China take stands against India like in the 1971 India-Pakistan war<sup>37</sup> and on the nuclear tests of 1998 where both of these powers condemned the nuclear tests and November 2009, bilateral talks between China and US. No doubt India, today enjoys closer ties with US, however it is keeping a watchful eye on Sino-US relationship.

The US "rebalancing" strategy has further heightened the suspicions within the trilateral relations between the three countries as argued by C Raja Mohan in his study entitled as, *India: Between 'Strategic Autonomy' and 'Geopolitical Opportunity'* that this strategy has further strengthened the triangular dynamic among, Washington, Beijing and India. As the US makes specific move as part of its so called 'rebalancing' strategy and China reacts with its own policies, India, as being situated in such a geopolitical condition can no longer ignore the costs of its relations with US or China on the other country (Mohan, 2013). India's triangular dynamic with US and China is most visible in the Asia-Pacific. In the current century, New Delhi is gradually shifting its focus from land borders towards maritime one, by continuously bolstering its maritime capabilities, particularly in response to Beijing's policy of making inroads with island and littoral nations in the Indian-Ocean (Montgomery, 2013). With this, the rivalry between India and China is also gradually shifting towards maritime domain. Given the increasing importance of maritime spaces in the Indo-Pacific, the region has become the major area of contest between India, China and the US. With US assistance, New

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<sup>37</sup> During this war US encouraged China to open a second front against India.

Delhi is enhancing its naval capability sufficient for operating in the Indo-Pacific and both are cooperating in their policies towards the region. The leading example in this direction is the President Obama's endorsement of India's 'look east' policy, and urging India to become more engaged in the region.<sup>38</sup> Beijing is also developing its naval capabilities which makes Indo-Pacific region prone to clash between the three players of the emerging triangle. In the backdrop of China's anti-access and area-denial capabilities, cyber and space capabilities and assertive behaviour in the South China Sea, which has been identified as potential friction points by the US National Military Strategy, there are possibilities for a stronger US-India partnership in the Indo-Pacific (McDaniel & Army, 2012). While the growing Indo-US cooperation may fall short of an alliance, there is undoubtedly the potential for the US and India to form a strong strategic partnership, particularly if China becomes more forceful or aggressive. As all the three actors of the emerging triangle are competing for their strategic presence and influence in the Indo-Pacific, the region has become the potential flash point for clash in the decades to come and each nation within the emerging triangle can use all the possible means to mitigate the risk.

As both India and US are concerned with the growing clout of China and both are having economic stakes in China which both would not like to put at risk, C. Raja Mohan rightly argued in his study, *"The New Triangular Diplomacy: India, China and America at Sea"* (2012) that–

“Beijing, obviously, enjoys the upper hand in the current triangular dynamic with Washington and New Delhi. It could accommodate either India or America to limit the depth of a progressive Indo-US strategic partnership.”

The nature of this triangle is of such nature that it generates uncertainty as there are elements of cooperation as well as confrontation involving all the three bilateral relationships (Brewster, 2013). Therefore, the hope lies in transparency, mutual

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<sup>38</sup> Obama's address to the Indian parliament in November 2010, available at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2010/11/08/remarks-president-joint-session-indian-parliament-new-delhi-india>, accessed on: January 7, 2014.

trust and at least co-existence in the increasingly contested Indo-Pacific region as mentioned by A K Antony, the Defence Minister of India, while meeting the former US Defence Secretary Leon Panetta at New Delhi on 6 June 2012.<sup>39</sup>

#### **4.5—Challenges and Prospects for India**

The Indo-US strategic relationship in the twenty first century is evolving in response to the changing role of India as a regional power, growth of the India's economy and technology and its attendant impact on US regional and global interests. It is in the long term shared interests of both countries which brought them closer. Washington is closely watching the Sino-India relations and is utilising these into its overall strategies in the continent which has become so vital in the current century that this century has been described as Asian century. US perception regarding India is that a strong and rising India will act as a hedge against Beijing which is in Washington's interest.

Currently India is facing the problem of evolving itself within the emerging security environment of Asia (characterised by the concerns of growing Chinese power and rising US engagement and its 'rebalancing' strategy) in order to promote its own strategic interests. America's "Asia pivot" policy has drawn New Delhi into some sort of dilemma and made it to think more cautiously about the pros and cons of a close alignment with the US.

***As India has become an important country for the US policies towards Asia, it has the following opportunities:***

- To utilise Washington's fears of the Chinese dominance of the Asia thereby utilising the opportunity to take geopolitical advantages from the U.S.A. Its help to make India at-least a regional power and the leader in Asia. As New Delhi is quite aware that, that it cannot balance China on its own, and is in need of an external balancer, therefore it considers Washington's long-term and active presence in Asia within the larger geostrategic interests of India. Thus many in India, view closer partnership with Washington as a means to

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<sup>39</sup> Antony told Panetta, that India favoured unhindered freedom of navigation freedom of navigation in international waters and indicated that there is a need to strengthen multilateral security architecture in the Asia-Pacific.

boost the country's economic and military rise in ways that will allow it to compete with China as an equal in a multi-polar Asia rather than a subordinate and India's cooperation with US necessary to enable India to balance the rising power of China.

- New Delhi's is quite aware that its positive response to the Washington's 'pivot' will definitely draw it into a position from where India can bargain better with US on a variety of issues encompassing military, economic, civilian and nuclear technology transfers, its desire for securing a deserving place in global decision making including in the United Nations Security Council as a permanent member and high tables of nuclear decision making, and lastly securing America's support on regional security issues related to Pakistan and Afghanistan (Muni, 2012).
- To prevent Sino-US cooperation contrary to Indian objectives as was the case during Cold War era and 1998 nuclear tests, and November 2009 bilateral talks between Beijing and US, where the both sides declared that the security concerns in Asia and the world can be jointly meted out by the two countries i.e., US and China (G2).<sup>40</sup>
- To exploit the Chinese rising fears of looking growing Indo-US strategic proximity being motivated by anti-Beijing sentiments, to make Beijing to review the policies contrary to New Delhi's interests.
- Given the current security scenario of Asia, which is characterised by the growing concerns and fears of Chinese dominance among US allies and friendly nations the most countries of the continent like Japan, Vietnam, Philippines, etc., India because of its own concerns towards rising China, can get more strategic leverages from these countries. India can get more support from Washington to make its position further strong throughout the ASEAN nations, and in their regional forums.

On the contrary, as being the weakest state in the emerging security environment of this triangular dynamics, New Delhi is also aware of the negatives of the tight

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<sup>40</sup> G2 stands for group two.

embrace with Washington. Realising the implications of the Obama's 'rebalancing' strategy, India's Defence Minister A K Antony told his counterpart Leon Panetta the former US Defence Secretary during the 'defence talks' of 6 June, 2012, at New Delhi, that India favoured unhindered freedom of navigation in international waters and indicated that there is a need to strengthen multilateral security architecture in the Asia-Pacific.<sup>41</sup> Given this background, the various challenges that India faces are as follows:

***The challenges for India in the emerging security scenario between India, US and China include the following:***

- An official acceptance by the Indian Government to initiate steps to contain China may invite latter's wrath all the more. Thus, Beijing will become more aggressive towards India. Unlike Japan, India don't have any security treaty with US that seeks explicit security measures, therefore India might be at risk.
- Like all other Asian states, India also wants to benefit from the rising China's economy. As New Delhi has growing economic stakes in Beijing, and is aware of its almost incomparable military strength with Beijing, it would not at any cost follow the policies which antagonise the economically developed China.
- Given America's relative decline (because of its economic turmoil, domestic pressure and defence cuts), and Washington's complex economic interdependence with Chinese one, India fears that it may be exposed if at any time the situations compel US to accommodate Beijing's rise and withdraw its containment of China policy. The recent accommodation of Chinese "Air Defence Identification Defence Zone" by the US commercial flights is seen as U.S. trying to maintain a minimum strategic profile. Thus, in any eventuality of accommodation, India would be at loss.

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<sup>41</sup> 'Panetta holds talks with Antony on access to dual technology uses', 6 June, 2012, available at: <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/panetta-holds-talks-with-antony-on-access-to-dual-technology-uses/1/199350.html> , accessed on : 11, January, 2014.



- New Delhi is also suspicious of the objectives of both Washington and Beijing, where their interest may converge. India has already witnessed such incidence in 2009 in early Obama administration, where both the countries discussed that the problems of Asia and world could be jointly managed by the US and China (G.2) (Jacob, 2012). Therefore India doubts the reliability of the US commitments toward New Delhi.
- Fear of losing strategic autonomy, because the US 'rebalancing' strategy has drawn India in a position of a "swing" state. It is going to restrict India's independence of forging closer ties with the two powers (US and China) at the same time in case of any eventuality between Washington and Beijing.
- Another area of uncertainty for India in the current scenario is that as South Asia has also been included within the scope of 'Asia pivot' strategy, the enhanced US military and strategic presence in the countries of the region (like Nepal, Bhutan, Srilanka, Maldives, Bangladesh and also Myanmar) as an imperative of the 'pivot' strategy, will curtail its own strategic space and opportunities in the long run (Muni, 2012).
- Lastly, as Russia is tilting towards China in the emerging Asian security architecture, New Delhi may lose its reliable partner, in the form of Russia which used to stand with India against any eventuality, during cold war era.

In the evolving Asian security architecture of the ongoing century, the policies, counter policies and interrelationships in the emerging triangle between US, India and China, are going to have the far reaching consequences in determining the course of actions/events of the twenty first century Asia. In the strategic triangle between India, China and the US, as both Washington and New Delhi are sceptical and concerned about the Beijing's rise, there is a potential for growing cooperation between the two countries. The Washington's 'return to Asia' which has further intensified the 'triangular' dynamic between New Delhi, Washington and Beijing, has drawn New Delhi into some sort of a security dilemma and made it to think more cautiously about the pros and cons of a close alignment with the US. India is concerned about, how to benefit from the increasing significance that Washington's is attaching to New Delhi without sacrificing its relations with its

immediate neighbour, aggressive China. Further like all other countries of the Indo-Pacific region, India seems to be sceptical about the consistency of the US rebalancing strategy. The main reason for this is the set of developments since October 2013, which include the following: the forceful cancellation of the Obama's important trip toward the region in October 2013, Obama's absence from the annual ASEAN Leader's Summit with its external dialogue partners and the associated East Asia Summit (EAS) in Brunei, the annual Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum in Indonesia, and, critical multi-national meetings (regional summits East Asia Summit (EAS) (Cronin, 2013); Washington's modest response to the Beijing's controversial air defense identification zone, that seemed less concerned than its Asian allies; and lastly the US top Democratic senator, Harry Reid's, announcement that he opposes legislation that's key for a Trans-Pacific Partnership which serves as an important part of the Obama's effort to strengthen Washington's engagement in Asia.<sup>42</sup> While speaking in this line, Michael Auslin, in his article, "*The Slow Death of Obama's Asia Pivot*" (2014), is of the view that—

"Obama seems to grow less focused by the day on Asia's dangers. It was bad enough that he chose to skip last year's major Association of Southeast Asian Nations meetings due to domestic budget battles back home. Now Secretary of State John Kerry is prioritizing Middle East issues. Washington seems almost entirely missing in action as America's top two allies in Asia, Japan and South Korea, are barely on speaking terms, while Chinese newspapers openly muse about war with Japan."

All these developments have raised the doubts about the Obama's much lauded "Asia pivot" policy. Thus in the emerging Asian security architecture, India would be in for a tightrope walk between the two superpowers (US and China). It has to remain cautious while dealing with these competing powers and has to play its diplomatic cards right in order to maintain its status-quo in the region and in the

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<sup>42</sup> "Obama's Asia policy takes a blow, Fast-track legislation seen as key to TPP opposed by Leading Democratic senator", The Japan Times, February 1, 2014, available at: <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/02/01/business/obamas-asia-policy-takes-a-blow/#.UxWvlunNvIU> , accessed on: February 25, 2014.

world. New Delhi has to avoid such steps that may antagonise either of the two powers against it.

## Chapter 5

### Pivot and Geo political Shifts: South Asian Response

Given the South Asia's inclusion in the scope of the America's "Asia pivot" the region as whole is witnessing its impact and is also going to witness more in the years to come. As the impact on India and its response to the changing security architecture has been discussed in the previous chapter, this chapter focuses on the importance of South Asia for the US "rebalancing" strategy and its impact on other South Asian countries particularly the Afghanistan and Pakistan.

#### 5.1—Significance of South Asia for Obama's Asia Pivot Policy

South has been a region of great significance for major powers, particularly the US. Washington has always attached a great significance to this region. South Asian region use to be a potential field, where great power competition has been played and managed. Thus, the primary significance of South Asian countries lies in their response to the competition between the great powers US, the Soviet Union and China for global and regional influence (Hilali, 2006). The Geographical location of the region makes it an area of strategic significance because of its routes connecting Europe, Africa and Asia. South Asia's significance is also enriched by its connection with vital sea lines of communication in the Indian Ocean and its strategic location between the two politically unstable and economically critical regions i.e., the Persian Gulf and Southeast Asia (Hilali, 2006).

While talking about the significance of South Asian region, Vikram Nehru in his testimony, entitled as, "The Rebalance to Asia: Why South Asia Matters", mentioned the following important points;

- *India's recognition that it must not only "look east" but also "engage east."*  
Throughout past decade, India's trade with China and Southeast Asia has grown at 40 percent and 20 percent a year, respectively. These rates of growth in trade could be higher still if India addresses its infrastructure and regulatory constraints;
- Progressively more, investors across Asia, recognize India as a potential

destination for their export-oriented investments to overcome the problem of their perceived over dependence on China;

- Myanmar's turn toward the outside world and away from some sort of a self sufficiency and dependence on China, created new opportunities to India for opening a land bridge to Southeast Asia and southern China for further integration between South and Southeast Asia. The US also has strongly supported India's commitment to invest \$500 million in road connectivity between Northeast India and Burma;<sup>43</sup>
- *The South Asian Free Trade Agreement signed in 2004*, which is on track to create a South Asia Free Trade Zone by 2016 (including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka). Although still at low levels, intra-South Asian trade has grown at an average rate of 16 percent a year over the last decade—faster than growth in intra-Southeast Asian trade (12 percent a year);
- The indo-pacific region, incorporating East Asia and South Asia driven by the inevitable logic of markets and geography, has the potential to become the world's economic powerhouse. Therefore, its peaceful rise should be a core objective of America's overall foreign policy (Nehru, 2013).

The rise of China and India in the twenty first century and their growing influence throughout Asia accompanied by the overlapping of their interests compelled the American think tanks to evolve an integrated strategy towards the East and South Asian region. The rapid economic growth accompanied by an ever increasing economic integration of South and East Asia since the last decade has reinforced the strategic significance of the Indo-Pacific Oceans as a major route for global commerce and energy (Yun, 2013). Near about 90 percent of globally traded merchandise travels by sea. Most of the countries across Asia, like China, India, Japan and others in East, South and Southeast Asia depend upon sea to secure the access of their energy demands to fuel and boost their economy and ship their exports to the important markets of other regions. Approximately 50 percent of the

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<sup>43</sup> Joseph Yun, "*The Rebalance to Asia: Why South Asia Matters (Part 1)*", Testimony, US Department of State Diplomacy in Action, February 26, 2013.

world's container traffic and 70 percent of global energy trade now transits the Indian Ocean (Yun, 2013). As mentioned previously, the pivot policy calls for deployment of 60 percent of the US Naval forces in the South China Sea. Having established the importance of the Indian Ocean and South China Sea in the above developments, it becomes clear that any significant disruption of trade in the Indo-Pacific Oceans would have serious global ramifications, and these consequences are also going to take US interest into its ambit. As Washington is quite aware of its increasing economic and strategic interests in the broader Indo-Pacific region, ensuring the freedom of navigation, promoting respect for international law, and fostering greater cooperation and dialogue with and among the countries of both regions on maritime security became one of its top priorities in overall US foreign policy (Lie Miere, 2012).

East Asia and South Asia are also linked in other important regional structures. India's membership in the East Asia Summit and the ADMM+ (ASEAN Plus Defence Ministerial Meeting (ADMM+),<sup>44</sup> and India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Srilanka's membership in the ASEAN Regional Forum, also provides US an opportunity to engage both South Asian and East Asian nations in the same multilateral fora to address shared concerns and build concrete bases of cooperation (Yun, 2013). China's sharing of borders with many South Asian countries also mark the significance of the South Asian region in the America's "rebalancing" strategy, as it is aimed at countering the growing clout of China. Just as Washington's policy toward Beijing will have consequences for the formers relations with South Asian countries; likewise China's policy toward South Asian states will have consequences for Washington's interests (Evans, 2012). Therefore, it is imperative for US to include South Asia within the ambit of its so called US "rebalancing strategy", because a stable, peaceful and outward looking South Asia that joins East Asia's production arrangements will present a counterpoint to China's growing economic preponderance in the region and provide additional momentum and resilience to Asia's rise (Nehru, 2013).

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<sup>44</sup> The representatives of ten ASEAN countries and eight major players in the Indo-Pacific – Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Russia, South Korea and the US – got together in Hanoi on 12 October 2010 in a bid to develop a regional architecture for dialogue on security challenges. These countries were participating as members of the first ASEAN plus Defence Ministerial Meeting (ADMM+), a new, ASEAN-driven security initiative.

## **5.2—South Asia in the Changing Security Architecture**

Within the changing Asian security architecture in which India is also holding a key position, the political, economic and social landscape in its neighbourhood is also significantly changing. The changing Asian security architecture as defined in the previous chapter is characterised by the rise of China and US relative decline and its rebalancing strategy. The geographical scope of Asia-Pacific has been defined as “stretching from the Indian Subcontinent to the western shores of the America’s, the region spans two oceans—the Pacific and the Indian—that are increasingly linked by shipping and strategy.”<sup>45</sup> This implies that South Asia as an entire region is going to be affected by the Obama administrations ‘Asia pivot’ policy or ‘rebalancing’ strategy. Though India has welcomed the US initiative tactically, yet, it has not announced its formal alignment with the US to contain China owing to its possible implications. Since the US announcement of ‘Asia pivot’ policy, countries across the Indo-Pacific region find themselves in some sort of a security dilemma regarding their bilateral relations with the two super powers i.e., US and China. Same is the case with two South Asian powers, India and Pakistan. Among the South Asian countries, India is affected by the policy to a huge extent owing to its unique location, bilateral relations with China and US, and its role as a ‘linchpin’ under the ‘Asia pivot’ policy. As India has started moving strategically closer to the US allies such as Japan and Australia, the entire debate of changes in Asian security architecture has gained momentum. Thus, the US rebalancing strategy is affecting the pattern of relations among the South Asian countries.

## **5.3—Afghanistan and the Asia Pivot**

As the US has faced many casualties in Afghanistan and the main objective- killing of Osama Bin Laden (under “Operation Neptune Spear” with “Geronimo” as the code word, on May 2, 2011 to kill Osama Bin Laden) is now over, the US is no longer interested in extending its military deployments, though it wants to continue its minimum strategic presence. Also, it does not want to interfere or involve itself in military interventions in the Middle East any longer (Azizian, 2012). Thus “Asia

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<sup>45</sup> Hillary Rodhan Clinton, ‘America’s Pacific Century’, *Foreign Policy Magazine*, (11 October, 2011), available at; <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2011/10/175215.htm> , accessed on : 16 may, 2013

pivot” is usually seen as the next stop for US foreign policy after it is going to exit from Afghanistan by 2014.

Different opinions are held regarding the post 2014 Afghanistan as the US is going to withdraw its forces and retain a minimum US troop presence in the country. This minimum foreign troop presence in Afghanistan will be for non combat roles or at best in special action roles and the primary responsibility for Afghan security will be that of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). As Afghanistan is all set for critical transition, it is plagued by insecurity and potential for civil war and above all the political instability. It is widely believed that Afghanistan is going to witness instability and even civil war as the foreign forces are going to leave behind the country without stabilising it. The western policy and approach regarding Afghanistan, in the current scenario, after a decade of direct intervention and engagement, is one of growing weariness and coldness towards the future of Afghanistan (Chandra, 2012). It seems that the whole idea of “peace” dialogue with the Taliban leadership has emerged out of the limitations of both Kabul and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) against Taliban outfits. The peace process with Taliban, lead to the perceived division of the country between Pashtuns and non-Pashtuns. The non-Pashtuns consider the settlement process as surrender to the Taliban and feel threatened by the perceived return of Taliban to power in Kabul. The minority ethnic groups are readying their militia for any possibility of a prolonged civil war, after the withdrawal of western troops. If at any case the Taliban (a predominantly Pashtun majority tribe), comes to power to rule the country after 2014, there is also a great possibility of disintegration of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) along ethnic lines. Given the lack of institutional strength, it is sure that Afghanistan is not in a position to withstand the impact of any eventuality of power sharing with the hardcore Taliban leadership. The major area of uncertainty is the handing over of the security responsibilities to local security forces, which are not in a position to take on the Taliban assault on their own (Chandra, 2012). The withdrawal of US and ISAF, forces from Afghanistan is going to push the country into some sort of a prolonged phase of anarchy and violence, the impact of which is going to be witnessed by the neighbouring countries, particularly the India and Pakistan.



Stable and peaceful Afghanistan is in the interest of the entire South Asian region. Afghanistan's location has a great geostrategic importance for countries across the South Asian region, as it acts as a bridge that connects the energy rich Central Asian region with energy poor South Asia one. Thus Afghanistan has emerged as a hub of trade in commerce. Realising the significance of Afghanistan, its neighbouring countries are keen to establish and even are competing for promoting strong relations with Kabul. China, India and Pakistan are competing with each other to establish their strong hold in Afghanistan and outsource the presence of the other from the country. Pakistan being the "all weather friend" of China enjoys Beijing's support in strengthening its influence in Afghanistan. The competition for establishing a stronghold over Afghanistan is intense between India and Pakistan and both of them consider each other's bilateral relations with Afghanistan against ones interest. Pakistan views the growing Indian influence in Afghanistan as a major challenge to its Afghan-policy. On the other hand New Delhi is concerned about the Islamabad's continuing interference in Afghan affairs, which acts as a hindrance to its growing strategic influence in Afghanistan. The nature of the competition between the two South Asian giants is such that their mutual hostility has gone towards Afghanistan. Both the countries fear of Afghanistan being used by one power to destabilise the other.

The proposed drawdown of foreign troops from Afghanistan by 2014 has raised a big question mark regarding the future course of developments in and around Afghanistan. The policy enigma in the current scenario is what developments are going to take place in the post ISAF withdrawal, when Karzai's second term as a president come to an end, as it is not clear what kind of leadership or political arrangement will emerge in Afghanistan after Karzai (Chandra, 2012).

The two South Asian local major powers are also concerned about the future perspectives of Afghanistan i.e., what shape it is going to take place after 2014 withdrawal of foreign troops. As Afghanistan possesses various destabilising elements its future appears to be a nation characterised by anarchy, instability and a long drawn civil conflicts. A stable and a prosperous Afghanistan is in the interest of both India and Pakistan. But both the countries will continue to adopt policies aiming to curb each other's strategic presence in Afghanistan, thus it may further

boost the rivalries among the regional powers with the aim of furthering their interests in the nation of great geo-strategic significance. The unstable Afghanistan is going to undermine the South Asian security, as it would lead the terrorist outfits to operate in a more hostile manner and establish links across the neighbouring countries.

With the revival of the Taliban factor, mounting disparities between the West and President Karzai,<sup>46</sup> draw-down in Western troop levels, and Islamabad's continuing efforts to increase its influence within Afghanistan and clout in the Obama administration's Af-Pak strategy, New Delhi is apparently cautious as to how to deal with the Afghan challenge (Chandra, 2012). In the post 2014 Afghanistan, India would not like to see the resurgence of Taliban regime in Kabul as it considers it detrimental to Indian interests. India is also concerned that Afghanistan may once again emerge as "safe haven" for terrorist networks, because any breeding ground of extremists under the support of Afghanistan will have a direct consequences on Indian security. The unstable Afghanistan will also undermine the Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India (TAPI) gas pipeline project, which is supposed to become operative by 2017. Thus an unstable Afghanistan with potential reserves of oil and natural gas will undermine the India's perception of looking Afghanistan as an alternative route of fuel supply in order to keep pace with India's growing needs for hydrocarbons that is expected to increase enormously by 2030 with the country projected to import 83 percent of fuel needs by that period (Sharma, 2009). Given its long-term security concerns, it is important for India to constantly evaluate its responses and policy towards the rapidly changing scenario in Afghanistan.

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<sup>46</sup> Chief among them are assurance that American soldiers would not face prosecution in Afghanistan for actions in the course of their duties there. Also, Special Operations forces would be able to conduct antiterrorism raids in private Afghan homes (Jackie Calmes and Eric Schmitt "US Military Eyes Afghan Force of 10,000, after Pullout" The New York Times, January 21, 2014). Recently US is pressuring Afghanistan to sign a bilateral agreement before the final withdrawal phase took place and it is only after signing the bilateral agreement that Washington is going to keep its minimum troop presence (that varies between 8000 to 12000, according to different sources) there in Afghanistan, either it may call for "zero option" i.e., complete withdrawal. No doubt both the Washington and Afghanistan agreed on the security agreement's wording, Karzai wanted to wait until after the election next April 2014 to test further conditions: whether American forces would stop raids on Afghan homes, help promote peace talks and not interfere in election (Rod Nordland, "Karzai Insists US Forces Killed Civilians in a Raid", The New York Times, November 23, 2013).

As Pakistan is also sharing the border with Afghanistan, it is also in some sort of dilemma regarding the future of Afghanistan. As Islamabad feels uncomfortable with the growing strategic presence of India in Afghanistan, curbing the rising clout of India in Afghanistan will remain the core focus of Pakistan's Afghan policy. Pakistan may use all overt and covert means in order to achieve this objective. The restricted presence or even the overall absence of New Delhi in the affairs of Kabul would be welcomed by Pakistan. As the resurgence of Taliban factor is viewed as a challenge for New Delhi but it is not the same for Islamabad and is welcomed by the latter. For Pakistan, the role of Taliban in the post NATO withdrawal Afghanistan is not a matter of concern but what concerns Pakistan is whether their establishment serve the needs of its geopolitical ambitions. In the future Afghanistan as, the emergence of Taliban to the centre stage in the Afghan affairs seems a possibility; it would give Pakistan an upper hand over India. Since the Taliban are used as instruments of Pakistan's Afghan policy, and the return of Taliban to power may not be in Indian interests, India may have to look for the right options to leverage its position in Afghanistan and join efforts at all levels to prevent the possibility of Afghanistan emerging again as a hub of terrorist networks.

As the US troops prepare to exit Afghanistan a major regional shift is underway. Given the probable decline of US strategic presence in the region, China and Russia are making inroads into Kabul and Islamabad with their economic initiatives in order to secure their borders against the possible spread of Islamic fundamentalism. Both China and Russia seems to be waiting eagerly to see the US exit from Afghanistan but on the other hand both are equally concerned about the future of Afghanistan that might become the "safe havens" for terrorist outfits which may lead to their penetration in Xinjiang province in southern China and the Central Asian republics, whom Russia claimed in its sphere of influence (Rashid, 2012). While talking about China's policy toward Afghanistan, it has emerged as the largest foreign direct investor in the Afghan mining and has also concluded a '*strategic and cooperative partnership agreement*', with Afghanistan in June 2012. China has been careful by not mentioning the Taliban as source of concern. Like Pakistan, it believes that a long-term foreign military presence in Afghanistan is counterproductive and detrimental to its interests, and considers the role of Taliban

critical for Afghan stability (Chandra & Behuria, 2013). Moreover, given its long-standing strategic relationship with Pakistan and latter's control over the Taliban, China may be considering a Taliban-inclusive (and perhaps a Taliban dominated) dispensation in Kabul that is favourable to its interests. China is also hoping to exploit mineral resources in future from Afghanistan and is aware of the fact that Pakistan is going to play a crucial role. So, it is likely for Beijing to continue to work closely with Islamabad in future, to curb the India's role in future Afghanistan (Chandra & Behuria, 2013).

Thus as "Asia pivot" is the next stop for US core foreign policy after the withdrawal of its troops from Afghanistan, it is leaving behind an Afghan nation with uncertain future. Finally, the Asia Pivot policy will have consequences for Indo-China relations and will bring instability at India's eastern border, especially in parts of Ladakh, Arunachal Pradesh; it will also de-stabilise India's western border with Pakistan as cross border insurgencies and terrorist activities in Kashmir, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Maharashtra will increase by leap and bounds. Thus, India's military and intelligence will have a daunting task of concentrating its resources and energy on two or multiple borders simultaneously in the times of a crisis. This would be tactical victory for Pakistan and China.

#### **5.4—Pakistan in the Emerging Asian Order**

Pakistan an immediate neighbour of India and the second local major power of South Asia after India has always been a country of great significance for great powers. Given the geopolitical location at the crossroads of subcontinent, Central Asia and the Gulf, Pakistan is having a great strategic value for major powers.

As US rebalancing strategy is directly aiming at countering the growing clout of China; Pakistan like India can no longer keep aloof from the developments within the changing Asian security architecture. It is also going to witness a great impact on its overall foreign policy. Pakistan has historical relationships with both the US and China. The matter of question within the current scenario is that what kind of relationship or what kind of policy US is going to adopt toward Pakistan in the post 2014 Afghanistan?, whether Pakistan will still remain as important for US as it was during the last decade? The answer to this question is not so simple, because the

US foreign policy moves are unpredictable. Both India and Pakistan are having past experiences of their relations with US. As US also enjoys the super power status its policies cannot be vigorously criticised by other countries. One thing is clear that Washington is quite clearly bearing this in mind that despite they have killed the 9/11 accused Osama Bin Laden, they have not eliminated the threat to the US security, but on the other hand they have raised the security concerns for US. The killing of Bin Laden has irked the Taliban outfits which might be making plans for one more strike against the US at various levels. So this Taliban factor may compel US to continue its leveraging of strategic warmth to Islamabad. Unlike India, Pakistan has enjoyed the warm relations with both the countries—China and America, at the same time.

Pakistan is cautious of the pragmatic nature of Washington's Pakistan policy. Despite enjoying close relations with US, Pakistan was considered as a failure state during the late 1990's, and India was given an upper hand over Pakistan by US. But after 9/11 Pakistan once again emerged on the centre stage of US policy towards South Asia and it emerged as a frontline state in US war on terror. In twenty first century, US viewed both Pakistan and India as equally important for the former, which was not the same case during the Cold war days, in which Pakistan was considered more important than India. Given the India's growing global posture and instability in Pakistan, America is gradually tilting toward India, and the relations between US and Pakistan are becoming worse.

Today Washington's relations with Islamabad are characterised by frictions, which tilted the latter further toward China. Washington's officials have accused Pakistan that, its military and intelligence operatives are secretly encouraging the Taliban outfits (Natsios, 2013). This suspicion became strong, when Central Intelligence Agency CIA's discover Osama Bin Laden, taking shelter in a comfortable compound near a Pakistani military school in Abbottabad in May 2011. US suspected that Pakistan's military and intelligence services had protected Bin Laden for more than a decade at the time when it was claiming to support US policy in Afghanistan. Washington has also apprehensions on the Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), functioning as a virtual shadow government, outside the

control of political leaders is much more compassionate to Taliban and Al-Qaeda outfits than to Pakistan's cooperation with US and its allies (Natsios, 2013).

On the other hand US drone strikes on the targets in Pakistan has raised the concerns for the later. While America see the use of Drones in the Af-Pak region as successful policy to dismantle the terrorist outfits, Pakistan on the other hand view it as an infringement of its national sovereignty. The NATO assault in November 2011, that killed 24 Pakistani soldiers emerged as a setback and further strained the relations between the two countries as the Islamabad faced greater pressure from its public. The killing of Pakistan security forces also infuriated the Pakistan's powerful military.

As relations between Pakistan and the U.S. deteriorate, India is seizing up to the opportunity to fill in the vacuum of space that has been created between the two. Pakistan in turn has shown its concern through multiple platforms about the emerging strategic proximity between the U.S. and India. On the other hand, U.S. has taken note of the shifts in the relations between the three countries; its overall policy towards South Asia has prioritised New Delhi over Pakistan. In the current scenario, America calculates India's importance not only within the South Asian region, but also towards Asia as a whole. Nudging India a key position in recent America's return to Asia (rebalancing strategy) can be cited in this manner. This is a clear indication that Washington factors India more than Pakistan and US may no longer be interested in Pakistan in the post NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan. Pakistan may face a serious diplomatic & strategic setback in the backdrop of the growing strategic relationship between US and New Delhi, and may lose a strategic partner in the form of Washington. Pakistan also considers the growing military and strategic relationship between US and India as detrimental to South Asia balance of power in favour of India, which compels Pakistan to look for alternatives to counter the growing Indo-US axis.

Given these developments, it is certain that Islamabad will attempt systematically to counter the US-India axis by embarking on a determined effort to intensify its existing ties with Beijing, that too in a way that provides China with a welcome opportunity to increase its own influence, not just in Pakistan but also in Afghanistan and other South Asian countries except India (Rogers, 2012). During

his visit to Pakistan in June 2012, Chinese Foreign minister Yang Jiechi, assured to, stand by Pakistan in tensions with the Americans. During this visit, Jiechi, while talking with government officials said, that the world should recognize Pakistan's 'huge sacrifices' in the war on terror and help safeguard its sovereignty, rather than question Pakistan's intentions as the US has done recently. Despite his words of support, there were also reports that Mr. Yang also warned Pakistan's leaders not to break with the US and to avoid taking hard-line positions regarding the US and NATO policy moves in Afghanistan (Rashid, 2012).

Pakistan will continue to get strategic leverages from China, as the later is also concerned with the growing Indo-US strategic partnership in the current century. Border disputes with India have been the main reason for the strategic alliance between Pakistan and China. Thus, China's support to Pakistan is primarily driven by the former's desire to contain India. China has built up Pakistan's conventional military as well as nuclear and missile capabilities over the years to help to keep India off balance.

Nudging India to centre stage in South Asian affairs by US may force Pakistan to tilt further towards China as both the countries are already enjoying long-standing strategic ties. It is all because of the India factor, that China maintains a robust defence relationship with Pakistan and has emerged as the largest defence supplier to Islamabad. Both the countries regard India as a common enemy, and share common security interests by presenting India with a two-front war in case of any eventuality of either country with India (Curtis & Scissors, 2012). As US is moving closer to India and leaving behind Pakistan, with the aim of countering the growing clout of China, Beijing may offer more and more strategic leverages to Islamabad and may further boost latter's military strength to make New Delhi to think more cautiously about the possible consequences of the tight embrace with Washington. On the other hand Pakistan facing the same security concerns might love to join hands with China to counter the magnitude of the growing Indo-US strategic partnership.

However, Washington's changing attitude toward Islamabad will not stop the later from getting strategic leverages from the major powers. Pakistan is still in the game of getting strategic leverages from the major powers by playing afghan

factor. As the date of US exit from Afghanistan is approaching closer, other powers like China and Russia for the one reason or the other reason are keen to establish strategic relations with Afghanistan. This may be the first and foremost reason for the Russia's intentions to make revisions in its South Asia policy, and reduce the political distance between itself and Islamabad. Given the open border with Afghanistan, Pakistan is going to be the most important external determinant of Afghan future, which makes it compulsory for major powers to engage Pakistan in order to fulfil their interests in Afghanistan.<sup>47</sup> Realising its unique position in Afghanistan, whose future is at stake, Islamabad is eager to utilise this to get political leverages from Moscow, US and Beijing. Thus after America's exit from Afghanistan, as China will seek to further its influence in Kabul and Russia will seek to prevent Central Asia, all of them need Pakistan army's cooperation.<sup>48</sup> These developments may provide Pakistan a strategic hedge against the historical rival India.

### **5.5—Other South Asian Countries**

As for as other small South Asian countries neighbouring India are concerned they are not as relatively important to US as they are for China and India; however, these countries do hold a strategic significance for US like; Bangladesh is going to emerge as the future economic corridor between South and Southeast Asia, Nepal could become more important in case of constrained Sino-US relations, Srilanka and Maldives serve as key component to any regional policy, both to encourage better economic integration and to maintain peace and security in the broader Indian Ocean and lastly Bhutan can also offer investment opportunities to unlock its enormous energy potential. In recent years, Bhutan the only hope for India in South Asia with which it is having good relations has become a country of intense competition for influence between China and India as the latter perceives that Bhutan is slowly moving into the orbit of China (Evans, 2012). Bhutan is the only country in the neighborhood of China with which it is not enjoying diplomatic

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<sup>47</sup> C Raja Mohan, "As Russia Warms to Pakistan" Analysis, 8 October, 2012, *Observer Research Foundation Building Relationships for a Global India*, available at: <http://orfonline.org/cms/sites/orfonline/modules/analysis/AnalysisDetail.html?cmaid=42843&mmacmaid=42844>, accessed on: 25/12/ 2014.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid



relations and the country which falls under Indian influence. China has been competing to win over Bhutan from India's orbit.

Within the emerging Asian security architecture characterised by the emergence of Asian "super complex", India has sought to challenge China in several bilateral fronts and augmented its defence spending to counter Chinese entry into South Asian sphere by moving close to Central, East and Southeast Asian states or in other words has sought means to manage the rise of China with internal and external balancing. These developments have raised concerns to the smaller South Asian states that are wary of being used in the big-power politics (Sitaraman, 2013).

South Asian region is characterised by the bilateral frictions of almost all the countries with the subcontinents economically and militarily dominant power i.e., India. These frictions have led to the greater Chinese penetration in the region. Feeling uncomfortable by the rising economic and military might of India, the other South Asian states have welcomed the increasing penetration of China in the region and they also view it as essential to balance the mighty India—a local giant of South Asia. As China is concerned with the growing Indo-US strategic partnership particularly in the Indo-Pacific region, China is in search of means to curb the intensity of Indo-US partnership by responding with its own policies. Keeping this objective in mind, Beijing since the last decade has made active involvement (both economically and diplomatically as it did in other parts of the world) in the Indian neighbourhood to tie down the magnitude of Indo-US partnership. Beijing's "string of pearls" is a best example in this respect. China's active involvement in South Asia involves the deepening and extending its military partnerships with Nepal and Bhutan, enhancing its military and economic partnerships with Bangladesh, its economic, military and construction projects with Sri Lanka and Maldives. China has emerged as the leading supplier of military hardware to Pakistan that includes nuclear reactors, missiles and jet fighters (Sitaraman, 2013).

In the current scenario, China's concerns rose further with the announcement of America's "Asia pivot" policy, directly aimed at containing the Beijing's rise and Washington's offer of a key position to India under this strategy. Despite that

Indian public officials every time use to say that they are not going to align with US or take part in any strategy aiming at containment of China, its growing strategic relationship, particularly its growing defence ties with Washington gives the clear impression that in some or the other way New Delhi is also participating in the US led China containment strategy. No doubt India has maintained the strategic ambiguity of its role of a 'linchpin', but it has shown overtures by slowly moving close to US allies like Japan, Vietnam, and Philippines etc., which is a cause of concern for China and has raised the eyebrows of a bullying China. China is very much concerned with the recent rapprochement of India and Japan in regional dealings and their tilt toward each other. Speaking to an assembly of Japanese government and corporate worthies in Tokyo, in May 2013, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said; India and Japan have a shared vision of a rising Asia, our relationship with Japan is at the heart of our look east policy, Japan is the only country with which we have a 2-plus-2 Dialogue<sup>49</sup> between the foreign and defence ministers (Lee, 2013). Further Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's visit to India as a chief guest at its Republic Day celebrations 2014 yielded some important advances in India-Japan relations. The pending sale of the ShinMaya US-2 amphibious patrol aircraft—a topic of interest for India since 2011, also inched forward. Abe and Singh agreed that India and Japan would follow up on the sale in March with a joint working group meeting<sup>50</sup> (Panda, 2014). Both the countries are also moving to strengthen their bilateral relationship in 2014 by holding joint exercises between Japan's Maritime Self-Defence (JMSDF) and the Indian Navy (IN) in the Indian Ocean for a third straight year, and to organise meetings between senior officials from the Japan Air Self-Defence Force and Indian Air Force (Takahashi, 2014). These developments may compel China to engage itself more vigorously by using its both hard and soft powers in the India's neighbourhood and also using the anti-India sentiment in these countries and provide them with more and more strategic leverages especially military hardware to tie down India within the subcontinent. Thus, China may vigorously involve

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<sup>49</sup> Two-Plus-Two dialogue is the framework which was agreed to establish by the both Prime ministers of India Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and his counterpart Yukio Hatoyama from Japan at the Annual Summit in Delhi, December 2009. India employs the 2 + 2 format only with Japan to address cross-cutting security and foreign policy issues such as maritime security, cyber security and space etc.

<sup>50</sup> Joint Working Group (JWG) was set up by the two countries during the Singh's visit to Japan in May 2013, to explore modality for the cooperation on the US-2 amphibian aircraft.

these countries to become a part of the Chinese grand strategy that would aim at putting pressure on India on multiple fronts by raising its insecurity.

Looking at the entire scenario, it seems quite clear that the Obama's "rebalancing" strategy is not going to solve the Asian problem rather it is going to make it further worse. As China's feels more and more insecure amidst its neighbours (which include US allies and friends) with which it has territorial disputes, Beijing's military spending and surge for sophisticated weapons is going to rise, so is the case with its neighbouring countries including India and Pakistan. So this is a clear indication that countries across the Indo-Pacific are going to indulge in arms race, which in turn threatens the security of the small states. Thus like most of the Asian states, the South Asian countries are not going to take sides in case of any eventuality between the two great powers—US and China. Also they are not going to take sides in the emerging cold war like situation between America and China.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

#### **6.1—Conclusion**

Ever since the end of Second World War US enjoyed its rapid economic growth and emerged as a leading economic power in the world and was successful in extending its sphere of influence from Latin America to South and Southeast Asia. The economic might placed Washington at the center of the establishment of many global economic institutions and a leading nation in setting global economic rules. These developments provided Washington with immense opportunities to be a norm setter in international relations, and there by having far reaching influence in international politics. Further Washington also got the opportunity during the cold war era to lead the capitalist countries fearing the rise of communism. With the collapse of communism in 1991, America emerged as a lone super power as Russian state carved out of the ashes of the collapse of Soviet Union was not in a position to pose any challenge to the US.

In the twenty first century, however, in a very different international environment characterised by the rise of the rest, Washington's position of both absolute and relative powers appears to have changed significantly. As a result it is widely held that America is in decline. As its decline has been debated at the international level, consequently two schools of thoughts have emerged. The first school of thought comprising thinkers like Paul Kennedy, Charles Kupchan, Cristopher Layne, Goldman Sachs, Fareed Zakaria, Francis Fukuyama, Stanely Hoffman, Robert Keohane, K.R. Dark, A.L. Harris, Immanuel Wallerstein, Edward Hadas, etc., argue that US is in decline and its economic, structural and military vulnerabilities are causing the erosion of its national capabilities. On the contrary, the second school of thought comprising Joseph S. Nye, William C. Wohlforth, Robert J. Leiber, and Robert Kagan etc., reject the declinist view and argue that US is undergoing a process of renewal and that America today is still a dominant military power, its economy is still the world's largest, its cultural influence is universal, and it is the only nation with a high ranking in all the major indices of national power. While commenting on the 2008 economic crisis and the declinist

view Robert Kagan argued that,” just as one swallow does not make a spring, one recession or even a severe economic crisis, need not mean the beginning of the end of a great power”. He argues that the US suffered deep and prolonged economic crisis in the 1890s, the 1930s, and the 1970s. In each case, it rebounded in the following decade and actually ended up in a stronger position relative to other powers than before the crisis.

Since the beginning of twenty first century, international system is rapidly becoming multi-polar. Given the rise of new middle powers especially the Peoples Republic of China, in regions across the globe, who aims to assert their influence on various international and regional issues, it is difficult to deny that America’s relative power is declining. Even though US is still enjoying the dominant lead in most of the key areas of national power, the trend lines are favouring China which has already surpassed Japan in 2010, as the world’s second largest economy and is on the track to surpass America in the coming decades.

As Washington was caught up in the long drawn wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, China used the vacuum created by the US in order to increase its strategic outreach in its immediate neighbourhood and in also the East Asian region. Towards this end it has increased its economic and military relations with most of the Asian countries. While leveraging its commercial ties, Beijing is also escalating its diplomatic, political and military influence in the broader Indo-Pacific region. China’s growing economic might accompanied by its military modernisation has emerged as a great challenger to US hegemony and its leading role in Asia as the formers economic and military might is undermining the security of its Allies and friends across the Indo-Pacific region. These developments have also raised the suspicions amongst the US allies and friends in East and Southeast Asia regarding the Washington’s ability to protect them against any eventuality. Given the rising apprehensions of US allies on its capabilities and the China challenge to its hegemony, America has returned to Asia in order to secure its own interests and remove the apprehensions of its allies and friends.

The changing security architecture of Asia is characterised by China’s rise and a relative decline of the US; and its return to Asia under the auspices “Asia pivot” policy and the emergence of “Asian super complex.” In the evolving Asian security

architecture of the ongoing century, the policies, counter policies and interrelationships in the emerging triangle between US, India and China, are going to have the far reaching consequences in determining the course of actions/events of the twenty first century Asia.

Given the Washington's and New Delhi's fears of Beijing's rise, there is a potential for growing proximity between India and US. However, this partnership is certainly not going to take the shape of an alliance, because of India's longstanding foreign policy objective of maintaining its 'strategic autonomy' at the international level; non-interference in its domestic issues, and, its principle of avoiding taking sides with one power to antagonise the other. Such an alliance is not in the interests of the either, as both Washington and New Delhi having economic stakes in Beijing which they would not like to jeopardise (Rajamony, 2002). The Washington's 'return to Asia' has drawn New Delhi into some sort of a dilemma and made it to think more cautiously about the pros and cons of a tight embrace with the US. Thus in the current century India seems to be concerned about, how to benefit from the increasing significance that Washington's is attaching to New Delhi without sacrificing its relations with its immediate neighbour, aggressive China.

As India the South Asian local giant is, holding a key position in the emerging Asian security architecture, the political, economic and social landscape in its neighbourhood is also undergoing significant changes. As far as other South Asian countries are concerned they are responding with their own policies to the changing Asian security architecture. South Asia's inclusion within the scope of America's "rebalancing" strategy has also put the countries across the South Asian region in the same security dilemma faced by other countries. Given the backdrop of NATO and US drawdown from Afghanistan by 2014, "Asia pivot" is usually seen as the next stop for US core foreign policy towards Asia. The proposed US exit from Afghanistan has raised doubts regarding the future Afghanistan. It has also raised the intense competition among the subcontinents two local giants—India and Pakistan. Apart from these two local powers, other major powers like Russia and China have also started to establish their presence in the Afghanistan because of their own security concerns and economic interests.

Pakistan is also witnessing the problem of evolving itself in the changing Asian security architecture. In the current scenario Islamabad's relations with US are characterised by frictions as the later is tilting towards the formers rival—India. Pakistan is responding to these developments by tilting further towards its 'all weather friend and strategic partner' China which is also concerned by the growing strategic proximity between India and the United States. Thus these developments may further worsen the relations between the two South Asian giants and will also worsen India's relations with China. As far as other South Asian countries are concerned they are also witnessing the impact of the emerging Cold War like situation between the two great powers. Thus South Asia as a whole in one or the manner is witnessing the impact of rising competition between US and China for strategic influence in Asia.

Obama's "Asia pivot" policy widely seen as directly aimed at containing the rise of Peoples Republic of China (PRC). In turn, it has compelled China to take necessary steps towards this end. As Beijing feels more and more insecure amidst of its neighbours and the Washington's "rebalancing" strategy, its military spending and surge of sophisticated weapons is going to rise, so is the case with the other countries of the region. On account of this security scenario the countries of the region might caught in the arms race which in turn threatens the security of the small countries and would in the long-run undermine the security and stability of the Indo-Pacific region.

Finally, in the current scenario there seems to be emerging two axes of power in the South and South East Asian region. Also, one may witness the further intensification of the triangular dynamic between US, China and India as the competition between China and US becomes more and more intense in the years to come. Apart from focussing on its immediate neighbourhood, the relative decline of the US, has given geopolitical opportunities to China to extend its strategic outreach to the west of the Asian map with the help of Russia, Pakistan and Iran. America on the other hand has refocused itself to the East with its strategic partnerships with the countries like India, Japan, South Korea and Australia. Both the US and China has tried to counterbalance the other by using small and emerging powers. The consequences can unfold in the form of military

standoffs and a potential small conflict with the possibilities of escalating into a limited war between arch rivals.

## **6.2—Recommendations**

Given the emerging security environment in Asia, South Asian countries, in particular India is undergoing a transformation in their respective foreign policies, and, are getting in tuned with the changes in the regional security architecture. As both the US and China are involved in an intense competition to outclass the other to strengthen their strategic foothold in Asia, the south Asian countries have to adopted a cautious approach.

As India also falls in the category of major rising powers, its importance at the international level has been vigorously felt, which called the special attention of major powers like US and China and also the countries across the South, East and Southeast Asian towards New Delhi. More importantly America looks upon India as a significant country towards the formers overall policy towards Asia. Knowing the realistic nature of US foreign policy India should respond cautiously while keeping in mind the pursuance of its own interests. As the competition for influence between US and China in the coming decades increases the latter may also attach greater significance to India and may offer strategic leverages to it. Thus in the current scenario the need of time for India is that it should play its diplomatic cards right in order to carve out its own interests from the growing rivalry between America and People's Republic of China. Therefore India should:—

**Maintain a strategic balance between United States and China**— While knowing the strengths and weakness of both powers India should respond accordingly keeping in mind its own interests. This is possible by maintaining a balance in its bilateral relations with both powers—America and China. Thus India should seek the same relations and partnerships with China as the former is having with America.

**Utilise the fears of both competing powers to New Delhi's overall advantages**— Given the US fears of Chinese dominance of the Asia and China's fears of growing Indo-US strategic partnership and more importantly its recent



return to Asia, India should put in place an active diplomacy to utilise these fears in securing its own interests.

**Strengthen its strategic position among South Asian countries**— India's 'big brother' role is criticised by almost all the subcontinent nations, the responsibility which in the current scenario seems to have been taken by China through offering strategic leverages to India's neighbours. China is strengthening its position in the Indian subcontinent by playing with India's bilateral frictions with its neighbours. Thus India should fully adopt policies towards this end. This is possible by offering more or less the same strategic leverages to its neighbours as Beijing is offering to these countries or by looking for policies to work in partnership with China for leveraging the same.

**Avoid steps to become entangled in the China containment strategy**— Given America's relative decline (because of its economic turmoil, domestic pressure and defence cuts), and Washington's complex economic interdependence with Chinese one, India fears that it may be exposed if at any time the situations compel US to accommodate Beijing's rise and withdraw its containment of China policy. The recent accommodation of Chinese "Air Defence Identification Zone" by the US commercial flights is seen as U.S. trying to maintain a minimum strategic profile. Thus, in any eventuality of accommodation, India would be at loss. So New Delhi should accept this reality and avoid such steps that may antagonise its mighty neighbour or jeopardise its relations with China, because any official announcement by the Indian government to initiate steps to contain China may invite latter's wrath all the more.

**To maintain its strategic autonomy**— As US "rebalancing" strategy has drawn India into a position of a "swing" state, it is going to restrict its autonomy of forging closer ties with the two powers at the same time in case of any eventuality between America and China. Thus while responding to the rising importance Washington is attaching to New Delhi, the latter should keep its options open to US or we may say that adopting "non-alignment 2.0."

**Enhance its strategic presence in Afghanistan**— As Afghanistan is the vital link that connects the South Asia to the energy rich Central Asia, India should involve

itself more and more in Afghan reconstruction process. It should also take steps to bring Taliban on the table and solve the differences amicably, because Taliban may once again take the rein in Afghanistan in post NATO withdrawal period. Like Russia and China, India should seek to bring Pakistan into confidence as the later is going to occupy a unique position in the post US and NATO withdrawal Afghanistan.

*Finally, given the changing Asian security architecture, characterised by the China's rise and US decline and its "return to Asia" the need of the time for India is to act in a pragmatic way while responding to the policies of China and US so as to secure its own interests.*

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