

# **FACTORS AFFECTING THE PAKISTAN RUSSIA RELATIONS:AN ANALYSIS**



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## **SUPERVISOR CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the thesis entitled as "**Factors Affecting the Pakistan Russia Relations: An Analysis**" is the original work submitted by Ms. **Rabia Kosar** a student of MS in International Relations in the department of Political Science and International Relations, Faculty of Social Sciences. The research work has successfully been done under my guidance and supervision. She has fulfilled all the requirements for the award of the MS degree ordinance at the university. This is important to certify that this thesis has not been submitted for attainment of any Degree, Diploma, association or fellowship from any other university.

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**Madam Nadia Awan**

## DECLARATION

By submitting this dissertation, I declare that this thesis entitled "**Factors Affecting The Pakistan-Russia Relations: An Analysis**" is my original work. This research work was completed under the supervision of **Madam Nadia Awan** and submitted to the Department of International Relations as satisfying the requirements for the degree of master's in international relations. I have properly referenced and cited the sources of information in my thesis. This dissertation has not been submitted before for any degree.

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**Rabia kosar**

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**Dated:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **DEDICATIONS**

TO the wonderful lady my Mother,

Beloved Maternal Uncle

and late Sir Dr. Anayat Kaleem Although he is no longer with us, his legacy endures in the minds and hearts of those he taught.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATION

<b>US</b>	United States
<b>USSR</b>	Union of Soviet Socialists Republics
<b>SCO</b>	Shanghai Corporation Organization
<b>NATO</b>	Non Alignment Treaty Organization
<b>SEATO</b>	South East Asian Treaty Organization
<b>CENTO</b>	Central Treaty Organization
<b>CSTO</b>	Collective Security Treaty Organization
<b>CPEC</b>	China Pakistan Economic Corridor
<b>OBOR</b>	One Belt One Road
<b>BRI</b>	Belt and Road Initiative
<b>MSR</b>	Maritime Silk Road
<b>CARs</b>	Central Asian Republics
<b>PSGP</b>	Pak Stream Gas Pipeline Project
<b>MOUs</b>	Memorandums of Understanding

## ABSTRACT

The relationship between Pakistan and Russia (formerly the Soviet Union) began in May 1948, characterized by mutual cooperation and trust. However, their ties experienced a decline in warmth following as Liaquat Ali Khan's first presidential visit to the United States, which subsequently led to tensions over certain historical events specially Cold-war era. This study deeply evaluates the evolving dynamics of Pakistan-Russia bilateral relations by analyzing historical context and recent developments, particularly post-9/11. It examines how regional and international factors, including the impact of NATO's withdrawal from Afghanistan the role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and anti-terrorist efforts in promoting regional stability and countering terrorism, as well as the influence of US-India relations, which has prompted Pakistan to strengthen ties with Russia and China more the tilt of India towards US is shifting geopolitical landscape. The research employs neo-realism as a theoretical framework to assess the strategic interactions between the two nations and evaluates their historical relationship both in achievements and failures, targeting the assumption as the role of international system which is chaotic and shapes up international and national political structures where states react accordingly with the use of qualitative research method where secondary and primary data collection techniques have been used. The study identifies significant regional, national, and international influence on the bilateral relationship, noting incremental improvements in cooperation since the early 2000s. The analysis underscores Pakistan's strategic importance in regional trade, particularly with Afghanistan, and explores the potential for triangular cooperation among China, Pakistan, and Russia to combat terrorism and enhance co-operation. It mainly discussing why Pakistan always choose US rather to Russia and how US respond to Pakistan in certain historical events till date. The study offers a foundation for future research and invites scholars to build upon these insights for a comprehensive exploration of relations in region.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

When Pakistan gained independence, its initial step was to establish a foreign policy framework to develop political ties with the existing major global powers of the time, namely as either Russia or the US. Given the international environment and global political scenario at that time, Pakistan chose to align with the US. As Pakistan got independence on ideological bases and throughout the history ideology remains the core factor which played a major role in choosing the allies. The former Soviet Union was much inspired by Marxism which was basically atheist in nature No God, No believe. The main reasons of argument which put forward one was that Muslims can never be on the side of atheists as Pakistan considered herself more of ideological state and another is security threat by India as neighboring rivalry state who enjoyed bilateral relations with Former Russia from early days even India adopted a non alignment movement for years. Soviet Union shared a cordile relation with India that reason Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan's first prime minister choose a visit to United State rather to Soviet Union even though former Soviet Union and Pakistan established diplomatic ties in May 1948. From then to now there have been so many of incidents where Pakistan played his role as frontline partner of US in region according to the scenario and opportunities of that time (Mustafa A. T., 2022).

The history of Pakistan-Russia relations is marked by a complex mix of cooperation, trade, distrust, hostility, and rapprochement. A pivotal moment in this history was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and the ensuing conflict. To counter the perceived Soviet expansion and safeguard its own security, Pakistan extended full support to the Afghan Mujahideen in their resistance against the Soviet forces.

During this period, Pakistan viewed the Soviet invasion as a direct threat to its security. Consequently, relations between Pakistan and the Soviet Union were highly antagonistic throughout the Soviet military presence in Afghanistan. Where Pakistan supported US against Soviet Union there were certain perceived threats one is expansionism policies of Soviet's that was the danger alarm for Pakistan security either to obtain entrance to the warm waters of the Persian Gulf or Initiate World War III to legitimize their own militarization and the continued presence of military personnel from the USSR. To tackle those perceived threats Pakistan played its role as the savior of Afghanistan to protect its own territory also from Soviet Union direct reach (Fatima & Ullah, 2022).

December 1991 by the disintegration of Soviet Union marked a huge shift in world's political nature which shifted from bi-polar to uni-polar system, and created a shift in the priorities and goals of the states. Throughout cold-war era, Pakistan had been playing a key role to assist US backed strategies in South Asian Region where former Soviet Union lost its hegemony as following the disintegration of Soviet Union and become Russian Federation and lost her super power status. However, the diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Russia remained functional but not much influential, many ups and downs which shaped the political relation between both governments. In emerging regional political scenarios Pakistan tried to adopt the policy of co-operation with Russia in 2000S particularly. With the particular shift of regional political order, with the withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan, Pakistan has been facing consequences and its after effects are far more massive. The positive aspect is Pakistan and Russia's joint collaboration in certain fields of cooperation includes joint military exercises, joining of Pakistan in SCO where Russia voted in favour of Pakistan and included other anti-terrorism activities. India's interference in the regional politics, their perceived threats and opportunities reshaping Pakistan's policies towards neutralism rather than to bilateralism only. (Mustafa A. T., 2022).

The evolving relations of Russia with Pakistan does not limit the Russia's bonhomie with India because India is the foundation stone of Russian policy in South Asia. Historically, the Indo-Russian strategic partnership has been founded on five key elements politics, defense, nuclear energy, counter-terrorism, cooperation, and the development and exploration of outer space. Russia has voiced its support for India obtaining a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council. Additionally, Russia has shown interest in becoming an observer member of SAARC, of which India is a founding member and many times Russia supported India against Pakistan in various events of history included 1965, 1971 wars particularly and on other forum as well but this led to a war situation all the time in the region which threaten peace and progress. (Siddiqa, 2021,).

As it is said, in international environment non is permanent ally and non is permanent enemy so, the past existing relationship can be transformed due to need of the day and opportunities ahead. Pakistan participated in Peace Mission 2018 held in Russia a multi-nation joint military exercise (Mohan, 2021).

The territorial disputes between India and Pakistan can be resolved through Russia's assistance. Perhaps this effort to balance Russia's engagements with both India and Pakistan could contribute to reducing long-term tensions between these regional rivals in South Asia. The growing relations between the new emerging centres of power might provide the world with an opportunity to cast aside the existed global issues and powers in the new world order may have preference for a different agenda (Dagia, 2021). Future cooperation between both states could potentially mitigate the burgeoning influence of major entities and terrorism, which have severely disrupted regional peace, stability, and economic growth, particularly since the conflict in Afghanistan impacted the surrounding regions.

The prospect of forging connections through business, investment, and partnerships in energy and defense sectors is substantial, provided Pakistan and Russia to overcome their contentious history (Janjua, 2021).

Hence, considering the evolving political landscape of the region since 2000s, it is imperative for Russia and Pakistan to cooperate for their own integration and that of the region. Given China's expanding economic influence in South and Central Asia, both Pakistan and Russia may seek to reduce their economic reliance on China in a balanced manner. Russia, endowed with abundant natural resources, holds significant economic potential. Therefore, enhancing bilateral economic cooperation is mutually beneficial. Given Russia's relatively modest economic presence in Asia, Pakistan can leverage this opportunity to foster cooperation and attract Russian investments, thereby enhancing its economic prospects (Rashid & Tahir).

## **1.1 Rational of the Study**

In the 21st century, Pakistan and Russia have seen growing bilateral cooperation amid shifting regional and global dynamics. Pakistan's strategic location and its involvement in the Afghanistan issue have made it a focal point in the region. Additionally, the increasing interaction through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has strengthened ties between Pakistan and Russia. As a result, Pakistan's alignment with any particular bloc has diminished, while its inclination towards regionalism has grown. Despite these shifts, Pakistan continues to seek positive relations with all countries in the evolving global landscape. As a Pakistani, the researcher finds it crucial to examine Pakistan's strategic pivot towards Russia and the impact of both international and regional factors on this relationship.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Pakistan-Russia relations has seen increased cooperation on various matters notably in 2000s. This shift marks a significant development in Pakistan's international relations, impacting its economic, political, and security domains. However this cooperation posses several challenges included diverse Pakistan from its traditional ally the United States on some extent. Pakistan-Russia relations have undergone significant shifts from decades, presenting a complex landscape particularly Cold-War era that demands a comprehensive analysis in respect of historical events, regional conflicts and the role of global politics internationally. As the adage goes, "there are no permanent friends or permanent enemies but only permanent interests" in international relations, and this principle applies to Pakistan and Russia as well. This study attempts to provide insight into the drivers behind cooperation, challenges and potentials to future scenario of the nature of relationship and it also examines the possible opportunities and constraints regarding the execution and further consolidation of ties focusing 21st century particularly with the analysis of India and Afghanistan as regional and US and China as international factors.

## **1.3 Significance of the Study**

The study on factors affecting the Pakistan-Russia relations: an analysis holds great significance as it sheds light on Pakistan's evolving geo-strategic, economic, and diplomatic evolvement towards Russia and Russia towards Pakistan, changing the context for the future of Pakistan's bilateral relations. This research will provide an in-depth analysis of the recent developments in the Pakistan-Russia relationship particularly in two decades (2000) . Moreover, it will answer the unique questions, that have added in recent existed studies and will add value to the various relevant fields.

This research will not only add significance to academia but will also provide a practical implication for policymakers to comprehend the future development of Pakistan's foreign policy. The policies which Pakistan adopted, may be at that time needed to adopt but now with the evolving nature of regional politics and international factors influence the politics, there must be a change needed in policies to introduce some other productive variant to implement. As Pakistan in South Asian region having a suitable strategic location which can provide linkage to many states from East to West. This study explores the possibilities and open new dimensions for future studies by adding new dimension in previous conducted studies.

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

1. To examine the level of bilateral relations between Pakistan and Russia.
2. To explore the regional and international factors which affect Pakistan-Russia bilateral relation.

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

1. What is the nature of bilateral relations between the Pakistan and Russia?
2. How the regional and international factors affect Pakistan-Russia relation?

#### **1.6 Delimitation of the Study**

This research study firstly limited to the factors affecting the Pakistan-Russia relations within the time frame of post 2000s events particularly. Secondly, examining the international and regional factors and their effects on both state's relations, with the help of existing literature available in Pakistan with the help of different sources. Hence it does not cover the global events, that do not directly apply to this specific shift but few. Moreover, the

study does not cover the social or cultural factors, unless they directly impact the alignment between two States.

Furthermore, the study is conducted in the English language and is based on primary and credible secondary sources. Therefore, other languages except English could not be utilized in the study.

## **1.7 Literature Review**

The literature review summarizes previous research conducted by accredited scholars and researchers on the chosen topic, as documented in books, journal papers, and reputable conferences. The purpose of literature review is to identify what has published earlier and how it linked with the present research problem. This section also introduces the theoretical framework for the study. A literature review is intended to evaluate and summarize the current understanding or application of a specific topic. However, in this field, sometime knowledge and the Truth are not synonymous often. When we speak about knowledge, we are referring to people's beliefs, particularly those in which they have grown a great level of confidence via education or experience of being living in that specific area. Numerous political and social behaviour, theories cannot be demonstrated with complete confidence (Knopf, J. W. 2006).

### 1.7.1 Review of Related Literature

Pakistan, situated in the northwest of the Indian subcontinent, holds significant geographical importance within South Asia. It has been a cradle of historical events, civilizations, traditions, and culture that embody the Islamic ideology of Muslims in the region. Geographically, Pakistan has historically served as a gateway between Eurasia. Blessed with abundant natural resources, particularly its warm seas, Pakistan plays a crucial economic role not only for itself but also for neighbouring landlocked states.

From its independence in 1947 until 1956, Pakistan struggled to formulate a sovereign constitution to chart its course. During this period, Pakistan joined the US-backed military and economic alliances CENTO and SEATO in the 1950s, hoping for balanced international relations. However, the events of 1965 and 1971 demonstrated that this balance was not assured, as Pakistan did not receive the expected assistance. Pakistan initially sought smooth relations with foreign states but soon realized the complexities involved for a newly established nation in proving itself on the international stage, leading to the eventual necessity of aligning with a single bloc to safeguard its interests (Jalal, 1997).

After gaining independence, Pakistan found itself increasingly threatened and challenged by its neighbor India, which exacerbated difficulties for the newly established state over time. To address these challenges and to align with Western interests for security against eastern threats, Pakistan felt compelled to join the CENTO and SEATO military and economic alliances. The Russian government was surprised by this move, considering their initial assistance to Pakistan. From February to December 1953, Pakistan negotiated various agreements with Russian authorities, leading to the provision of military and economic aid (Jalal, 1997).

During this period, Pakistan was striving to establish itself in the global arena. Field Marshal Muhammad Ayub Khan made vigorous efforts to secure Pakistan's interests internationally. Pakistan sought a strategic partner to bolster its objectives. Under President Nixon's administration, Pakistan endeavored to resolve differences with both the United States of America and the People's Republic of China. During Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's tenure, Pakistan reviewed its foreign policies, adjusting to challenges posed by President Jimmy Carter's administration, which held anti-socialist views and was unsupportive of Bhutto's government. In General Zia's era, Pakistan maintained balanced relations with the United States by supporting them against the Soviet Union during the jihad (Holy War) in Afghanistan in the 1980s. During this era Pakistan got an aid of 3.8 billion dollars from United States. In May 1998, Pakistan tested her nuclear devices and became the seventh in the world and first in the Islamic world to have the nuclear capability (Mustafa A. T., 2022).

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union and its transformation into Russia, Pakistan once again found itself isolated, as the United States temporarily withdrew from the region until the 1990s. when they re-entered into Afghanistan after the incident of 9/11 and started different operations over there on the name of peace building efforts and to reduce terrorism and the presence of Al-Qaida in Afghanistan after their almost 20 years effort they failed to disintegrate Afghanistan and got back their forces to US and the role of Pakistan in their paper disappear again where they use the soil of Pakistan against a group of people and many other innocent people of Afghanistan. Pakistan views Russia as a key long-term partner in Central Asia and the Middle East, With the changing geo-political scenario. Seeking to bolster its national development, Pakistan is focusing on increasing trade and investment in the region (Khan H. U., 2019).

More intensified aspects Russia-India relations, dominating the Indian subcontinent during the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. Amid the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, Russia-India relations have intensified, exerting significant influence over the Indian subcontinent. This conflict has adversely impacted Pakistan, particularly its trade relations with both Ukraine and Russia where Pakistan offered to play a mediator role in the conflict.

The global surge in oil, gas, and food prices due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict prompted Islamabad to deepen cooperation with Russia, focusing primarily on energy and food security. These sectors have been severely affected by the ongoing war. Energy cooperation, including the supply of crude oil and natural gas from Russia, was a critical area of discussion, with both countries deliberating on the specifics. In late September 2023, Islamabad received its first shipment of crude oil from Russia. Pakistan intends to finalize long-term agreements with Moscow to import crude oil and LNG, aiming to fulfill its future energy requirements (Fabbri, 2023).

### **1.7.2 Historical Events in 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

The partition of the Indian Subcontinent into two separate states, India and Pakistan, coincided with the onset of the Cold War between the superpowers of the time. These newly independent states, emerging from colonialism, faced structural weaknesses and the dilemma of aligning with one of the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, in the emerging bipolar international system. India inherited the colonial political structure of the British Raj and initially preferred strategic autonomy over military alliances. However, it also engaged in deliberate and secretive collaboration with the Soviet Union while officially maintaining a nonaligned policy for many years.

In contrast, Pakistan, as the weaker and more economically challenged of the two states, opted to join US-led military alliances that persisted until the Cold War's conclusion. Pakistan derived economic and military benefits from these alliances with the West but not without facing consequences for its choices. Throughout much of its history, Pakistan faced retaliation and antagonism from the Soviet Union due to Islamabad's pro-Western alignment (Khan M. T., 2019).

Diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Russia were officially established on May 1, 1948, following an agreement reached in New York by then Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR Andrei A. Gromyko and Pakistan's Foreign Minister at the time, Zafrullah Khan. Subsequently, embassies were inaugurated in Karachi and Moscow. Internationally level relationship of states can never be stagnant and changed as per need and political atmosphere. Similarly, Pakistan and Russia experienced fluctuations in their relations akin to those between the USSR and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan during the Cold War era, influenced by the dynamics of international politics. Cooperation between the Soviet Union and Pakistan was affected by the intricate and tumultuous events in Afghanistan, where both nations found themselves involved in various activities (Morgulov, 2015).

During the late 20th century, Pakistan actively engaged in the Cold War, aligning with US strategic objectives that led to significant historical differences and nonalignment with the Soviet Union.

Initially, in the early 1960s, Pakistan shifted its stance by supporting China's admission to the UN in 1961. When the Sino-Indian border conflict erupted in 1962, the US swiftly provided military assistance to India. Pakistan, as an ally of the West, viewed this support as detrimental to its security interests and subsequently withdrew from Western alliance (SEATO and CENTO). With the outbreak of 1965 war between Pakistan-India

changed the policies and tilted to western bloc again when Russia assisted India on broader level and clashed remained unresolved between Russia and Pakistan. Bhabani Sen Gupta wrote in his book “The fulcrum of Asia: Relations among China, India, Pakistan and the USSR.”

It was widely expected that United States could not possibly come to help to Pakistan in an Indo-Pakistani military conflict. His perceptions was so accurate and aligned with the US actions later in war of 1965 between India and Pakistan. That was the only historical full fledged war where US adopted neutralism policy rather Pakistan was an ally of her from last two decades. (Khan, Dashti, & Siraj, 2023)

Later Pakistan provided the United States with air bases and intelligence assets on Pakistani soil against when the soviet expansionism policy facilitated investigation and monitoring of the Soviet Union in the pre-satellite era. As a superpower in the Cold War, the Soviet Union frequently voted against Pakistan’s interests in all international forums, and in particular, against Pakistan’s position on Kashmir in the United Nations (Jabeen, 2011).

In the 1970s, Pakistan played a crucial role in facilitating a geopolitical summit between US President Richard Nixon and China, which led to improved relations between the two countries. In response, the Soviet Union signed the India-Soviet Mutual Friendship Treaty in August 1971. This treaty provided political and strategic support to India during the 1971 Indo-Pakistan War. Pakistan faced defeat and the loss of East Pakistan, leading to the creation of Bangladesh. Many Pakistani intellectuals view the breakup of Pakistan as the most significant consequence of Islamabad's role in facilitating US-China rapprochement. (Hanif, 2013).

In the 1980s, following the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan, the United States and Pakistan formed a strategic alliance to support Afghan insurgents against Soviet forces. The Soviet involvement in Afghanistan during the 1980s contributed to its strategic overreach and eventual dissolution. This period can be seen as the United States' response to the Soviet support for North Vietnam during the Vietnam War, and Pakistan's response to its defeat and partition in 1971 supported by the Soviet-backed India.

Essentially, both Pakistan and the Soviet Union indirectly influenced each other's disintegration during the Cold War, with the United States playing a central role. These historical events continue to influence relations between Russia and Pakistan, despite efforts to foster a new relationship, particularly in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, albeit with limitations (Hanif, 2013).

During the 1990s, relationship between Russia and Pakistan remained stagnant as of previous years. Russia was preoccupied with its internal transformations but maintained strong historical ties with India. Despite the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan and the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia continued to support anti-Taliban non-Pashtun militant groups. Therefore, even after the Cold War ended and the Soviet Union dissolved, Pakistan's strategic interests remained at odds with those of Russia. Before the events of 9/11, Russia actively endorsed all US-sponsored resolutions at the UN, which condemned and imposed sanctions on the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Pakistan, alongside Saudi Arabia and the UAE, recognized the Taliban regime. As a result, mutual mistrust continued until Pakistan strategically changed its Afghanistan policy after 9/11, withdrawing its support for the Taliban. Post 9/11, Pakistan emerged as a pivotal member of the international coalition led by the US against terrorism. Pakistan's significant role in the coalition's efforts in Afghanistan, aimed at dismantling the Taliban regime and eliminating the al-Qaeda network,

underscored its importance in combating terrorism. However, Pakistan bore a higher cost than most other countries in these efforts (Zia, 2023).

However, in the early 2000s, there were some initial steps towards improvement. Both countries began exploring opportunities for cooperation in trade, energy, and defense. With China's involvement in normalizing Pakistan's bilateral and multilateral relations, Pakistan's focus extended beyond the US to include other regional and international states.

The political history of Pakistan-Russia relations reflects the intricate interplay of global and regional dynamics. From Cold War adversaries to pragmatic partners, their relationship has been shaped by mutual strategic interests and geopolitical realities spanning the 20th and 21st centuries. It was only after Pakistan's role in counterterrorism was recognized by the international community that Pakistan and Russia started to find common ground for engagement.

The factor that contributed to the improvement in Pakistan-Russia relations was the initiation of a composite dialogue process between Pakistan and India for regional peace and stability. Additionally, the evolving strategic partnership between India and the US has played a role in prompting a normalization of relations between Pakistan and Russia as India tilting towards US more. With India showing interest in purchasing arms from the US and its allies, there is a potential reduction in India's arms market share for Russia. Consequently, Russia is seeking new markets for its arms exports, which creates a shared interest between Russia and Pakistan by China's influence. Although, both countries recognize the potential benefits of a stronger partnership. High-level diplomatic exchanges and bilateral meetings, conferences continue to explore new areas of cooperation. The evolving geopolitical landscape, particularly with changing US policies in the region, might further influence Pakistan-Russia relations in future as positive gesture (Shah, 2001).

Another factor where Russian-Pakistani relations have been improving significantly. With the inclusion of Pakistan in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), both nations are working together on regional security issues. Drug trafficking, which flows through Afghanistan towards Central Asia and Russia, is contributing to a humanitarian crisis in Eurasia, and Russia is keen to address this problem. Pakistan is collaborating with Russia to combat this issue. Additionally, there has been a notable economic breakthrough.

Russia has lifted the arms embargo on Pakistan, contributing to a more balanced regional dynamic. (Belokrenitsky & Kamenev, 2013).

Most of the literature is on Pakistan-Russia bilateral relations is involved particularly Cold-War era and after words cooperation on some sectors and participation internationally.

## **1.8 Theoretical Framework**

This study consults with one single theoretical perspective, in term of the modified addition in assumption of realism (a basic theory of IR) which is called neo-realism. In the field of International Relations (IR), realism is a theoretical perspective that highlights the competitive and conflict-prone nature of international relations. Realism is often traced back to some of humanity's earliest historical writings, particularly in Thucydides' observations around 400 BCE. However, realistic thoughts in IR were not existed before 19<sup>th</sup> century but behaviour was found in ancient world. Later, Niccolo Machiavelli, Thomas Hobes, Hans J. Morgenthau, Henry Kissinger the main proponent of classical realism, invested in international relations theory. In 1970s a modified addition in realism introduced in existing theory of IR as neo-realism whose main proponent is Kenneth Waltz. Moreover, upon closer analysis, the fundamental tenets of this theory provide a relevant framework for evaluating the relations between the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Russian Federation, encompassing both historical interactions and future diplomatic approaches in international

relations particularly the concept of power balancing, security dilemmas, and state behaviour in an anarchic international world system which applies to the case of Pakistan-Russia relation (OBE, 2017).

### **1.8.1 Neo Realism**

According to the Kenneth Waltz, traditional realism contained significant deficiencies, that it was very ‘agent centred’ (individual or state behaviour) concentrating primarily on states and their behaviour. Waltz argued that any theory in international relations should be able to provide the main agent ‘state’ and the ‘international world system’ all together. From state level-analysis to system-level analysis (Steans, Pettiford, Diez, & Imad, 2010).

From the very ground concept of neo-realism which argues that it is not the selfish nature of human being or state but the international system which is chaotic and anarchic it compels states to behave in certain manners to ensure their security and power maximization through certain co-operation strategies (Kenneth Waltz). States act as rational actors driven by the imperative of survival and the pursuit of national interests, often employing bilateral policies to achieve these goals. In this political landscape, where unforeseen events can unfold, this paper explores how Pakistan and Russia can collaborate to meet their respective fundamental needs on the evolving regional and international stage, guided by futuristic approaches. Within this theoretical framework, the paper will examine how Pakistan seeks ultimate security and economic support, while the Russian Federation prioritizes power and influence as key instruments. The analysis will also delve into the offensive and defensive strategies each state may employ in the future, within the context of this paradigm (Sarmad, 2018).

In an anarchic international system, states operate based on self-interest and seek to maximize their security and power in the absence of a higher authority.

By cooperation and security alliances Russia involved in Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) Shanghai Corporation Organization (SCO) and other collective military exercises in region can be seen as an effort towards co-operation as per needed in evolving regional situation and to encounter western influence in South Asian Region respectively which compel other states included Pakistan as an old ally to behave in certain pattern (Younus, 2018).

Neo-realism, or structural realism, provides a framework for understanding international relations by emphasizing the anarchic nature of the international system, where no overarching authority exists above states. Key concepts in neo-realism include power balancing, security dilemmas, and state behaviour in an anarchic system. Applying these concepts to the Pakistan-Russia relationship can help elucidate their dynamics.

### **1.8.2 Power Balancing**

Power balancing is the concept that states will seek to counterbalance the power of more dominant states to ensure their own security. During the Cold War, Pakistan and Russia (then the Soviet Union) were on opposite sides, with Pakistan aligning more closely with the U.S and Russia supporting India. The end of the Cold War shifted the international balance, but regional dynamics persisted. Today, Pakistan's relationship with Russia can be seen through the lens of power balancing against regional competitors, particularly India. For example, Pakistan's engagement with Russia can be partly understood as an effort to diversify its partnerships and reduce dependency on the U.S. and China, while also balancing India's growing strategic ties with Russia.

### **1.8.3 Security Dilemmas**

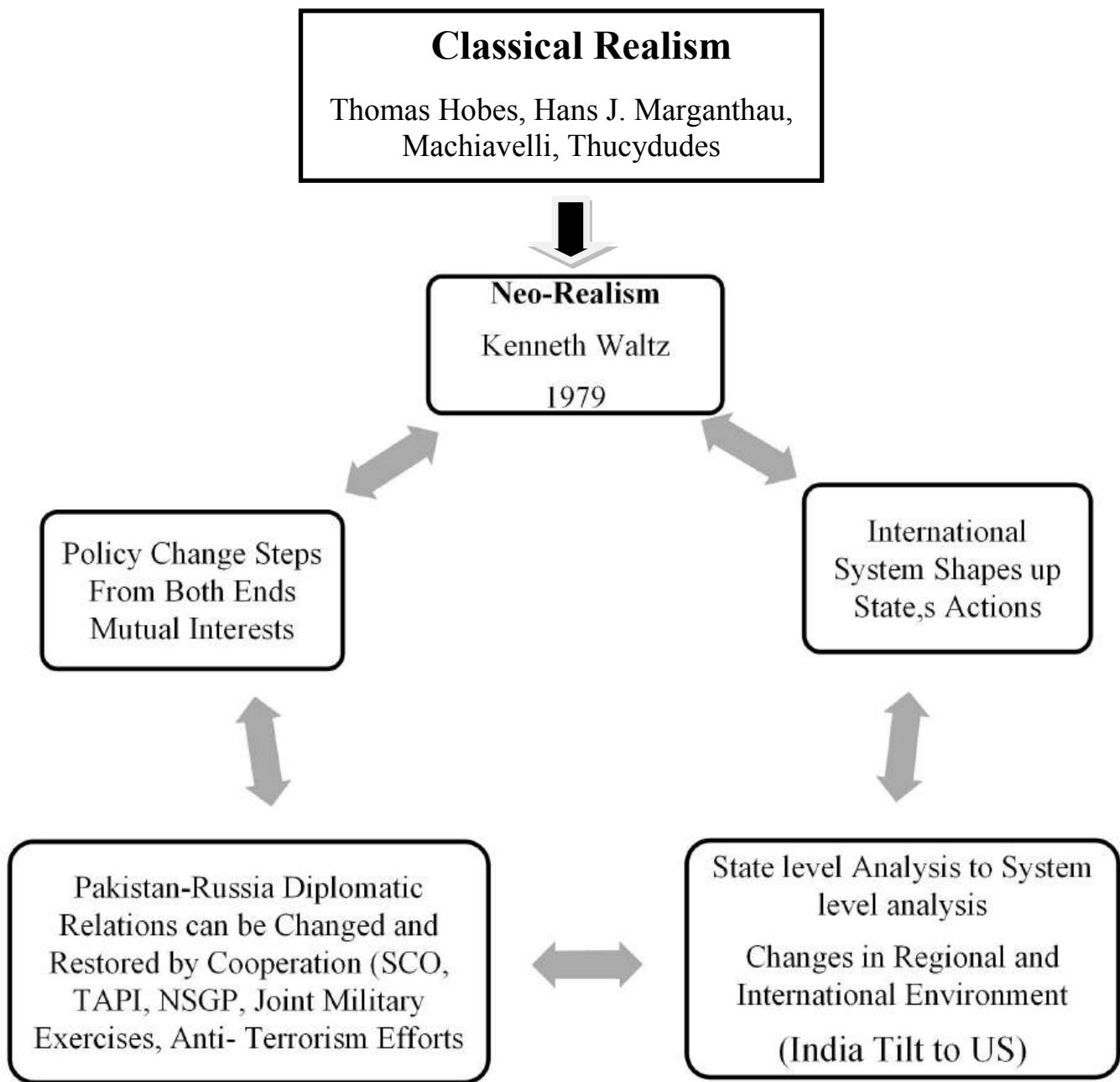
A security dilemma arises when the actions taken by a state to increase its own security cause insecurity in other states, leading to an arms race or heightened tensions. Russia's increased military cooperation with India could exacerbate Pakistan's security concerns, prompting Pakistan to seek greater military or strategic support from other powers, including Russia to balance their relations in region to secure their security. Pakistan's efforts to bolster its security through closer ties with Russia could be perceived by India as a threat, potentially leading to a regional security dilemma where each side's attempts to enhance security contribute to overall instability. However, Afghanistan is another key player in South Asia where Russia and Pakistan both work jointly to counter terrorism which ultimately affects both side as Pakistan and Russia. In an anarchic international system, states act primarily in their own self-interest and seek to maximize their security and power due to the absence of a higher authority. (Sarmad, 2023)

### **1.8.4 Self-Interest**

Both nations operate based on their national interests and strategic goals. Russia may view Pakistan as a partner to counterbalance Western influence in the region, while Pakistan seeks to leverage its relationship with Russia to enhance its strategic positioning and security. Pakistan's outreach to Russia can be seen as part of its broader strategy to diversify its foreign relations and secure new avenues for military and economic support, reflecting the self-help nature of the anarchic system where states must navigate and respond to each other's actions to maintain their own security (OBE, 2017).

In summary, neo-realism helps explain the Pakistan-Russia relationship as a strategic manoeuvre within an anarchic international system, characterized by efforts to balance power, navigate security dilemmas, and pursue self-interested strategies in the absence of a central authority.

### 1.8.5 Diagrammatical Illustration of Theoretical Framework



(Waltz,1979) Designed by Author

## **1.9 Research Methodology**

The research methodology refers as a systematic and appropriate approach to address the chosen topic comprehensively. This study is exploratory, logical, systematic, and concisely descriptive in its nature. By the induction of “qualitative method” primary data(official’s interviews) through convenience sampling method and secondary sources (articles, books, governmental reports, credible websites research journals) are used with theoretical approach of neo-realism. Moreover, the findings are based on the content analysis of the collected data.

### **1.9.1 Research Design**

Research design is a well-defined process in the research to come to the conclusion. A research design help to make the study more-clear (Mahmud 2011). This study used a qualitative research design to examine the “Factors Affecting The Pakistan-Russia Relations: an analysis” examining the regional and international factors and their effects on their relationship. The qualitative research approach examine the factors discussed in thesis, offering a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the Pakistan-Russia relationship along with the factors. This research utilized exploratory and analytical methods to achieve its objectives.

### **1.9.2 Population**

This research includes the specific individuals or area on which the research conducted. It helps to narrow down the research or study which will increase clarity on the research study (Kothari, 2004) population on large scale can make research more complicated and time taking so this study is much focused.

A population is well-defined set of units of analysis. This research include every individual of society and government who is concerned. .

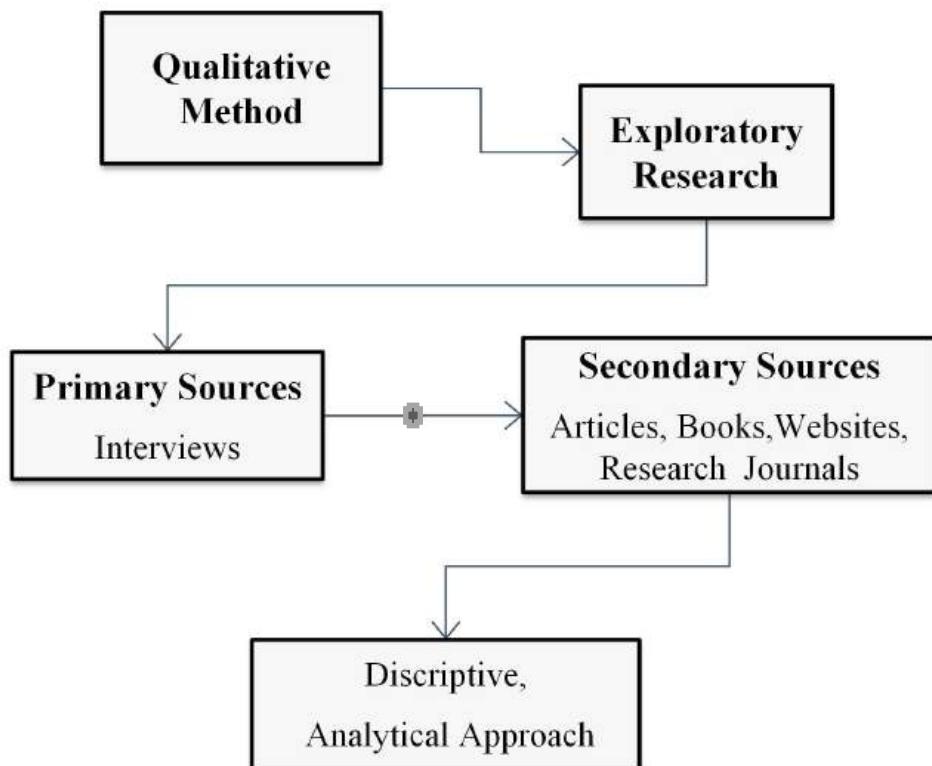
### **1.9.3 Procedure (Data Collection)**

Data collection is a technique or process of collecting relevant data to find answers for the research questions via different sources and there are two basic methods of data collection; one is primary data collection and other is secondary data collection (Creswell, 2022).

This qualitative study has utilized both primary and secondary sources of data collection to explore and analyze Pakistan-Russian relations and the factors having effects on both states relations which includes international and regional as well. So the asked questions via interview are based on the nature of Pakistan Russia bilateral relations, how do regional and international factors effecting both state's relation and other one is based on the future of their relations in regional and international environment. The research gathered data from reputable and current sources such as books, journals, political reports, newspaper articles, relevant websites, research articles, and other scholarly literature. These sources were aligned with the research questions, aims, and objectives to substantiate the research findings. The study focuses on a timeframe , examining events that have significantly impacted the relations between Pakistan and Russia, bringing them closer together. In this context, "post 9/11 incident" refers to events that have shaped their relations. The research addresses "how" and "what" questions in a logical manner, with "Pakistan-Russian relations" as the independent variable and "regional and international factors" as the dependent variables.

#### 1.9.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis involves the scientific or systematic cleaning and modeling of data to uncover valuable and pertinent information, ultimately leading to the conclusions in a systematic way (Walliman, 2021) . Systematic and scientific method in defined area to analyse print, electronic or text form data timely and further analyse pattern and phrases which have used in certain context and then interpret accordingly. Coded the literature by time since 2000s particularly which based upon the historical events through news papers, journal articles or other relevant measures in a specified time frame with the arguments about the bilateral relationship of Pakistan and Russia and analyzed the content words, phrases, reports their interpretation etc to analyse a built world's narrative.



d by author.

Designe

### **1.9.5 Ethical Consideration**

Ethical considerations are important in any research regarding the validity of research (Creswell, 2022). This research will no generate any harm to its readers. All the data used in research has been mentioned with its resources, citation and bibliography.

### **1.9.6 Research Gap**

According to Mearsheimer (2001), major powers and other states alike struggle or strive to maximize their power and security. Existing literature largely supports this perspective. However, it is noted that Pakistan, despite being a non-major state, is also pursuing both enhanced security and increased power in its region. Similarly, the study argues that Russia is engaged in efforts to bolster its security while also seeking to expand its influence and power.

While the available literature extensively discusses relations between Pakistan and Russia, it emphasizes a new aspect it is not merely opposition but rather regional and global ambitions and hegemonic intentions that shape the competitive behaviours of regional actors, especially in the Asian context. Another crucial aspect overlooked in the available literature is India's multifaceted approach politically, diplomatically, militarily, economically, and strategically to obstruct Pakistan. This obstruction is not merely rooted in historical animosity but also in India's role as a facilitator for advancing and realizing the ambitious aspirations of China and Russia into reality.

### **1.9.7 Operational Definition:**

**Bilateral Relations (Bilateralism):** "Bilateral relations (Bilateralism) refer to the political, economic, or cultural interactions between two independent states.

**Realism** – A theory of international relations which defines egoistic nature of state or individual and power hunger.

**Neo- Realism** – An addition in theory of classical realism which talks about international system and its influence on state's nature.

**Power Maximization** – Gain more and more power against others.

**Hegemony** – A state of supremacy or dominance in political context.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2. DYNAMICS OF PAKISTAN-RUSSIA GROWING BILATERAL RELATIONS

#### OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Dynamics is usually marked or refer as a continuous or productive activity or change which caused by the internal or any external force or forces. This kind of change can happen in every field of science either it is natural science, political or social by other factors who cause them to bring a change whether it is a whole system or a minor effect which ultimately cause to generate a variation with in a system. So in social sciences specifically in International Relations there is a system which is monitored internationally as well as on national level and it can be changed in many areas of world by public revolts, public will or by the state's government for the betterment of their citizens. These changes are mandatory in evolving nature of political system moving international to multinational. The theme of change can easily be found in the rhetoric of political leaders, in media, as well as in the academic world. (Kusuma wardhana, 2017)

Bilateral relations involve the exchange of perspectives on regional and international developments between two states. Specifically, Pakistan and Russia engage in high-level interactions, closely align their positions on regional and global issues, and enhance their trade, investment, and cooperation in energy and power generation sectors and their common allies all the possible sectors where they both can jointly participate towards future approaches. With the perspective the political relationship between Pakistan and Russia has evolved significantly over the decades, shaped by historical contexts, geopolitical shifts, and mutual strategic interests. (Hussain N., 2012)

From the Cold War adversaries to cautious collaborators, the curve of their bilateral relations reflects broader, international dynamics and the changing priorities of Pakistan and Russia. Following World War II, Pakistan achieved independence and appeared as a new nation on the world stage then there is an era which is defined as the Cold War divided World into two or a bipolar international system for years (Hussain N. , 2012).

Since its independence, Pakistan's foreign policy has been defined by its national security objectives, which have been challenged by neighboring South Asian states particularly India. Kashmir issue remained unresolved between India and Pakistan which on and off generates causes of conflict between both states where Russia supported India's stance over Kashmir and another incident includes wars between two states Russia also supported and assist India through different means and aid. Pakistan's relationship with the Soviet Union (now Russia) was not particularly warm and often adversarial, as Pakistan aligned closely with the United States within the Western bloc. Pakistan leaned more towards socialism than Marxism on ideological grounds, further cementing its foreign policy alignment with the United States during the Cold War era. Initially adopting a policy of non-alignment for about a decade, Pakistan later joined military alliances such as SEATO (Southeast Asia Treaty Organization) and CENTO (Central Treaty Organization) (Zia, 2023).

Although the general Cold War hostility, there were moments of limited engagement. In late 1960s and early 1970s, Pakistan's leadership apparently sought to expand its foreign policy. That time of official Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto initiated diplomatic approaches towards the Soviet Union, leading to some cooperation. However, those efforts were limited to that time in scope and impact which could not move and act as a long time

policy between both states. Later the Soviet (Russian) invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 marked as a major turning point in international system. (Hanif, 2013)

Pakistan, with substantial support from the United States as of Pakistan having a suitable geostrategic location in South Asian region which accomplished United States to counter the expansion of socialism in Afghanistan and Pakistan as suffering to survival and security issues found US assistance as a blessing to the betterment of state in security, economy and other required fields and became a frontline state against Soviet expansionism policy, providing support to Afghan Mujahedeen (fighters). This period saw a deepening of hostilities as Pakistan played a crucial role in the Soviet Union's eventual withdrawal from Afghanistan (Shah, A.A.2001).

The nature of their bilateral relations majorly based on and changed during the Cold War era in the words of Dr. Sohail Ahmad, Tenured Associate Professor of Humanities, CUI Comsat University Islamabad campus. "Historically Pakistan and Russia's relations remain stagnant and the cold war time period considered as a major era of 20th century. It goes back to the era of cold war between US and Soviet Union, where Russia was the largest state in the Soviet Union on the other hand Pakistan was an ally of US that time created a barrier between the two countries. Later on since the cold war ended cooperation between both states is growing now on some extent especially in 21st century sharing concerns over Afghanistan other major factor is maintaining the balance of power in South Asia so on the points where the interests of the both countries align with each others. In defence area Pakistan is eagerly looks for great powers and Russia has given its military assistance to Pakistan even in post cold war era . Energy needs of Pakistan always remain a major need an energy hungry country needs energy on more cheaper and less costly as compare to the other energy providers" (Ahmad S, Personal Communication, July 3, 2024).

However, by the start of 21st Century they both are moving towards cooperation like Intergovernmental Commission on trade, economic, scientific, and technical cooperation between Russia and Pakistan is actively working to foster business connections, with the next sessions scheduled to take place in Moscow later in coming years. It is emphasized that through collaborative efforts and other bilateral mechanisms, significant strides can be made in realizing ambitious joint projects. The focus is shifting towards translating framework cooperation agreements into concrete business contracts, with vast untapped potential identified, particularly in the metallurgical and energy sectors, where historical foundations laid by Soviet engineers can be built upon (Dedov, 2020).

## **2.1 Balancing Power Dynamics in South-Asia**

The involvement in South Asia by the Soviet Union was significantly influenced by the need to balance the power dynamics and counteract the influence of rival superpowers, particularly the United States. Pakistan's alignment with the US demonstrated through military agreements and alliances such as the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) and the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), spurred Soviet initiatives to offset American influence in the region. This led to increased Soviet engagement in South Asia including military assistance to countries like India to counterbalance US influence and safeguard its strategic interest.

The strategic landscape in South Asia was shaped by a complex interplay of alliances and power struggles between the superpowers. The US was driven by a desire to maintain a strategic equilibrium and prevent the consolidation of American dominance in the region. As Pakistan seeks to enhance its security by forging stronger ties with Russia, it may provoke a corresponding reaction from India, exacerbating regional instability and potentially leading to

a security dilemma where each state's defensive measures amplify overall tensions (Ganguly, 2001).

## **2.2 Thematic Areas of Russia-Pakistan Cooperation**

By applying neo-realism to the Pakistan-Russia relationship provides a framework for understanding their interactions as strategic manoeuvres within an anarchic international system, driven by the need to balance power, address security dilemmas, and pursue self-interested goals to address the certain areas of their interests. A security dilemma occurs when a state's efforts to enhance its own security lead to increased tensions and insecurity among other states, potentially sparking an arms race. Russia's strengthening military and strategic relations with India could heighten Pakistan's security concerns, leading it to seek a counterbalance through closer ties with Russia. This dynamic reflects a classic security dilemma, where each state's actions to secure itself can inadvertently increase the perceived threat to others.

### **2.2.1 Defence and Security**

Russia and Pakistan have made significant progress in defence and security collaboration, marking a deepening of their bilateral relationship. It includes their defense agreements, including arms sales and joint military exercises, and examines the impact on regional security. Recent years have seen both countries sign multiple defense agreements, enhancing military cooperation across various domains. These agreements cover arms sales, defense technology transfers, and joint military drills (Khan, 2019).

Russia has become a key supplier of defense equipment to Pakistan, notably lifting its arms embargo in 2014 and beginning defense trade. Since then, the two nations have completed several major arms deals. Russia has provided Pakistan with a range of defense equipment, including helicopters, tanks, and air defense systems. These arms sales have

enhanced Pakistan's defense capabilities and contributed to the modernization of its military forces. Beyond the supply of arms, Russia has also participated in defense technology transfers, including the manufacturing and assembly of Russian military equipment in Pakistan. Additionally, Russia and Pakistan have engaged in joint military exercises, which serve to improve interoperability, exchange best practices, and build mutual trust between their armed forces. A prominent example of these joint exercises is the "Friendship" series, which commenced in 2016. These exercises have covered various domains like counterterrorism operations, mountain warfare, and Special Forces training. Joint military exercises contribute to mutual learning and cooperation in defence strategies and tactics (Mohan, 2021).

### **2.2.2 Regional Security**

Increased defence cooperation between Russia and Pakistan is poised to enhance regional security. Both countries are aligned in their concerns about terrorism, extremism, and the situation in Afghanistan. By working together on defence and security issues, they aim to address these mutual challenges. Collaborative efforts in counterterrorism, intelligence sharing, and border management are intended to combat transnational threats and curb the spread of violence across borders (Sarmad, 2023).

Furthermore, their joint participation in the Afghan peace process underscores their commitment to regional stability and a peaceful resolution of the Afghan conflict. However, it's important to recognize that the defence cooperation between Russia and Pakistan might raise concerns among other regional players. India's historical rivalry with Pakistan could lead it to perceive Russia's defence ties with Pakistan as a threat to its own security interests. Balancing these competing interests and managing potential tensions presents a challenge for

Russia as it seeks to sustain its relationships with both India and Pakistan (Haq, Khan, & Khatoon, 2023).

Since 2000s, Russia and Pakistan have signed multiple agreements to boost their economic cooperation. During a visit by the Russian counterpart to Pakistan, memoranda were established in sectors including metallurgy, railways, and energy. Additionally, the resolution of a protracted trade dispute dating back to the dissolution of the Soviet Union led to a notable rise in bilateral trade, increasing from US\$442 million in 2017 to US\$532 million in 2018. Furthermore, as Russia seeks new markets for its energy products, especially in response to Europe's decarbonization initiatives, Pakistan has become an appealing partner. The two nations have signed agreements to build a \$2.5 billion natural gas pipeline in Pakistan, which is part of a broader Russian investment package totaling \$14 billion in the country's energy sector. This collaboration could help decrease Pakistan's reliance on oil and address its increasing energy needs (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2021).

### **2.2.3 Bilateral Engagement Between Pakistan and Russia on Economic Interests**

In recent decades, Russia and Pakistan have been actively strengthening their economic relationship, influenced by a variety of factors. Pakistan's drive for economic rejuvenation and energy security, combined with Russia's goal to extend its economic presence in Asia, has brought the two nations closer together. The 8th session of the Pakistan-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, and Technical Cooperation, which took place in Islamabad from January 18-20, 2023, resulted in significant developments. Both countries reaffirmed their dedication to enhancing economic ties and agreed to boost collaboration in sectors such as trade, investment, energy, and education. The

Pakistan Stream Gas Pipeline project was emphasized as a crucial element for sustainable gas development and affordable energy supplies.

Russia invited to explore potential projects with both federal and provincial Pakistani governments, and outstanding issues regarding certificates of origin were resolved. Designated contacts were appointed to improve cooperation, and initiatives were taken to advance collaboration in science, technology, and education. Discussions also covered innovative business models, including barter trade, with a focus on fostering regional integration and Eurasian connectivity.

The deepening economic ties between Russia and Pakistan are likely to have significant implications for the regional balance of power, especially as China's geopolitical influence continues to rise (Ministry of Economic Affairs, Government of Pakistan).

#### **2.2.4 Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**

BRI, an extensive network of land and maritime routes, strategically links China with Southeast and South Asia, Central Asia, the Pacific Oceania, Africa, and Europe. Officially launched in 2013, this initiative has fostered deeper relations between China and Russia within the broader context of Eurasian integration. As Sino-Russian ties strengthen, Pakistan emerges as a key ally and connector to Europe, enhancing its relationship with Russia. China and Russia, as pivotal non-Western Eurasian powers in political, economic, and military terms, drive multi-faceted Eurasian integration, offering Pakistan an alternative path amidst Western challenges. Russia's involvement in China's One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative updated as BRI (Belt and Road Initiative) could potentially lead to normalized relations. BRI comprises two main routes: the New Silk Road Economic Belt, which extends westward through Central Asia to Europe, and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road (MSR), which runs

southward through sea routes to Europe, with stops in Southeast Asia, South Asia, and Africa (Zemánek, 2019).

### **2.2.5 Shanghai Corporation Organization (SCO) and Russia**

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) was established in 2001 as a significant Eurasian entity for political, economic, international security, and defense collaboration, originating from joint efforts by China and Russia. It stands as the world's largest organization by geographic coverage and population, encompassing approximately 80% of Eurasia's land area and representing around 40% of the global population as of 2023. With a combined GDP constituting about 20% of the world's total, the SCO evolved from the Shanghai Five, which initially comprised China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan, formed in 1996. In June 2001, these nations, along with Uzbekistan, convened in Shanghai to formally announce the SCO, aimed at deeper political and economic cooperation (Xue & Makingo, 2021).

In June 2017, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) expanded to include India and Pakistan, growing its membership to eight states. Iran joined the organization in July 2023, leading to annual meetings held in Astana, Kazakhstan. Pakistan viewed its accession to the SCO as a significant achievement for two primary reasons. Firstly, it provided Pakistan with strategic leverage against India as of security concern and Secondly, it will enhance further Pakistan's independent foreign policy from bilateralism to multilateralism (Ziegler, 2013). Russia places significant emphasis on its collaboration with Pakistan within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The SCO has garnered substantial credibility and is increasingly becoming a crucial component of regional security arrangements, facilitating cross-regional economic, energy, and infrastructure initiatives. Of

particular note is the growing momentum in Russian-Pakistani cooperation against drug trafficking, an area deemed a top priority for further engagement (Morgulov, 2023).

According to a Russian official report from 2020, there is a strong focus on enhancing trade and economic cooperation with Pakistan. Efforts are being intensified to strengthen partnerships in economy, trade, and finance. The goal is to elevate economic ties to a level commensurate with the advanced political dialogue currently enjoyed between the two countries. Despite a current trade volume of \$550 million, it is believed that this figure does not reflect the full potential of economic collaboration. In recent years, Russia and Pakistan have been actively fostering their economic relations, driven by a combination of strategic interests and mutual benefits. Pakistan's quest for economic revitalization and energy security, coupled with Russia's ambition to expand its economic influence in Asia, have brought the two nations closer together (Haq, Khan, & Khatoon, 2023).

During the first presidential visit to Russia since President Musharraf, addressed the SCO summit in Shanghai in June 2006, Pakistan emphasized its capability to contribute effectively within the SCO framework. It was stated that "Pakistan is strategically positioned in geopolitical, geostrategic, and geo-economic dimensions, making it ideally suited not only to promote but also to assume a pivotal role in advancing the SCO's shared interests." Pakistan serves as a natural bridge connecting the SCO states, facilitating connectivity between the Eurasian heartland and the Arabian Sea region of South Asia. He further emphasized, "We provide essential overland routes and connectivity crucial for mutually advantageous trade and energy transactions within our region and beyond." He also articulated a vision for Pakistan to evolve into a central hub of economic activity, connecting neighboring regions through extensive railway networks, highways, and ports. This strategic positioning aims to establish Pakistan as a pivotal trade and energy corridor linking Europe and Asia (Rahman M. S., 2014).

## 2.2.6 China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Russia

CPEC, a flagship project under China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), aims to enhance connectivity and foster economic integration between Pakistan and China through the development of infrastructure projects such as roads, railways, and energy pipelines. Beyond its economic objectives, CPEC holds significant civilization, cultural, political, and strategic dimensions. While its primary focus is geo-economic, the project's implementation is expected to be transformative, facilitating connections across East Asia, Central Asia, South Asia, West Asia, the Gulf, and Africa. Hence, it is essential to examine CPEC from various perspectives and its linkages with different states and routes (Khan, Malik, Ijaz, & Farwa, 2016).

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is expected to significantly enhance trade and economic cooperation between the two countries. Chinese Premier Li Keqiang highlighted the importance of CPEC during his visit to Pakistan in May 2013. The corridor will span from Gwadar Port in Baluchistan, Pakistan, to Kashgar in the north-western province of China. Once completed, it is anticipated to serve as a key trade route connecting China with the Middle East, Europe, and Africa. The Ukraine crisis has strategic implications not only for Europe but also intersects with Russian interests and objectives vis-à-vis those of the US and Europe in other global contexts (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) .

The primary route traverses Pakistan's territory to reach its destination. BRI encompasses at least six routes, with CPEC being a pivotal component. It is crucial to note that Pakistan occupies a strategic position at the intersection of east-west and north-south trade corridors, including the CPEC. In South Asia, following the US decision to withdraw forces from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Russia are inclined to strengthen their relations based on emerging strategic and economic dynamics (Bhattacharjee, 2015).

CPEC enhances the significance of Gwadar port for Russia, prompting Pakistan to propose the western corridor to facilitate Russia's utilization of Gwadar port. This would provide Russia access to the Indian Ocean via the Arabian Sea and Gwadar ports. Connecting Russia and the Central Asian Republics (CARs) to Gwadar Port is expected to contribute to Pakistan's economic growth and development. Russia is keen on enhancing trade and economic cooperation with Pakistan. Stable conditions in Afghanistan could potentially facilitate expanded trade among Pakistan, CARs, and Russia. As Pakistan's relations improve, it could also offer Russia trade access to India. Russia's interest in participating in CPEC aims to benefit the initiative and strengthen Pakistan's economy. The agreement signed in 2015 for the construction of the North-South gas pipeline underscores Russia's commitment to highlight and invest in projects within Pakistan. Later, in 2016 Pakistan grant permission to Russia to access warm water resources because Russia wanted to explore market in south Asia and trying to enhance trade that is why its beneficial for entire Asia (Ahmed K. , 2017).

## **2.2.7 BRICS and Pakistan Ambition**

In the evolving global economic and geopolitical landscape, the BRICS group comprises Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa emerges as a symbol of the shifting global power dynamics, challenging the traditional dominance of Western economies. This alliance of emerging economies represents a move towards a more balanced and inclusive global order, seeking to elevate the voices of developing nations. Against this backdrop, Pakistan views its potential membership in BRICS with a mix of hopeful anticipation and strategic caution, recognizing both the opportunities and challenges this affiliation may present. Pakistan's application for BRICS membership in the latter half of 2023 reflects its genuine interest, driven by strategic and practical considerations. This ambition has garnered broad support within Pakistan's intellectual and political circles, indicating a unified desire to join this influential group to overcome the Western influence G7 countries (The Group of

Seven states is a bloc of advanced economies in the world Canada ,France ,Germany Italy, Japan, United Kingdom, United States).

## **2.2.8 Pakistan-Russia Official Meetings**

Although Pakistan and Russia found themselves in opposing camps during the Cold War, their bilateral relations are now undergoing normalization amid the evolving global landscape. Current efforts are taking functional steps, with expectations that achieving completely normalized relations, particularly in the context of regional antiterrorism cooperation, will require time. While the frequency of high-level meetings between leaders and officials from both countries has increased, substantial progress at the operational level is still pending. Both countries are increasingly demonstrating their intentions to enhance their relationship. Pakistan appears particularly eager to improve its international policies through closer ties with Russia. (Dedov, 2020).

In the context of Pakistan-Russia relations, President Pervez Musharraf's visit to Moscow at the invitation of President Putin marked a significant diplomatic event. President Musharraf emphasized the mutual interest of Pakistan and Russia in expanding their ties, emphasizing the need for bilateral cooperation rather than a self-centered approach. He highlighted the importance of translating political and diplomatic understanding into economic and trade relations, identifying textiles, Pakistan's largest export commodity, and the oil and gas sector as promising areas for economic engagement. This visit, the first by a Pakistani leader in thirty-three years, served as an initial step in fostering high-level dialogue between the two countries. While it did not immediately transform their overall relationship, it acted as an icebreaker and laid the foundation for deeper mutual understanding. Following President Musharraf's visit, Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov visited Islamabad in June 2003, further indicating the growing momentum in bilateral exchanges. (Khan D. Z., 2013).

Pakistan's former Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz participated in the SCO meeting in October 2005, where he also held discussions with Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov on the sidelines to enhance bilateral relations. Russia's admission as an observer at the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in June 2005 and Pakistan's attainment of observer status at the SCO were not coincidental; both countries accommodated each other's aspirations. During the SCO summit in Shanghai in June 2006, President Musharraf expressed gratitude to President Putin for supporting Pakistan's observer status in the SCO. In return, President Putin appreciated Pakistan's support for Russia's observer status at the OIC. Both leaders expressed satisfaction with their strong diplomatic and political ties and agreed on the imperative to strengthen trade, commercial, and economic relations. The events in February 2003 marked a significant milestone in fostering cooperation between the two nations (Khan D. Z., 2013).

### **2.2.9 MOUS, Delegations (Official)**

MOUs, Memorandum of Understandings often termed as nonbinding agreements outlining each party's intentions to pursue actions, conduct business transactions, or establish new partnerships, are typically signed by representatives of two states. Since the 9/11 incident, Pakistan-Russia relations have notably strengthened across diplomatic, political, military, and economic domains. Tensions between Pakistan and the US following this event, compounded by the US's increasing alignment with India during the Obama administration (2009-2016), prompted Pakistan to seek alternative partnerships. The strain in US-Pakistan relations created opportunities for Russia to increase its engagement with Pakistan.

The exchange of high level leadership's visits and other ministries, the signing of a number agreements and Memorandums of Understanding for promoting political, social, economic and military cooperation has greatly enhanced bilateral relations between two

countries. Close relations with Russia would provide Pakistan an opportunity to have more independent foreign policy. In the prevailing circumstances, it is in the supreme interest of Pakistan to initiate political and military outreach towards other global power centres especially Russia. More important is the membership of Pakistan in Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Russia as a founding member is another positive and constructive step in the context of Pak-Russia relations, their common views and perceptions on regional and global issues make the relationship more significant. Joint efforts by both sides for the eradication of menace of terrorism and extremism further led to strengthen this relationship. In addition, there are numerous areas of common interests ranging from bilateral economic cooperation to multilateral arm control and disarmament (Khan M. , 2011).

In the sector of energy good prospects and opportunities for Pakistan-Russia cooperation are emerging. In October 2005 during the official visit the Gazprom chairman (Gazprom is a Russia majority state owned multinational energy cooperation) which supplies gas to domestic industries and consumers and trades it abroad mostly to Europe and Asia, via pipelines and in its liquefied form (LNG) Aleksei Miller, with President Musharraf and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz in Islamabad held separate meetings. The government of Pakistan signed a MoU with Gazprom for cooperation in the oil and gas sector. Under the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), collaboration entails the research and development of gas fields, the establishment and management of underground gas storage systems, exploration and production of oil and gas, as well as conducting research to tap Pakistan's unexplored potential, particularly in offshore areas (Afzal, 2006).

Recently Memorandum of Understanding signed between Pakistan and Russia in June 2024 on co-operation in Railway sector. Through this MOU, two sides aim to look for opportunities to implement railways up gradation and other initiatives of this vital sector. Minister Shehbaz Sharif met with several world leaders, including China's President Xi

Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin, and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Sharif expressed his words at meeting with Putin and gave stress on the 2022 SCO summit, Sharif highlighted the significance of bilateral trade and reminisced about the robust barter trade system between Pakistan and Russia from the 1950s to the 1970s, which covered various sectors such as leather and machinery. During their discussion, Putin proposed increasing crude oil supplies and enhancing cooperation in the agro-industrial sectors. Russia has been a key supporter of Pakistan, providing grains and other logistics to boost trade. In response, Shehbaz emphasized the need for renewed cooperation in banking and financial sectors to revitalize trade through the barter system and support Pakistan's struggling economy. (Raza & Abbas, 2024)

#### **2.2.10 Economic Ties/Interest Between Russia and Pakistan: A Comparative Analysis**

The process of reconciliation between Russia and Pakistan commenced in the early 2000s. It was initially highlighted by the state visit of Alexander Losyukov, the Russian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, to Pakistan in April 2001, followed by a reciprocal visit by Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf to Russia in February 2003. Pakistan's decision to withdraw support for the Taliban regime and its involvement in the US-led international security efforts in Afghanistan played a crucial role in thawing the previously frosty relations between Russia and Pakistan. Musharraf's visit was significant as he became the first Pakistani head of state to visit Moscow since Bhutto in 1970 (Sarmad., 2018).

In April 2006, a delegation of five Russian oil and gas companies, led by Aleksandr Bornov, visited Pakistan and expressed keen interest in collaborating on projects involving cross-border pipelines, LNG, and the exploration and development of oilfields. Bornov indicated their intention to deploy a significant number of drilling rigs, exploration equipment, pipeline construction machinery, and skilled professionals to Pakistan in the near future.

Additionally, several other Russian oil and gas firms have signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with Pakistan's private sector companies in pursuit of local contractual opportunities. Similarly, Viktor Rashnikov, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Magnitogorsk Iron and Steel Works in Russia, has committed to investing \$2 billion over five years to upgrade and modernize Pakistan Steel. If these current commitments from Russia materialize in the coming years, it is anticipated that Russian investments totalling between four to six billion dollars could flow into Pakistan, contingent upon the successful initiation and completion of these projects (Khan M. T., 2019).

Four years later, Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov visited Islamabad officially in an effort to revive relations, although the outcomes were modest. One notable achievement was Pakistan being recognized as a crucial regional actor with whom Russia should foster bilateral and multilateral ties, as outlined in the 2008 Russian Foreign Policy Concept. Despite Pakistan not being explicitly mentioned in subsequent revisions of the Foreign Policy Concept in 2013 and 2016, there has been a notable increase in high-level ministerial visits, military engagements, and economic cooperation between the two nations since 2010 (Khan B. F., 2021).

Russia's longstanding interest in pivoting towards Asia is not a recent development, have been actively promoted since the 1980s and 1990s. In 2010, Moscow officially announced a policy shift known as "the turn to the East" (povorot na vostok). This initiative gained prominence under President Vladimir Putin's leadership, particularly highlighted during his 2012 election campaign as a key foreign policy objective to enhance cooperation with Asia. Under Putin, Russia has pursued a new strategy aimed at geopolitical resurgence, transitioning from the "Greater Europe" concept to the "Greater Eurasian Partnership." This initiative seeks to establish a geo-economic and geostrategic community spanning Eurasia, presenting opportunities for Russia and the European Union to potentially reset their

relationship by identifying new avenues for mutual development. The Russian Greater Eurasia project, its origins, and its potential implications for regional and global geopolitics, security policies, and Russia-EU relations are significant areas of analysis. During the tenure of Russian President Dmitri Medvedev and Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari, there was a notable rise in bilateral engagements and meetings, both independently and within multilateral forums. At the 2010 Sochi summit, both leaders proposed the establishment of a Russia-Pakistan Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC) on Trade, Economic, Scientific, and Technical Cooperation. The inaugural session took place the following month, and annual meetings have been conducted regularly since then. During President Zardari's official visit to Russia in 2011, these efforts were further solidified (Glaser, 2021).

Since the Ukraine crisis began in 2014, followed by Western sanctions on Russia, the Russian "Turn to Asia" strategy has accelerated, focusing on China due to political and economic interests. This crisis also opened new avenues for cooperation with South Asian countries. In 2015, Pakistan and Russia signed an agreement to construct the North-South Gas Pipeline in Pakistan in PML-N era at that time they both dealt that Russia will fund 85% of funding rest by Pakistan and keep complete hold to it for the next 25 years . However, the project could not commence due to U.S sanctions on the Russian companies involved Gazporam amid pressure from the U.S. and its allies then. (Clary, 2022)

In 2020 Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan visited Moscow during the period of Russian aggression in Ukraine, despite expressed resentment over the visit, both states drafted a model again over that pipeline and revived with holding percentages as either Russia will hold 26% on the other hand Pakistan will take a hold of 74% and invest 400billion rupees or Russia will hold the entire project but couldn't reach at a point where it can be functional. In 2020, Pakistan had a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with

Russia to purchase wheat, and both Imran Khan and Shehbaz Sharif's governments showed interest in buying Russian oil if offered at a discount (Abbas, 2022).

In 2020, following a meeting of the Pakistan-Russia Technical Committee, discussions were revived regarding the North-South Gas Pipeline Project, which had initially been stalled due to Western sanctions on Rostec, a Russian state-controlled company involved in the project. Renamed the Pak Stream Gas Pipeline Project (PSGP), the 1,100-kilometer-long pipeline is slated for completion in 2023. It aims to transport liquefied natural gas (LNG) 1.23 Cubic Meters from terminals in Karachi and Gwadar to Lahore, although as of 2024, it has yet to be fully completed (Chia & Haiqi, 2021).

Most recently July 2024, Pakistani Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif met with Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin in Astana (Kazakhstan) PM praised PM Putin over re-elected prime minister position and discussed bilateral relation's as a positive trajectory from last few decades where now Pakistan can have a great matter of comfort to work with Russia to further cement both states relations. He pointed the trade relations between both states which is reaching \$1Billion according to him further he highlighted to cooperate in the field of energy, shipment of received oil in 2023, which previously former Prime minister Imran Khan paved a way towards it which PML-N government received 45,000 tons crude oil in the year 2023.

He further expressed that Pakistan and Russia will cooperate in different areas without having an impact on relations with the other countries and further he remind him his bilateral concerned meeting with Putin in 60S,70S when bilateral trade was under barter system and Pakistan import lot of goods like machinery from former Soviet and exported textile and leather goods to Soviet which was under barter.

The need is to overcome today's faced problems like economic by renewing and expanding trade between Pakistan and Russia under barter system which is beneficial for both countries (Channel, 2024). Recently, Russia and Pakistan have been working actively to strengthen their economic ties, motivated by strategic interests and mutual advantages. Pakistan's pursuit of economic revitalization and energy security, along with Russia's desire to broaden its economic influence in Asia, has brought the two countries closer together (Haq M. , 2021) .

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3. REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL FACTORS AND THEIR EFFECTS

This chapter aims to explore the factors influencing the bilateral relationship between Pakistan and Russia over the decades, with a specific focus on developments following in 2000s. The geographical location equipped with important sea routes and land, makes it prominent in the contemporary global setting. Recently, Pakistan's foreign policy orientation has impacted regional and global affairs. Pakistan's economic, political, and strategic decisions shape the environment of the whole region. Comparative to Pakistan's relationship with the US, the relationship with Russia remained insignificant due to several factors. Both countries have shown a keen interest in normalizing their relations amidst evolving geo-economic and geopolitical conditions in the South Asian region. Historically, Pakistan and Russia have maintained a relationship characterized by fluctuations influenced by the perspectives of the US and India, often resulting in limited independence in their foreign policies towards each other. Despite these challenges, both nations have successfully navigated their relationship back on course. Since 2000s Pakistan and Russia have adopted proactive and pragmatic approaches in their foreign relations. Pakistan's active participation in the war on terror and its efforts to foster a peaceful regional environment, including initiatives to improve relations with India and Afghanistan, have been recognized by the international community (Tariq & Mustafa, 2022).

Following in 2000s, there has been a notable improvement in cooperation between Pakistan, Russia and Afghanistan, marking a positive shift in their policies aimed at enhancing relations. This has also paved the way for improved relations, facilitated through collaboration with China to Russia more. Pakistan has been striving towards significant economic advancements in partnership with China, which had previously been a crucial missing element in its comprehensive bilateral relations with neighboring regional states. This economic dimension forms a core objective of Pakistan's foreign policy strategy. Current economic and strategic considerations are playing a crucial role in reshaping policy perspectives (Rahman F. U., 2007).

Pakistan situated in a landscape where its neighbouring states India, Afghanistan, Iran Pakistan always compile its policies to keep in mind neighbouring states and focused more to align accordingly especially by India as they both see each other as rivalry states since their inception. For now, Pakistan initiated to remain neutral in policies as of regionally and internationally, conflicts and choices managing to reassert the relationship globally. Changes in Russia's foreign policy demonstrate Moscow's effort to integrate itself into the Asia Pacific region (Akram, 2016).

This chapter examines the international, regional, and domestic factors influencing Moscow's foreign policy shifts and assesses their potential implications for Pakistan. Internationally, these changes are aimed at counterbalancing the dominance of the American-led unipolar world order. Regionally, Russia seeks to limit growing American influence by actively engaging in regional affairs and strengthening ties with neighboring states.

This increased engagement in South Asia as part of its strategy not only affects regional security dynamics but also holds significance for Pakistan. The emerging rapport between Pakistan and Russia presents multifaceted opportunities in trade, energy, and defense cooperation. Pakistan stands to benefit from diversifying its foreign policy through enhanced engagement with Russia, based on mutual interests and economic advancement. Therefore, it is crucial to explore and discuss the international and regional dimensions of this relationship to provide a comprehensive understanding of the evolving Pakistan-Russia ties.

### 3.1 International Factors and Their Effects

#### **3.1.1 China as International Factor**

Pakistan and China share a significant bilateral relationship rooted in mutual understanding, trust, economic cooperation, and shared benefits. This alliance dates back to 1951 when Pakistan became the first non-communist and Islamic state to recognize the People's Republic of China. However, the solidification of their ties began in the 1960s, marked by Pakistan's shift in stance to support China's representation in the United Nations. The relationship between Pakistan and China gained momentum during the Sino-Indian war, when the United States supported India with military aid. This event prompted Pakistan, a Western ally under SEATO and CENTO, to perceive the US support for India as a threat to its security. Consequently, Pakistan re-evaluated its geopolitical position and gradually moved away from the Western orbit. Despite these shifts, Pakistan later restored its relations with the United States (Kurita, 2019).

Overall, the Pakistan-China relationship has evolved over decades, influenced by geopolitical dynamics and mutual interests, leading to a robust partnership that spans economic, diplomatic, and strategic domains. During this period, China and Pakistan found common ground in addressing perceived geostrategic threats amidst evolving regional dynamics and international involvement in conflicts. A significant step was the negotiation and signing of a border demarcation agreement in 1963, which solidified their shared border.

Pakistan played a crucial role in helping China counter isolation policies imposed by major powers. This support included signing an air-transport agreement and facilitating China's relations with other regional and Islamic states. In turn, China provided substantial assistance to Pakistan during the 1965 war with India, supplying aircraft, tanks, and other forms of support to help Pakistan recover from war losses. The foundation of mutual interests and trust between China and Pakistan was thus firmly established in the 1960s, marking a pivotal period in their bilateral relations (Shambaugh, 2022).

In early 1970s Pakistan played its role between China-US as a main player in facilitating a secret communication that resulted in Henry Kissinger's secret visit to China followed by US president Richard Nixon's historic visit. Which India perceived as US-China-Pakistan strategic triangle and resulted to sign India and Soviet-Union a treaty of peace, friendship and cooperation. This development introduces a new dimension in the region the other development of 1970s profoundly influence China-Pakistan relations is the use of China veto power in UN to stall the move which helped Pakistan to assist and recover their prisoners of war (POW) in 1971 war as Bangladesh application for the membership of the UN and China bargained them to return POW to Pakistan in Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's time period. The end of 1970S witnessed immense International development in major consequences which impact the region throughout the history till now (Ahmad N. , 1981).

In the late 1970s, the Iranian Islamic revolution and its subsequent hostility towards the Western Bloc set a significant geopolitical stage. This period was further complicated by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which created hostile fronts involving Pakistan, India, and Afghanistan, posing a threat to regional peace and stability. During these critical events, China aligned itself with Pakistan, strongly condemning the invasion of Afghanistan and highlighting it as a threat not only to regional stability but also to global peace. Throughout the 1980s, Pakistan-China relations continued to evolve into a comprehensive partnership. By the end of the decade, China began improving its relations with India. Pakistan viewed this development as part of China's foreign policy and maintained normal relations, although it signalled a noticeable shift in China's stance on Kashmir (Kishwar & Iqbal, 2022).

Pakistan always supported its stance on every forum such as sovereignty over Hong Kong, Taiwan and Tibet and issues relating to human rights and democracy. In late 1980S the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan the regional strategic dynamics was changed again because of the US ended their varying interests and put sanctions over Pakistan which remained throughout the 1990s where China assisted Pakistan and managed their bilateral relations and assisted Pakistan with nuclear assistance in the supervision of Dr. Abdul Qader khan Pakistan successfully opted to nuclear power and became the first and the only nuclear power of Islamic world. China and Pakistan held high-level consultations on the South Asian region during the Kargil war between India and Pakistan in 1999 where China adhered to a neutral position. As China perceived that conflict to escalate more so, he asked both countries to defuse tensions along with US, China played his role as mediator between both states. The Chinese role to maintain peace in South Asian region was dully acknowledged and paved the way towards peace at that time (Singh, 2021).

### **3.1.2 Pakistan and China's Relations in 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

The 21st Century became a very fruitful age for Pak-China relations across all domains. They both were already developing firmly in the last two decades of 21<sup>st</sup> century respectively the relationship has deepened especially in the fields of trade, geo- strategic, geo-economic, energy sector and defence. Renewal of the long root Silk Road, SCO, CPEC, Gwadar Port. To connect Europe with Asia Pakistan is to be considered as the most admirable and suitable landscape for China to make a road web around the world. In the early 2000s, following the events of 9/11, Pakistan and China engaged in consultations regarding the escalating conflict in the region. President Jiang Zemin of China sent a special envoy to Islamabad to meet with President Pervez Musharraf and other Pakistani officials. During this meeting, they discussed the situation and the implications of the 9/11 incident. Later that year, in December 2001, President Musharraf visited China. (Bhattacharjee, 2015)

Given the United States' strategic interest in maintaining a presence in South Asia, they carefully formulated their policies accordingly. During his official visit to China in 2001, President Musharraf openly expressed support for China's efforts against Muslim separatists in Xinjiang, a province where a significant Muslim population has resided for many decades. The situation surrounding the Uyghur separatist movement against the Chinese government is multifaceted, driven by a complex mix of historical, ethnic, and religious factors. This issue is further exacerbated by socioeconomic challenges such as poverty, unemployment, social inequalities, and political grievances.

The perspective on this issue hinges on whether China is accused of victimizing the Uyghur minority, using claims of terrorism and separatism as justification to infringe upon their human rights, or if China itself is portrayed as a victim facing challenges from separatist movements and terrorist networks within its territory (McGregor, 2001).

The escalation of Pakistan-China relationship in the 21st century is increasingly defined by its economic dimensions and its intersection with regional politics. Central to this dynamic is the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), recognized as the flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). This initiative establishes critical maritime routes linking various parts of the world, offering China strategic access to the Arabian Sea. This corridor grants China a crucial land route to access the warm waters of the Arabian Sea, which is of strategic importance to India due to its major ports located there (The Economic Times News, 2020). CPEC aims to link China's Xinjiang province with Pakistan's Gwadar deep-sea port, enhancing China's global influence through expanded infrastructure and development. The Gwadar port is vital for China's connectivity and is key to achieving the fundamental objectives of the BRI, helping China in its ambition to become a world power (Akhtar, 2023).

Both countries have signed numerous MOUs, agreements, and treaties, conducting official meetings across various fields of cooperation. Pakistan-China relations flourished significantly, evolving into one of the strongest bilateral relationships globally in new era. While international relations often lack permanent allies or enemies, the bond between Pakistan and China stands out for its enduring strength and longevity. Since the inception of their relationship, their ties have remained robust, characterized by a friendship that has weathered various challenges over time.

Former Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani once described the relationship between China and Pakistan as "*sweeter than honey, stronger than steel, higher than mountains, and deeper than the ocean.*" Similarly, former Chinese President Hu Jintao emphasized that "*China can part with gold, but not with its friendship with Pakistan.*" (Jetly R. , 2012).

In April 2015, to further strengthen their relationship, Pakistan and China welcomed Chinese President Xi Jinping to Pakistan, where he was received by Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. During this visit, the two nations finalized approximately 51 agreements and Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) aimed at enhancing cooperation across various sectors. A cornerstone of these agreements is the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which holds immense strategic importance for both economies. Upon completion, CPEC will provide China direct access to Middle Eastern and African markets through the Gwadar port. This ambitious project is an extension of China's envisioned 21st-century Silk Road initiative (Fazil, 2015).

### **3.1.3 Imran Khan Vision towards Developments ( Official Visits)**

In 2019, Imran Khan, the Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party and former Prime Minister of Pakistan, made his first official visit to China. During this visit, he engaged in comprehensive discussions with Chinese leaders, encompassing all facets of Pakistan-China bilateral cooperation. The leaders also exchanged perspectives on regional and global issues of mutual concern in a cordial atmosphere. Prime Minister Imran Khan highlighted his concerns regarding the increasing polarization in the world, emphasizing its potential threats to global development and particularly impacting developing nations. He briefed the Chinese President on his government's geo-economic vision and policies aimed at achieving sustained growth, promoting industrial development, modernizing agriculture, and enhancing regional connectivity (Pakistan G. o., 2019).

Prime Minister Imran Khan also underscored significant global challenges such as climate change, pandemics, growing inequalities, and regional issues, emphasizing the necessity for global cooperation to address these issues effectively. He commended China for its consistent support and assistance in Pakistan's socio-economic development, which has significantly benefited from China's high-quality development initiatives. Both leaders expressed appreciation for the signing of several agreements covering industrial cooperation, space collaboration, and vaccine development. They reiterated their commitment to forging a Pakistan-China community for a shared future in an era marked by development and multilateralism (Pakistan G. o., 2019).

### **3.1.4 China's Consistence Approach**

China's consistence approach towards Pakistan is highly appreciated from the decades. Following the US's inconsistent approach, which initially left Pakistan in a precarious situation, China promptly responded to Pakistan's need for defense supplies during a time of heightened security vulnerability. This steadfast support has earned China greater appreciation from both the Pakistani government and its people. While both China and the US have recognized and supported Pakistan's strategic significance in the Asian region, a crucial difference lies in their approaches. The US has been perceived as inconsistent, often prioritizing its own strategic interests and potentially abandoning Pakistan midway. In contrast, China has maintained a steady friendship with Pakistan over the past five decades, which has bolstered its standing in Pakistan's eyes (Rong, 2022).

Recent developments in Pakistan-China relations are shaping a strategic landscape where two bilateral powers have gradually emerged in South Asia over the past decade: India and the US on one side, and Pakistan and China on the other. China's steadfast support for Pakistan in this context is driven by its own strategic considerations. As a major global power poised to play a significant role in regional security in Asia, China is wary of the increasing presence and engagement of the US in the region. Beyond counter-terrorism efforts, China perceives broader US interests, particularly in securing energy routes and countering China's expanding influence in the region (Jetly R. , 2012).

## 3.2 US-Pakistan Relations

### 3.2.1 US-Pakistan Relations and its Effects on Pakistan-Russia Relations

As the foremost global economic and military power, the US has wielded significant influence over Pakistan-Russia relations and the broader regional dynamics. US-Pakistan relations have been characterized by fluctuations over the years. During the Cold War, the US provided substantial military aid and robust diplomatic support to Pakistan, especially concerning the Kashmir issue, which bolstered Pakistan's position and India on the other hand.

However, following the Indo-Pak war in 1965, US aid to Pakistan was suspended. Relations saw some improvement during the 1971 Indo-Pak war but soured again until the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. During this period, the US sought Pakistan's assistance in countering the Soviet Union. Post the Soviet-Afghan war, the US enacted the Pressler Amendment, imposing military and economic sanctions on Pakistan. These sanctions included withholding military equipment, such as the F-16 fighter jets that Pakistan had already paid for. Consequently, this strained period contributed to a diminished US influence in the South Asian region to a certain extent. (Zaidi & Ahmed, 2021)

Soon US needed to re-enter into the region and incident of 9/11 happened where they labelled the Muslim's organization Al-Qaida which was mainly started as an Afghan's Mujahedeen group organization which turned into a strong organization in Cold-War era and later banned by US as a terrorists group organization. In a story or planning, the presence and role of Pakistan can never be completely vanished US needed his physical presence for the forces to move into Pakistan and started a search operation in the Pakistani city to capture Osama Bin Laden as of accuser and succeeded in that particular operation. (Kurita, 2019)

After the events of 9/11, US-Pakistan relations saw significant growth as well as down time as they collaborated in the war on terror, with the US seeking continued presence in Asia. Pakistan was designated as a major non-NATO ally and received substantial economic and military aid as a frontline state. However, post 9/11, Pakistan-US relations were at its high point, when Pakistan became the frontline ally of the US in the war against terrorism in Afghanistan, and the US granted Pakistan the prestigious status of non-NATO ally. Soon after, though, the partnership between the two states was in trouble, when the US repeatedly violated Pakistan's sovereignty through drone strikes and covert operations, it diplomatically painted Pakistan as the real reason behind all the scenarios by claiming it to be part of the problem (terrorism), not the solution, and by promoting India within the region. (Zaidi & Ahmed, 2021)

The US's secretive raid on Osama bin Laden's hideout May 2011, stirred widespread discontent, prompting calls for a reassessment of Pakistan's relations with the US. As this partnership has begun to unravel, the US is perceived as prioritizing its own interests rather than engaging as a genuine global cooperative partner. The US often presses Pakistan to increase its efforts and accuses it of harbouring terrorists, portraying Pakistan as a scapegoat for the failures in Afghanistan. This has strained their relations considerably. Furthermore, when Pakistan became part of China's New Silk Road initiative, commonly known as the Belt and Road Initiative, Pakistan-US relations saw its lowest point in history. (Zaidi & Ahmed, 2021)

The US has been concerned about Pakistan's reluctance to take decisive action against militant groups like the Haqqani network in North Waziristan and the Afghan Taliban, which the US considered dangerous for the regional security. Pakistan, however, has proceeded cautiously due to concerns about potential future dealings with these groups, especially if they gain power in Afghanistan following US withdrawal. In addition, a series of incidents over the last few years, including the US unilateral action in the killing of Osama Bin Laden on Pakistani soil, the Raymond Davis affair, the increase in drone strikes and the killing of Pakistani soldiers in a US airstrike have brought ties to a new low and led to an increase in anti-US sentiments in Pakistan. Religious sentiments in Pakistan have consistently remained significant (Ahmed & Kharal, 2015).

Meanwhile, the US, India, and Europe are strengthening their ties, while Russia also seeks engagement with Pakistan in investment and trade sectors. Both need to have a strong improved relationship to secure maximum developments in future and recent days. Even after realigning with the US in the war on terror, Pakistan has essentially not forgotten the discarding by the US after the Soviet withdrawal, and fears a similar fate (2014) with the expected US withdrawal from Afghanistan. Thus despite the huge amount of money and arms that the US has poured into Pakistan since 9/11 (Pakistan has received around US\$22 billion in military and economic assistance since 2001) it is seen as an opportunist who has used Pakistan at will in pursuance of its own strategic agenda and other projects must be completed (Pande, 2011).

### **3.2.2 Emergence of the Bilateral Powers in South Asian Region**

Over recent years, the geopolitical landscape of Asia has undergone significant transformation. Scholars of the 20th century have closely studied and analyzed international relations, observing the development of new alliances and the evolving regional and global political dynamics in the South Asian region. The strategic developments in Pakistan-China relations are situated within the context of the gradual emergence of two bilateral powers in South Asia. While on the other hand, there is India in collaboration with the US. Pakistan aligns closely with China and India maintains a strategic partnership with the US engaging in political, military, and economic cooperation to strengthen their alliance, a trend particularly evident in recent years (Masahiro, 2020).

### **3.2.3 US-India Collaboration**

The world's largest democracies, India and the US, have embarked on a new era of collaborative engagement. This phase began in 2005 when the Bush administration publicly articulated its strategic objective of aiding India in becoming a "major world power" in the forthcoming decades. Subsequently, India and the US finalized a civil nuclear deal and signed a 10-year military cooperation agreement in 2005. (Dwivedi & Kacker, 2013).

In 2014, Narendra Modi, upon assuming office as Prime Minister, accelerated India's burgeoning engagement with the US toward a cooperative and amicable direction. His national security team swiftly navigated bureaucratic hurdles to finalize several agreements related to defense cooperation and technology transfer between the two nations. Through initiatives like the Defence Trade and Technology Initiative (DTTI), New Delhi and Washington have progressed towards joint development and production of weapon systems, which are now deployed in various regions.

During the Obama administration, America's engagement with India continued, and in 2015, the 10-year military cooperation agreement was renewed. Simultaneously, the Indo-US 'Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region' underscores the importance of safeguarding maritime security and ensuring freedom of navigation, particularly in the South China Sea. This agreement has fostered consensus on collaborating in the maritime domain, including conducting joint military exercises. The US has pursued heightened defense engagement with India as part of its rebalance to the Asia-Pacific strategy, aimed at countering China's ascent and its expanding military presence in the South China Sea and Indian Ocean Region (Faisal, 2020).

### **3.2.3 Analysis**

The notion of a US-led global order has shown its limitations, particularly evident in its approach to terrorism and its handling of Afghanistan. After nearly two decades of military involvement, the US withdrew from Afghanistan in 2020, and as of August 2024, the UN Human Rights envoy has been barred from entering the country. This highlights significant failures in US policy and its impact on global affairs.

Pakistan, traditionally an ally of the US, remains hopeful for assistance and support in various conflicts. However, there is a growing recognition that Pakistan needs a more independent and self-sufficient approach to its internal and external policies. The political system in Pakistan has long been stagnant, but there are signs of change. The rise of a third political party with majority support and a visionary leader challenges the entrenched two-party system, reflecting a broader shift in public sentiment.

Recent events, such as the public revolt in Bangladesh and the active participation of Pakistan's young generation, analysts, women, and the diaspora in demanding change, underscore this trend. Additionally, Pakistan's experience with political influence, such as the regime change in 2018 and the failed deal with Russia for cheap oil, illustrates the need for a more autonomous policy stance. Vladimir Putin's offer to establish a joint trade corridor with Pakistan and to collaborate on various initiatives including scholarships, climate change, anti-terrorism, and cultural exchange programs represents an opportunity for Pakistan to diversify its international relations. Yet, the lack of follow-up on such offers and the failure to secure essential military equipment from the US for counter-terrorism purposes indicate a need for Pakistan to reassess its strategies ( Hussain M. S., 2024).

In summary, Pakistan must pursue a more balanced and independent foreign policy, engaging with major global players like the US and China while exploring new partnerships and opportunities.

### **3.3 Regional Factors and their Effects**

#### **3.3.1 India as Regional Factor Effects Pakistan-Russia Relations**

Throughout the era of independence Pakistan and India were in coalition with two different blocs. The India alliance with Soviet Union after few years of non-alignment policies which led to bitter relations with Pakistan by Soviet Union as they called Pakistan too to Soviet coalition and Pakistan choose Western side as per situational demand. In 1971, India and the Soviet Union signed a friendship and cooperation treaty, marking a significant milestone in their bilateral relations. The Soviet Union emerged as a major supplier of arms to India, and a robust economic relationship also developed between the two nations.

While India was not formally aligned with the Soviet bloc, it could be perceived in some respects as a quasi-ally of the Soviet Union, which added complexity to the geopolitical landscape. However, mutual trust and reliance between India and the Soviet Union were sometimes lacking, leading to occasional strains in their relationship. This complexity also hindered efforts for the former Soviet Union to cultivate and sustain friendly relations with Pakistan. Following their respective independence, India and the Soviet Union quickly drew closer diplomatically. The Soviet Union consistently supported India's stance on Kashmir at international forums, aligning with Indian positions against perceived expansionist policies in Jammu and Kashmir and along the Line of Control in Azad Kashmir at various times (Anwar, Gillani, & Wasim, 2020).

The two countries engaged in extensive strategic, economic, and political ties, including joint ventures in manufacturing advanced defense technologies such as aircraft carriers and nuclear submarines. These collaborations significantly strengthened their bilateral relationship throughout the 20th century. As India embraced multilateral policies in the 21st century, it explored new avenues of cooperation and adjusted to changing dynamics in regional politics. This included managing its relationship with the United States, offering it as a viable choice and option for collaboration alongside other international partners (Naqvi & Abbas, 2022).

India finds US as the strongest Global economic power to mitigate the Chinese growing influence around the world specially in South Asia. The close relationship of China to Pakistan make a big statement of purpose for India emerging as global market strength to overcome china's influence. With this regard India's cooperation with US creating differences among Russia and India not completely but on some areas of preferences and Indian and US coalition and exchange of official visits among both states slowly getting a way out for Pakistan to overcome Western influence at home and to look over other possible options as well. Recently, Russia has begun to develop its economic and military relations with Pakistan to some extent. However, Russia is cautious and will not jeopardize its relations with India, given that India is the second largest economy in South Asia after China (Tourangbam, 2023).

### **3.3.2 Russian Assistance to India**

India and Russia have maintained extensive strategic cooperation in defense, diplomacy, and intelligence sharing for decades. This enduring friendship, which began soon after India's independence and the formation of the Soviet Union, has grown significantly over the years.

The USSR consistently backed India's position on Kashmir at the United Nations, initiating their strong diplomatic bond. This partnership evolved into joint ventures for manufacturing defense technologies, particularly weapons and related equipment. Today, Russia remains a key supplier of various military hardware to India, including aircraft carriers, nuclear submarines, surveillance aircraft, helicopters, upgraded Sukhoi aircraft, jointly manufactured SU-30 MKI aircraft, T-90 Main Battle Tanks (MBTs), and modernized weapon systems (Khattak, 2018).

India and Russia have established several defense agreements and collaborate in various multilateral forums such as BRICS, the SCO, and trilateral engagements involving Russia, India, and China. Russia aims to maintain positive relations with both India and Pakistan, suggesting it won't fully isolate itself from either. Looking optimistically, Russian involvement could potentially reduce hostility between India and Pakistan by mediating under the SCO's auspices in the future. Pakistan has long harbored mistrust issues, exacerbated historically by Russian support to India and US support to Pakistan, particularly evident pre-9/11. Addressing regional issues through cooperative policies is crucial in the current context (Khan H. U., 2019).

### **3.3.3 Pakistan-India Relations and Russia's Perspective (Post 9/11)**

Russia and India both having strong and deep relationship from decades they both are historical allies and history plays its crucial role in shaping the state's policies. From independence Russia always backed up Indian policies regarding Pakistan on every forum because Pakistan as US's ally who played a role of frontline state who cause Russia to flee back to Afghanistan.

Later, after 9/11 incident a war on terror started and initiated by US in Pakistan specially attacking Osama Bin Laden and alleged Pakistan as the safe Haven for terrorists groups like Al-Qaida shaken up their relationship which brings closer Russia to Pakistan somehow and adopt multilateral policies rather to focus only upon bilateral or innate bitter relations to the states. Russia changing his decade's mistrust policies as of China's involvement and regional politics of South Asia compel both states as well as other regional powers as India and Afghanistan not to create tensions rather to cooperate on possible matters to resolve tensions (Smith, 2004).

In September 2001, the Times of India published an article titled "India hopes US will now pressure Pakistan," reflecting a widespread national sentiment that the United States might become a close ally in combating terrorism and supporting India's efforts against extremist activities. However, in the years since then, the US has not taken a firm stance against Pakistan, nor has India significantly bolstered its capabilities to combat terrorism and internal insurgencies. By 2010, India and the US began jointly working to strengthen their relationship and pursue shared policies. Since gaining independence, India's ties with the United States have been strained by Cold War-era distrust and disagreements, particularly over India's nuclear program, which impeded cooperation. However, relations have thawed in recent years, leading to enhanced cooperation across various economic and political domains.

In 2017, during the 17th Heads of State Council Summit in Astana, India and Pakistan formally joined the organization amidst a changing global landscape. Russia has consistently supported the SCO's initiatives to address regional challenges such as terrorism, extremism, and separatism through cooperative regional approaches. Despite their strained relations, India's legal experts participated in a three-day meeting of the Legal Experts Group of the SCO's Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure, hosted by Pakistan in May 2018 (Osmanov, 2018).

### **3.3.4 Pulwama-Balakot Attack and Russia's Stance**

In February 2019, following a suicide attack on an Indian troop convoy in Pulwama district of Indian-administered Kashmir, India accused Pakistan of involvement. In retaliation, the Indian Air Force conducted airstrikes on what it described as training camps in Balakot, Pakistan. India claimed the airstrikes successfully targeted militant facilities, resulting in significant militant casualties. Pakistan refuted India's claims, asserting that the airstrikes caused minimal damage without any casualties. Pakistan also denied allegations from India that it was responsible for the Pulwama attack. During the subsequent air skirmish between Indian and Pakistani air forces near Balakot in AJK, India aimed to target terrorist groups, specifically J-E-M, according to their claims. (Haris, 2023)

In response, the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) retaliated and shot down an Indian Air Force (IAF) plane, a Russian-made MiG-21, and captured an Indian pilot. Tensions eased after Pakistan returned the pilot as a gesture of goodwill and peace by PM Imran Khan Government. India sought to raise the Pulwama incident at the SCO forum, but China and Russia declined, recommending bilateral resolution of the issue instead. Russia's approach was seen by Pakistan as a signal of enhanced Russia-Pakistan relations, as it refrained from intensifying the crisis between neighboring states over the issue.

However, Russia's vote in favour of an India-sponsored initiative at the United Nations Security Council, which sought to designate the head of Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) responsible for the Pulwama attack as a globally banned figure, underscored Russia's delicate balancing act in managing its relations with both India and Pakistan in South Asia (Haris, 2023).

### **3.3.5 India as Regional Player, Effects Pakistan-Russia Relations**

Russia and India, both among the world's largest countries, have sustained a strategic partnership for decades, collaborating on military defense and space exploration. However, Pakistan's growing rapport with Russia on certain fronts raises concerns about India's position as Russia's foremost ally in the region. This shift prompts India, a key regional player, to reassess its policies in relation to Pakistan and emphasize independent bilateral strategies alongside multilateral engagements. The trade relationships between nations are pivotal in shaping their geopolitical dynamics, economic growth, and international relations, whether conducted bilaterally or through multilateral frameworks. One such interesting nexus exists between Pakistan and Russia, and its impact on India-Russia relations and how India as a regional factor effects Pakistan-Russia relation and catches a significant attention. The relationship between Pakistan and Russia presents an intriguing dynamic that impacts India-Russia relations significantly (Clary, 2022).

Russia and India have forged a longstanding partnership characterized by cooperation in technology, energy, and defense spanning several decades. This alliance, founded on mutual trust and shared objectives, has played a pivotal role in fostering robust trade between the two nations. Conversely, despite historical ideological disparities and complex geopolitical dynamics, Pakistan and Russia have seen a gradual improvement in their relations in recent years. This progress has led to increased trade and cooperation to some extent, marking a promising start towards diversifying their engagement beyond single issues (Javed, 2023).

Obama's regional counterterrorism strategy necessitated engaging India in Afghan affairs, aligning closely with Indian strategic interests. Indian analysts viewed Obama's approach positively, as it prioritized addressing Afghanistan's challenges, which were also of significant concern to India. The cooperative efforts under a shared agenda promised better outcomes, leveraging the complementary security, strategic, and economic interests of India and the US (Javed, 2018).

President Obama personally emphasized his commitment to advancing Indo-US relations, highlighting their mutual interests across various domains. He underscored the significance of initiatives like the Indo-US nuclear deal in fostering closer bilateral ties and enhancing economic cooperation during his administration. This deal also underscored mutual defense commitments, where an attack on one signatory could trigger a joint response. Addressing the context of Azad Kashmir, Jammu Kashmir, and Indian involvement, the imperative today is to address regional issues and adopt cooperative policies to maintain peace and stability in South Asia, particularly given the conflict-prone nature of India and Pakistan's neighboring regions.

Indian analysts expressed concerns that the new president might sideline the nuclear deal, but diplomatic ties were strengthened through summit diplomacy. President Obama and Indian prime ministers exchanged visits, resulting in several significant bilateral agreements. Reflecting on President Obama's visit to India, it's important to assess the evolution of the India-US relationship and the removal of sanctions that were in place fifteen years ago. The Obama administration acknowledged that the US-India relationship would be a defining partnership of the 21st century.

Indian Prime Minister Modhi emphasized shared values and interests between India and the US, encompassing high-level engagement, economic and defense ties, people-to-people connections, and future opportunities for bilateral cooperation (Wakil, Mustafa, & Shabir, 2022).

Their cooperation can be seen now in the world's largest humanitarian crises in Palestine and in Jammu Kashmir specifically. Where they both collated against the Muslims and cooperate with Israel which have been proven most recently as many different missiles dropped over Palestinian are made of US where in Jammu Kashmir India is using weapons made of Israel. Regionally, India was quiet close to Former Soviet Union as a historical ally and there relations were developed at that time when India actually adopted non alignment strategy globally. But their relations were developed and Russia as the largest state of Soviet Union never wanted to having conflicted nature of relations with India as they have the largest armed marked in South Asia and there are so many of arm deals between both of the states. India is considered as a very lucrative arm market to Russia and they don't want to drop it because of their growing and good relations. There is always and an ongoing rivalry between India and Pakistan Russia could be a balance maintainer between both of the states and can maintain peace between both these countries (Ahmad D. S., 2024).

### **3.4 Afghanistan as Regional Factor**

#### **3.4.1 Afghanistan as Regional Player Effects Pakistan-Russia Relations**

Afghanistan is located in the centre of Asia and the Middle East, particularly South of Asia the country has long been a key geostrategic location for the international community. In addition, its natural resources including oil, coal, and various textiles for domestic use have made it the focus of European influence since the 19th century. Beginning with the British Empire in the late 1800's, the tribes of Afghanistan have combated European expansion and have undertaken extreme, and often times violent, political transformations in order to protect their sovereignty and people. Moreover in 20th century a dominated religious aspect practicing Muslims who are ambitious to practice Islam and their ambition is to spread all around the country whether by force or by laws was active all the time till now (Cooper, 2012).

Pakistan and Afghanistan have strong historical ties based on shared culture, geography, and faith. They also celebrate common customs, languages, literature, and heroic figures. This deep-rooted relationship is often highlighted and celebrated by scholars, writers, and poets. With the demarcation of state's boundaries, the concept of one nation, one Ummah got fade and shattered and people divided into state's native. Before this segregation the heroes and poets always talked about Afghanistan as the land of warriors and highlighted the importance of peace to maintain in Afghanistan which will ultimately bring peace in entire region for that Allama Iqbal's chunk of poetry explains in a synthetic way (Kohzad, 2011).

*Asia is like a body made of water and clay*

*The Afghan nation is like a heart in the body*

*Peace in Afghanistan brings tranquillity in Asia*

*Chaos in Afghanistan brings disorder in all Asia*

*(Allama Dr. Muhammad Iqbal)*

Societies of South Asia in general, Afghanistan and Pakistan in particular are tribal and feudal. Their peoples and cultures are heterogeneous, economies scattered with unstable, fragile and weak political institutions. The region is divided along religious, cultural, racial, and ethnic lines. Historically it can be seen that Afghanistan as the land of worriers and the brave Pashtuns who protected their land with no such advanced weaponry and missiles unless super power helped to fight against the rivalry power at time when they needed to enter into Afghanistan and fought against and sometimes in favour. Specially in the case of US, in Cold War era made a junction with Pakistan to mitigate the influence of USSR expansionism policies in South Asian region. Al-Qaida's members considered the main heroes behind the withdrawal of USSR from Afghanistan became one of the strongest organization among the others whose members than only served for the sake of Allah's command regarding Jihad and considered it as the most important pillar of the Islam as of others (Karim, 2017).

The firm spirit of Faith made a way out for the people of Afghanistan after the struggles and tough situations created by the super power once by Russia that time of Cold War and secondly after 9/11 incident where the interests of US changed according to their policies and consider Al-Qaida as the international terrorist organization who is dangerous for the world's peace. From the very beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century Afghanistan is considered as the main player or the key factor who divided world into two poles one who fought against and the other one who favoured Afghanistan. Those two super powers of 20<sup>th</sup> century one US respectively and the other was Russia who they fought against each other in Cold War era where USSR lost his supremacy and the status as of world's super power where US gained more and more by the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century (Muhammad & Safdar, 2020).

Towards the end of the 20th century, developments accelerated significantly. In 2001, a multinational coalition, spearheaded by the USA, intervened in Afghanistan to dismantle the terrorist organization Al-Qaeda, as the Taliban leadership refused to surrender Osama bin Laden. British forces joined US troops in this effort. At its peak, the conflict involved over 130,000 NATO troops deployed on the ground. By July 2021, nearly all NATO member states had completed their withdrawal. However, after two decades of turmoil, the Taliban have once again asserted control over Afghanistan (Asfahan, Ali, & Arif, 2023).

Historically, Russia has had interest in the Afghan territory for multiple reasons such as geographical proximity, geopolitical confrontation, economy and trade routes from South to North. Russia's main objectives toward Afghanistan include stability and limiting the threats that might hit Russia. Access to warm waters had always been an important objective of Russia's keen interest in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

### **3.4.2 Pakistan-Afghanistan Relation and Regional Stability**

The relationship that exists between Pakistan and Afghanistan has had a bearing on the state of regional security over the course of a lengthy period of time. Both countries can be found in an unprecedented region of the globe which is resource rich but not developed and is characterized by frequent instances of conflict and political unrest. By a variety of factors Pakistan and Afghanistan's relationship has been influenced, including historical connections, invasion of Afghanistan by Russia former USSR, US involvement, their political and economic interests, and security concerns, to name just a few of these major factors. The nature of their connection as well as the safety of the area around them has been substantially altered as a direct result of these factors. The relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan has significantly impacted the security of the surrounding region, leading to the spread of conflict and unpredictability in the area. (Muhammad & Safdar, 2020).

### **3.4.3 The 9/11 Incident and Afghanistan**

The pattern of politics changed once again and US re-entered into Afghanistan to eradicate Al-Qaida's influence and considered it as a threat after their airlines hijacked in US and attacked on various centres includes World Trade Centre. Then US started anti-terrorist operation and banned Al-Qaida internationally where Pakistan played his role against terrorism as it is to be said and provided land to US against Taliban where Afghanistan people suffered much. Although their infrastructure was totally diminished, Government was not stable their homes demolished and people fled to other countries as immigrants and Pakistan was the one who bore the maximum by Afghanistan and US as well.

Geographic strategic location, weak government, tribal division, and absence of worthwhile communication/ administrative infrastructure in Afghanistan repeatedly attract major powers' attention. Event of the 9/11 could best be described as the blowback of U.S. Cold War policies towards Afghanistan. Pakistan is currently confronted with a significant security dilemma. The military and diplomatic measures adopted by Pakistan to safeguard its security are viewed with skepticism by its neighboring countries, as well as by regional and extra-regional powers with vested interests in the region. Additionally, the population of FATA perceives these measures with considerable suspicion and apprehension. Political and religious parties, along with militant groups, further exacerbate this situation, acting as catalysts that deepen the security dilemma (Karim, 2017).

Pakistan active concerns that India is collaborating with the U.S.-backed Afghan government to create a hostile western border for Pakistan. This, combined with the already contentious eastern border with India, could potentially trap Pakistan in a geostrategic pincer. Consequently, India remains a pivotal factor in Pakistan's foreign and security policy considerations.

The strengthening of India-U.S. and India-Afghan relations, set against the backdrop of the ongoing war on terrorism, is met with significant distrust and uncertainty in Pakistan. In the aftermath of the withdrawal of allied forces from Afghanistan, competition among major regional powers for influence is expected to intensify, which may precipitate further internal conflict and potentially lead to another civil war. US once fed Al-Qaida against for their interest and when they met with that particular agenda planned and started operation against local Afghanis and the particular organisation to crush their level of faith and the Islamic system which Afghanis always talked about to implement as a political system rather to accept and practice One World Order (Hussain D. , 2002).

The historical events play their pivotal role of very good relations of once and the bitter and hatred feelings of Afghani's for the Pakistani government when they suffered after 9/11 event by US armed forces through the Pakistan's soil they claim. The events of September 11, 2001, resulted in nearly 3,000 casualties in New York City, Washington, D.C., and Shanksville, Pennsylvania. Now, two decades later, as Western military forces withdraw and the Taliban reasserts control over Afghanistan, questions arise about whether different approaches to Afghanistan could have led to a more favorable outcome (Hartig & Doherty, 2021).

The strained relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan predates the 9/11 incident, originating from Pakistan's independence. Initially, Afghanistan opposed Pakistan's entry into the United Nations as a sovereign Islamic state in Asia, making it the sole Islamic state to vote against Pakistan's membership. Throughout the mid-20th century, bilateral ties remained unstable due to territorial disputes along the Durand Line. Afghanistan contested Pakistani control over Pashtun-majority areas in KPK and Baluchistan, alongside dissatisfaction with the perceived permanence of the Durand Line, which has been recognized as the international border by all nations except Afghanistan.

### **3.4.4 Afghan Immigrants and Pakistan stance**

When Cold-War started and end with the collapse of USSR and emergence of Al-Qaida who definitely supported by Pakistan as of the common religious factor and US participation to protect Afghanistan against USSR. Many immigrants migrated to Pakistan from Afghanistan and Pakistan bared their burden even economically suffering state. Later the war on terror started after 9/11 incident where Pakistan armed forces participated to protect the border of Pakistan as of security concern and provide US his bases which again brought Afghanistan and Pakistan on the bay of cruelty and mistrust. In 2023 the immigrants of Afghanistan sent back to Afghanistan after decades few of them are the resident of Pakistan even now which Afghanistan doesn't consider a good gesture from Pakistan. They must acknowledge the efforts by Pakistani government for the people of Afghanistan rather to react (Sattar, 2011).

Experts analyze how a profound misunderstanding of the situation led the West into a 20-year campaign that fell short of its major goals and resulted in unprecedented violence, leaving Afghanistan teetering on the brink of instability. Main reason behind the operation is to overcome the influence of Islamization in Afghani people and to take control over the expansionism of Islamic ruling around the Muslim states as well as Globally. The grudges remain same among both states but the need of day is cooperation to maintain the stability and peace in the Asian Region. As the both states are sharing much commonalities in various fields and also a physical link between both can never bear any conflicted situation.

Afghanistan as regional factor and influencer in Pakistan-Russia relations from the Cold War perspective played its major role where once Soviet Union collapsed and then US forces withdrawal makes it a particular state in South Asia. Afghanistan once safeguarded by Pakistan on global level and then may be used by US as Afghanistan says which caused them a huge lose in their homeland so, this is the international system which shapes up regional and national level system. Once enemy could be another times good friend because the interest varies in this democratic world system in the shade of Neo-Realism realm which says interests varies and states act according to the system which compel them to act in certain manners.

In the early 21st century, both Pakistan and Russia have aimed to achieve a peaceful Afghanistan by jointly addressing terrorism in the region. Both nations are committed to preventing instability and the rise of terrorist and extremist groups in Afghanistan, focusing instead on eradicating these threats. This shared perspective highlights their common interests in regional security. Conversely, Pakistan faces challenges due to the porous Pak-Afghan border, which is complicated by its rugged terrain. The guerrilla fighters and terrorists can exploit this challenging geography to conceal themselves. The Southern area of Afghanistan is encircled by the Pamir mountain range, while the Northern region features the Hindu Kush and Himalaya ranges, adding to the geographical difficulties. Pakistan and Afghanistan have nine formal border crossings, including three international ones Chaman, Torkham, and Spin Boldak and six additional mutual border points. Locals have identified various other locations along these borders for illicit activities such as smuggling, human trafficking, drug trafficking, and arms trafficking. (Carvanistan 2019).

In words of an analytical expert US and Pakistan relations never been an ideal because Pakistan is highly depended on US definitely at time would come then Pakistan would start looking towards Russia because US is not providing much needed support to Pakistan rather to India so, Pakistan would definitely look to other options in the region as well to fill that vacuum which is created by the lack of interest of US in Pakistan particularly post Soviet withdrawal. This is the potential area Pakistani policy makers look into these factors so they should definitely get close to Russia. Ukraine war emerged as an international factor as Russia is under pressure to put an end to the war and Russia is no interested to do it.

This factor is going to play a role on international level in bringing Pakistan close to Russia because a time will come when Russia would definitely think that only Pakistan is a country which is not that close to UN when it comes to Ukraine or other regional or international issues which can give an incentive to Pakistan to bring it close and normalize relations. There is a shift from uni-polarity to multi-polarity and the factor of global power shift quiet visible in this scenario definitely Pakistan should also look for new economic and military partners and both China and Russia are there (Ahmad S, personal communication July3, 2024).

Historically, Afghanistan has significantly influenced Pakistan-Russia relations, though not always positively. Despite this, current geopolitical realities present numerous opportunities for Russia and Islamabad to collaborate for mutual benefit. Both countries share several interests concerning Afghanistan, which necessitates bilateral cooperation. This study emphasizes the crucial role of Afghanistan in shaping Pakistan-Russia relations, highlighting their shared goals, including countering terrorism and extremism, ending violence, controlling drug trafficking, and improving regional connectivity.

### **3.4.5 NATO Withdrawal from Afghanistan**

Following the US withdrawal from Afghanistan, the country has faced severe challenges, including a humanitarian crisis as shortages of food and medicine, issues surrounding international recognition of the Taliban government, and economic collapse. Both Pakistan and Russia have urged the international community to engage with the Taliban to prevent further humanitarian disaster. While Pakistan's historical alliance with the United States and Russia's longstanding ties with India have been influential, the situation in Afghanistan has emerged as a dominant factor in shaping Pakistan-Russia relations. (Ullah & Fatima, 2022)

### **3.4.6 Pakistan-Russia Relations in Regional and International Environment An Analysis**

Need to look at the potential of possibilities there are so many of opportunities for both countries in trade, economic, militarily and cultural exchange programs can be initiated between them and there are counter terrorism efforts initiated between both in Afghanistan can bring them more close and hostile to each other these are the broader co-operation avenues where these two countries can explore more. Growing economic co-operation between Russia and Pakistan as they both started the projects as Gas Pipeline between them so these energy projects are the initiative to callosities and the same views over the stability of Afghanistan. Peace in Afghanistan normally relates with the peace in South Asia so, there aim is same regarding this particular state. Russia's relations with the West are quiet strange so she also needed some other states as partners included Pakistan because of same potential areas.

These relations are not certain there are of course some uncertainties revolving around all these issues particularly as Pakistan is an old ally of US so whenever Pakistan initiates as seen in recent past when Pakistan tried to get close to Russia US pressure is on Pakistan in most recent years regime change operation in Pakistan is an example of their strong influence and the supposed to deal with that pressure that is an uncertain situation for Russia too where the whole political system shattered. In economic perspective Pakistan is struggling for a certain economic condition while the public is suffering with a huge amount of inflation and deprived with the basic needs as the fuel prises become so high and lower income class barely meet with their basic needs the graph of hunger is growing rapidly and crime rate growing as accordingly now what to do about it if the policies are not going on their way to mitigate these major problem rather to act as ally can't do this and only can do this.(Ahmas S, Personal communication, July3, 2024).

### **3.4.7 Regional and International Factors: An Analysis**

Both countries face opportunities and challenges based on the regional and international factors influencing Pakistan-Russia relations. When considering regional factors such as Afghanistan and India, it is evident that Pakistan and Russia have mutual interests in Afghanistan. Security concerns represent a major issue for both nations. Within the framework of the SCO, Pakistan and Russia are collaborating to address terrorism and its repercussions in Central Asia and Pakistan ( Khetran, 2019) . Additionally, Afghanistan serves as a major centre for high-grade opium production, with 93% of the world's high-grade opium being produced there, and 40% of it being consumed in Russia ( Bajoria, 2009) . Pakistan and Russia are doing mutual drills and military exercises to prevent three evils including terrorism, separation and extremism in the region.

Another reason is that both Pakistan and Russia wanted to fill the power vacuum in Afghanistan after the withdrawal of US and NATO troops. (Khatoon, Khan, & Haq, 2023).

In the case of India, Russia and India are cordial friends. Even if Russia gets closer to Pakistan, it can never reduce or limit Russia's friendship towards India (Naqvi & Masood, 2017). However, there has recently been a change in Russia and Pakistan's relationship. President Vladimir Putin offered Pakistan membership in the International North-South Trade Corridor (INSTC), which offers the shortest trade route from Europe to South Asia and eliminates the Suez Canal route. Currently, Russia, Azerbaijan, India, and Iran are part of this corridor. Pakistan has happily accepted the invitation and started the process for INSTC membership (Haider, 2024).

This has raised concerns in India as it is one of the founding members of INSTC, and it perceives Pakistan's membership as a threat. According to India, Russia aims to connect INSTC with Gwadar port or CPEC, which will later involve China. India is already working with the United States to limit China's influence in the Indian Ocean, and if Russia connects CPEC with INSTC, it could provide an open platform for China to manoeuvre in the Indian Ocean. The other reason is, India is getting closer to the United States and Russia never wanted India to get closer to her. To limit India's growing relations with the US, Russia is getting closer towards Pakistan (Craig, 2015).

Russia is currently seeking new markets, and Pakistan, being the fifth most populous country in the world and the 10th largest gas importer, presents an attractive opportunity (Katona, 2021). This comes as Russia looks to offset its declining trade in Europe due to the Russian-Ukraine war. Both Pakistan and Russia are diversifying their relationship due to mutual concerns. It's not just about India's closer ties with the US; their mutual benefits are driving their relationship to new heights.

As President Vladimir Putin and Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif met at Astana for the annual SCO meeting, PM Shahbaz Sharif stated that no political or geostrategic landscape could limit the bilateral relations between Pakistan and Russia. He also expressed the desire to increase bilateral trade to 1 billion dollars. President Vladimir Putin offered to increase gas supply to Pakistan at a discounted price. PM Sharif emphasized the importance of trade relations based on a barter system (Yousuf, 2024). Thus, the relationship between Pakistan and Russia is transforming within the multipolar world order, characterized by mutual concerns rather than through the lens of the US and India.

In the global arena, China is emerging as a major world power, and its Belt and Road Initiative is creating diverse trade opportunities for Pakistan and Russia. Both Pakistan and Russia have friendly relations with China, setting the stage for a potential trilateral partnership. Recently, Pakistan launched Operation Azm-e-Istehkam in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to combat terrorism spilling over from Afghanistan. This operation was initiated in response to concerns raised by China following attacks on Chinese workers by terrorists believed to have originated or been trained in Afghanistan (Jamal, 2024). Given that both Russia and Pakistan are already collaborating to counter-terrorism stemming from Afghanistan, the three countries could work together to address security issues in Afghanistan and strengthen their relationships.

In terms of the US factor, Pakistan has always been a strong ally of the US. Pakistan has worked closely with the United States since its inception, especially in the wars against communism and terrorism. This has contributed to the strained relations between Pakistan and Russia (Naqvi & Masood, 2017). However, the US's increasing partnership with India has become a concern for Pakistan's security, particularly as the US supports India's activities

in the Indian Ocean. Moreover, a recent bill introduced by a US senator proposes cutting off economic assistance to Pakistan and considering India as a NATO ally, which poses a threat not only to Pakistan and China but also to Russia (Iqbal, 2024) . Pakistani foreign policymakers have always prioritized national security, and they view this bill as a serious threat to Pakistan's security.

All of these are the reasons behind the growing Pakistan and Russia's relation under the regional and international dynamics.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4. FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Findings

The relationship between Pakistan and Russia has evolved significantly in 2000s. Several key factors have influenced their bilateral ties during this period which study thoroughly find out according to the topic:

The U.S invasion of Afghanistan and the following War on Terror brought about significant changes in regional security dynamics. Pakistan, being a frontline state in this conflict, initially formed a close alignment with the United States. This alignment had repercussions for Pakistan's relations with Russia.

Russia's close defense and strategic ties with India, Pakistan's regional rival, have historically complicated Pakistan-Russia relations.

Energy security emerged as a crucial factor in Pakistan-Russia relations, with Russia's focus on the energy market in South Asia (India's tilt towards US) and Pakistan's energy requirements forming a foundation for cooperation. As US led China's containment policy in South China Sea (Indian Ocean Strategy) is very active by the both states and India give freedom of navigation to US.

Pakistan's foreign policy is diversifying its alliances, reducing over-reliance on the U.S and strengthening ties with the Russia and China. Both nations have aimed to boost trade and economic collaboration. In recent years, there have been endeavours to escalate bilateral trade, although it has yet to reach its full potential. Both nations have common concerns regarding terrorism and extremist groups in the region, which has resulted in heightened cooperation on security issues.

The evolving situation in Afghanistan continues to be an area of significant mutual concern influencing their bilateral relations is the desire for stability in Afghanistan, which is of interest to both Pakistan and Russia but having differed approaches and priorities. There have been efforts to collaborate on counterterrorism measures, addressing mutual concerns over terrorism and extremism.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and its potential connectivity with Eurasian economic initiatives have been areas of interest. Russia's participation in regional economic projects aligns with its broader strategy of expanding influence in South Asia

The strategic realignments in South Asia, including India's growing closeness to the U.S have pushed Pakistan to seek stronger ties with Russia.

Balancing the relationship with Russia by acknowledging its ties with India while emphasizing mutual benefits of Pakistan-Russia cooperation. Because India is its cordial partner from years and recently the both side leaders met in Russia to discuss their cooperation. On the other hand India is benefitting by both of the powers recently met with president Joe Biden in USA where they both discussed regional issue and their other cooperation on different areas.

India has successfully balanced its relations with both the US and Russia, managing to avoid major challenges from Russia as well as US. Similarly, Pakistan could benefit from adopting a multilateral approach in its foreign policy, which could potentially improve its economic condition.

All is Pakistan needs unconditional economic assistance and US failed to do so which led Pakistan to take IMF loans on huge taxed and condition based. Need to generate more exports abroad rather to import, as Pakistan is having highly productive land and capacity to

generate but machinery, markets, stations how to develop on broader level, there is a need of state sponsors with whom we can be able to balance all these factors internationally.

If Russia is willing to give Pakistan's debt based economy an unconditional economic support than there is no point to not to adopt multi-polar policies rather to serve one bloc. Russia solely may not be able to do but with the help of China there can be a hope for Pakistan in near future. As recently Prime Minister of Pakistan Shahbaz Sharif met with President Putin and discussed the importance of trade and their relationship and highlighted barter system of 70s era but how it be possible and what he thought before suggesting president Putin with that impossible factor (De-Dollarization) when the whole world is dealing in Dollars.

Another factor has explored which says India is a strategic ally and defence partner of Russia from decades and having a strong market why Russia would tilt towards Pakistan to support wholly in suffering situation of Pakistan. So, how would Russia balance its relations with India if it gets close to Pakistan this could be an uncertain situation. Here the role of China could be interesting as a good friend of Pakistan have the power to convince Russia and cause a gradual rise of relations a trajectory of relations between both because Russia and Pakistan's relations are not a full fledge alliance between these two states it is issue specific relation like energy, counter terrorism regional security etc they both are cooperating with each other but not a full fledge alliance between both but the gradual warming of ties can initiate a friendly environment.

## **Conclusion**

From above literature and data analysis this study concludes on some major points to conclude the chosen topic. Pakistan-Russia relations have evolved amidst significant shifts in geopolitical dynamics and deteriorating regional security in South Asia. Pakistan's pivotal role as a frontline state in the US-led war on terror in Afghanistan, coupled with India's emergence as a regional power, has shaped Pakistani perceptions of threats and Islamabad's cooperation with the United States. Initially, Pakistan viewed its role as crucial to achieving US objectives in Afghanistan. However, over time, it became apparent that America's broader strategic goals did not fully align with Pakistan's interests. Pakistan came to believe that Western powers favored Indian dominance as a model of stability rather than promoting a balance of power or resolving the complexities of the India-Pakistan conflict.

1. Post-9/11, Pakistan-Russia relations have been influenced by a complex interplay of geopolitical, economic, and security factors. While the initial years saw limited engagement due to Pakistan's alignment with the U.S., the subsequent years have witnessed a gradual warming of ties. Enhanced diplomatic engagement, defence cooperation, and economic interests have been key drivers in this evolving relationship. With this strategic shift, Pakistan has increasingly engaged with Russia and China in recent years. Membership in the SCO has provided Pakistan a platform to advance its strategic and economic interests, countering India's efforts to diplomatically isolate Pakistan. Pakistan's geopolitical significance has been amplified, particularly with China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) highlighting the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as a flagship project. Meanwhile, Russia, facing US sanctions following the East Ukraine crises, has deepened ties with Beijing and

expanded its interests into Southwest and South Asia. Moscow now navigates delicate relationships across the region.

2. For Russia, the future of Afghanistan holds critical implications for its security interests in the southern region. Additionally, Russia has identified South Asia as a significant market for defence cooperation and sales. India, as a strategic partner of Russia, has raised concerns over Moscow's sale of the S-400 system to Pakistan, while Pakistan sees Russia's expanding defence ties with India, its rival, as undermining its interests (Khan H. U., 2019).
3. The deepening ties between Pakistan and Russia can be viewed as a natural response to the strengthening Indo-US partnership during the 2000s. Pakistan is actively working to manage and enhance its relations with the US, while both countries seek to maximize bilateral opportunities without disrupting their ties with other nations. They recognize the importance of fostering improved relations amidst evolving regional and international political landscapes. Regional security is paramount for both Russia and Pakistan, particularly in Afghanistan, where a peaceful environment is crucial for Russia's interests in its southern neighborhood. Pakistan similarly emphasizes the need for a peaceful and secure neighborhood. These considerations guide their engagement with each other.
4. Recent advancements in Pakistan-Russia relations underscore Russia's confidence in Pakistan's capacity to combat terrorism. Russia is actively pursuing anti-terrorism cooperation with Pakistan, including training initiatives Friendship Series. Pakistan's membership in the SCO, where regional security and counter-terrorism are priorities, enhances the potential for both countries to collaborate significantly on mutual security goals in Afghanistan, thereby contributing to regional stability (Biswas, 2021).

5. The current collaboration on anti-narcotics, drug trafficking, and organized crime is important for Russia and therefore Pakistan can take major steps to assist Russia in controlling these problems. Economically, the 2000s saw a gradual improvement in Pakistan-Russia relations. The two countries worked towards institutionalizing their economic cooperation, establishing various intergovernmental commissions and business forums to facilitate trade and investment. Notably, the formation of joint working groups in 2015 and the signing of memorandums of understanding (MoUs) in fields such as metallurgy, railways, and energy highlighted the strengthening of economic ties. (Lecture, 2023).
6. The advantages of a strong partnership between Pakistan and Russia are evident, particularly in leveraging Russia's robust defense production industry to enhance Pakistan's arm capacity. Their collaboration includes training Pakistani technicians, scientists, and engineers to develop defense equipment domestically. Additionally, Pakistan's expertise in counterterrorism is crucial for addressing Russia's security concerns, fostering mutual cooperation between the two countries. While cultivating closer ties, both nations recognize the transient nature of international alliances, guided by the principles of neorealist's where state interests drive relationships. However, to establish a sustainable and mutually beneficial partnership, Pakistan and Russia must navigate this evolving path cautiously and expand their cooperation across various domains in the coming years (Khan H. U., 2019).
7. In Asian region India and Russia both states are of good relations from decades in case of AJK (LOC) and JK, if India and Russia solely cooperate to each other and Pakistan neglect this particular aspect regarding buffer zone this may lead to lose the very important part of Pakistan as of Russia's support. If Pakistan want Russia not to intervene in territorial issue between Pakistan and India as of princely state, Pakistan

should develop more friendly relations to Russia as well. (Anwar, Gillani, & Wasim, 2020).

8. The United States is increasingly concerned about China's expanding global influence, prompting efforts to build alliances, particularly with India, as a significant regional counterbalance. In this global context, Pakistan faces the challenge of maintaining relations with both the U.S. and China amidst their growing tensions. Historically, Pakistan was a close ally of the U.S. during the Cold War, playing a pivotal role in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union and receiving substantial military and economic aid in return. However, since the end of the Cold War, relations between Pakistan and the U.S. have become strained. This shift has allowed China and Russia more to step into fill the resulting power vacuum and deepen its ties with Pakistan. The post-9/11 era has witnessed a cautious but steady improvement in Pakistan-Russia relations, marked by pragmatic engagement and mutual economic benefits. This evolution reflects a broader trend of diversifying alliances and seeking stability in a complex regional landscape (Akhtar, 2023).
9. As per Fiscal Year 2022-23 Pakistan's total trade volume with Russia was \$920million, Pakistan exports to Russia were \$846million, while imports from Russia were \$74million during this period which decreased from previous year. The bulk of imports from Pakistan consisted of edible fruits, vegetables and cereals Russia's exports to Pakistan of \$95.7 million consisted of paper and paper board edible vegetables, iron and steel, inorganic chemicals and machinery. Total potential trade between Pakistan and Russia, based on 2014's trade patterns that was estimated at \$71.8 Billion (including petroleum products). For Pakistan, a potential of around \$24.5 Billion lies in overall export (Report C.S.,2023).

10. There are compelling reasons to expect future growth in the relationship between Russia and Pakistan, particularly driven by the evolving geostrategic landscape of the region. This provides a solid foundation for Russia to enhance its relations with both large and small South Asian regional powers. Improving bilateral relations with Pakistan is crucial for Russia, especially within the context of regional antiterrorism cooperation across various platforms. Additionally, Pakistan's interest in procuring Russian weapon systems and expanding economic interactions is well defined. Pakistan stands to benefit significantly from closer ties with Russia, including access to alternative security options, technology transfers in scientific research fields, entry into the Russian market for its exports, and strengthened relations with its Central Asian neighbors, which are challenging to develop without enhancing ties with Russia as a key ally (Rahman F. U., 2007).

## **Recommendations**

By the proposed study there are some suggestions and they can never be hundred percent correct these are only assumptions that based on existed data, historical incidents, state level involvements, international and regional factors and current scenarios. With the help of above data or study there are few suggestions regarding both state's bilateral relations in their flaws, strengths, common interests and evolving nature of world political system.

1. Pakistan and Russia must overcome historical burdens and forge ahead in the face of new global circumstances and needs, which present ample opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation.
2. Pakistan should seek an independent foreign policy and foster balance in relation with Great and Major Powers.
3. Enhance the use of multilateral platforms such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) to better tackle common security and economic issues. Advocate

for collaborative initiatives within the SCO framework that concentrate on counterterrorism, anti-narcotics efforts, and regional connectivity projects.

4. As Pakistan is suffering with energy crises and Russia is a major exporter of oil and gas around the world. As Russia President recently in june,2024 expressed his keen interest in Pakistan to join North-South corridor, it's a unilateral project where India, Iran, Russia and Azerbaijan multilaterally working especially focused on their infrastructure, transportation of goods and services as gas and oil particularly. Pakistan have started its process towards that project if this project accomplished Pakistan can cope up with its energy sufferings . There is a great chance of acquiring energy sources and meet the energy deficits at home. Russia needs exporter and Pakistan as importer can buy energy sources on cheaper price which can overcome the energy burden of Pakistani people.

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